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WELCOME – Bobby & Hannah Schuller

BS: This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. Hello.

HS: Hello visitors and church family. We are always so honored that you were with us. I want to remind you today that God's word is His will. The promises in the Bible are His will for you here and now. You are loved.

BS: Let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, thank you so much for all that you're doing in our hearts and minds and lives. We're just so grateful for your power and your life to us. We ask in Jesus' name for an outpouring of your Holy Spirit. It's in Christ' name we pray, amen.

HS: Amen.

HAVEN: Turn to the person next to you and say God loves you and so do I.

SCRIPTURE – Jeremiah 1:4-10 - Hannah

In preparation for the message, Jeremiah 1:4-10. Remember, these words are for you. The word of the Lord came to me saying, before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I set you apart, I appointed you as a prophet to the nations. Alas, sovereign Lord, I said, I did not know how to speak. I am too young. But the Lord said to me, do not say I am too young. You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them for I am with you, and will rescue you, declares the Lord. Then the Lord reached out his hand, touched my mouth and said to me, I have put my words in your mouth. See today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant. Amen.

INTERVIEW – Stevie & Sazan Hendrix and Bobby Schuller (BS)

Sazan Hendrix is a content creator and podcast host who grew up not knowing the Lord. After having dreams about church and hearing the Lord's voice, she found herself searching for answers. Since accepting Christ, she has used her platform to share His love and the blessings that we can find in life through Him. Sazan and her husband started a podcast called "The Good Life with Stevie and Sazan" to further their passion to connect with people.

BS: Sazan and Stevie, hi! Welcome! Thank you so much.

SAZAN & STEVIE: Hi guys, hello, everyone, hi everyone, hello.

BS: We know a lot of people love following your podcast, and all your social media, but it's such an honor to have you in the house or virtually in the house. For those who don't know a lot about you, tell us a little bit about your story and your faith journey.

SAZAN: Yes, kind of like the video was saying, I grew up in a house where I didn't know the Lord; I didn't know God intimately. I went through a season of life where I really had to go on that journey and ask those questions. It wasn't until I was in college, ten years ago when I went on that soul-searching adventure, and I always say that Jesus found me. It was crazy how I just asked God to reveal Himself to me, and He showed up in my dreams, and I just remember waking up and the rest is history because something in me completely changed. I felt like this radical..

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I don't know, it was just like I was healed, I was restored, I felt like I had been awakened after feeling like I had been asleep my whole life. And something just ignited in my spirit, and I've got to credit to my husband now Stevie, but in college at the time, he was that vessel that God used to get me to that place of asking those questions, and so I'm so grateful that he stuck around, and I could ask him those questions about Jesus.

BS: Yes.

SAZAN: Because we would be talking for hours all the time about it in our car in college, I'm just very grateful looking back at that season ten years ago. Wow.

BS: Social media is such an awesome place to begin some of those things. Somebody told me that Justin Bieber actually started on YouTube, and you can see how there's ways that things like Instagram and TikTok and I know your podcast can be a way to really launch you. When I see you guys on your podcast, you seem like some of the clips we saw, you seem like really fashionable, you're both a really good-looking couple, your children are beautiful, you talk about those things. Is it hard in that environment to talk about your faith when there's also this other side of social media that's like fashion and how you look and a lot of those things. Is that a hard thing to navigate through?

STEVIE: I think it's been tricky trying to talk about our faith in way that people feel welcome, and they don't feel excluded, right? That's always the goal is to welcome people in to God's house and so if we can just kind of be a bridge between the lost and the saved, that's what we want to be. We want to present the gospel in a way where its more so that we're just living that out, and so when we do talk about it, we do talk about God, people feel like well I want to know more because I love your family, I love following you, and you seem like you have a nice life. And it really is God in our life that is the good in our life, and so that's what we have tried to share, and I would say that my wife is very bold about sharing that since she came to know God. I grew up in the church, but she didn't. She's like babe, we got to just be blunt, and we just got to talk about Jesus. And I was like all right! Let's do it.

BS: Is it hard? I know too, you seem like such a perfect family, too, and you have Christ in the center, but like I remember Sazan, you've talked about how you had some conflict with your parents when you came to faith. And sometimes it's not always like it looks, right? I mean you've faced tough times in your own faith journey, right? It wasn't easy from the beginning.

SAZAN: Yes, totally, and nothing is picture perfect, right? Behind the scenes there's always things that we're all going through, and for us it was in the beginning of our relationship. My parents didn't approve of our relationship so we really had to navigate through that, and I couldn't imagine doing it without God by my side. Having my parents disown me for two and a half years after we got married, that was a really hard time. I think for me, too, the online world has been a therapeutic place, as well, just where I can just share openly what's going on in life as we live it and shine it a light and point it back to Christ always, because He has really been in it with us, and He's gotten us through it. So, it's been an amazing journey, and to know that now our families have reconciled and seeing how close we are again with our families, it's all a work of God, and so we're just so grateful that we've been given these platforms and this testimony that we can share with people.

BS: I didn't know you'd reconciled with your parents. That's an awesome part of the story that I think it's like so often there's this tension because Christ really does cause us to make these decisions that sometimes there's a divide. One thing I love that you guys have done with your social media is the S&S Goods. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

STEVIE: Yes, so that's our new brand that we launched. It was really kind of a God dream. We were really kind of questioning, God what can we do outside of social media, and there are so many things we could do, but what should we do. We spent a few years just kind of praying and thinking about it, and it's weird, I felt like God kind of asked us the question, what do you want to do.

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We're like well, we kind of want to just create a brand where we can sell people kind of some pure-rated goods, but also give them things for the heart and for the soul. It's kind of a new platform where it's a mixture of content and vlog, and then we also are selling some actual goods and things like that. But with that brand, as we kind of moved along the way, we realized that our mantra for our brand was the good life and it was to share with people that goodness is all around, and that's just kind of another way of saying that our Father, God the Father is all around. His presence is all around us, but do you see it, do you recognize it, do you see it in your wife, in your kids, in the life that you're given. And so, what we want to share with the world and through our brand is really that goodness is all around, that you can have a good life. You don't need to wish for another home or another spouse or for different kids or a different garden, but you can cultivate the good life right where you are.

BS: I love that that's such a core part your ministry because so often people think of eternal life as just going to heaven, but we see clearly in the scripture eternal life is the quality of God's life. That even though we have tough times, God wants us to really have a wonderful, worthwhile life. I feel like that's a big part of your message is showing us that that's a part of knowing the Lord. What encouragement do you have for people that are watching right now that are either believers and they feel like they're losing their faith, because I know that's a big part of your message, or just feeling like maybe they don't believe in God, or they want to hear from God but they just feel like He's not talking.

STEVIE: I would.. man, there's so many ways..

SAZAN: I know where is..

BS: I know.

STEVIE: ..I think for Sazan and I, we've both been through hard times in our life. Neither of us came from successful background. Our families really struggled growing up. I think it was in those humble beginnings, right, where God really was doing a work in us. I remember when we both moved to LA, it seemed like everything was failing. The dreams that we were going after, there was no wind in our sails. And I would say it wasn't until we just surrendered our goal and our vision for what He had for us, and that's when we really.. it's almost like we turned directions and there was wind in our sails, and everything we were doing, it seemed to be working, but it wasn't until we surrendered what we wanted for what He wanted for our lives. It's not easy; it could be a person; it could be a dream. It could be anything that's keep you from what God has for you, but I can promise you whether its Sazan telling her family about us, and them disowning her for a few years, to now having a better relationship. Whether it's that or a person or a job, I can tell you that if you surrender it to God, He will bless you tremendously. And it's not just in the form of money. There are other forms of currency that He can bless you with. And so just take that leap, just trust Him, He knows what's best.

SAZAN: I would add to that real quick, it's like even if you're in a waiting season or you're in a soul-searching season, or maybe you feel like you're in the desert, I would just say just try to love where you are right now. It's such a precious time. You don't have to have it all to look up and see the goodness that's all around. There are so many gifts that are right in front of you right now that you can unwrap, and so I would just say be still in that and just love where you are right now, regardless and despite the daily challenges, and God, He's always around, right. So sometimes we just got to look and find Him.

BS:Awesome. I love it. Sazan and Stevie, thank you so much. If you want to know more about their ministry, they have some great products and they also just have like an amazing blog. You should check them out. Its StevieandSazan.com or Sazan.me. Thank you, guys, so much for all you're doing. We appreciate you. Thanks for joining us today.

STEVIE & SAZAN: No problem. Thanks, guys. Thanks, we appreciate it. Take care. Have a good one.

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DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

If you're new to the church, there is this creed that we say every week that's a way of saying the scriptures in a fresh way in our lives, and I want to invite you to stand with us. We're going to this together, and I want you to really understand this about yourself, so let's hold our hands out like this and say this together: I'm not what I do. I'm not what I have. I'm not what people say about me. I am the beloved of God. Its who I am. No one can take it from me. I don't have to worry, I don't have to hurry, I can trust my friend Jesus and share His love with the world. Amen!

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "God Will Qualify You"

Today I want to talk about this weird revelation I had last week working through the scripture – that for brave people, fear is actually a gift. There's a lot of sermons you'll hear about how fear corrupts, and it does, how fear can ruin everything, and it can. But if you're a brave person, and I think you are, there's also a gift in it because when you're a brave person, and you get a dream in your heart from God, that dream is going to be scary. And there is this thing that keeps you up at night as a brave person, that I'm really afraid to write that thing, or I'm really afraid to start this thing, or I'm really afraid to say this thing or do this thing, and it keeps you up. And what's happening is the thing you're afraid of is actually deep down inside a crystal-clear signpost of where you're supposed to go. Many of us lack clarity about what the next step is in our lives, well maybe start with something that you're scared of. God's plan for you is big, God's plan for you is scary, but its good. We all have people in our lives who impact us, and long after they're gone, we carry their spirit, lives and memories in our hearts with us; they, in many ways, form who we are. I have my parents; my grandparents have all been a huge part of my life. My grandma and grandpa Persley are here today. Grandpa Persley turns 95 in May, I believe. May 20-something. 94.. you're turning 94. But actually today, and especially since he was such an important part of this mission, I want to talk about my grandpa Schuller. It was a while back now I was at my grandma Schuller's funeral. And there were many people there, and they put the three ministers in the front. This one guy from a Lutheran church, a wonderful man, myself and Rick Warren. I had never met Rick Warren or talked to him, and I'd actually gotten there late, so they just sat me next to him; we hadn't said a word. And this other minister who got up, actually had some very beautiful words; some amazing things to say. One of the exercises he had us do was he asked everybody to reach across to the person sitting next to you, even if they were a stranger, and to hold their hand. And so now if you're sitting in a row of 20 people, and you're sitting with your family or a friend, that's pretty normal to reach across and hold hands while you're sitting there. But you see it was just me and Rick. You know Rick Warren, the pastor of Saddleback Church, the biggest church in the world. Just me and him, never met each other, and now to comply, we're holding hands just two dudes, holding hands in a church. And he was going on about, I don't remember specifically, but it was about something like human connectedness and the value of a loving touch, and some of these things. And it's kind of turning out to be kind of a long time to like hold this dude's hand, and so we kind of like look at each other, kind of without saying anything in gentle agreement, kind of like it's probably good enough, its good enough. And so, we like let go a little bit. And just as we start to do that, the guy interrupts, he goes 'I see some of you letting go of hands. Now keep holding the hand.' Then we're like.. so, we're holding hands some more, another five minutes, honestly, goes by. It was a long time. Finally, when he finished, I took my hand and wiped that purpose driven sweat on my pants; it had been a long time. He was wiping that possibility thinkers sweat off of his hand. But after that service, it's the first time I'd ever talked to him. He said 'I'm so glad I sat next to you; I want to tell you something. Saddleback church only had about a hundred people in it, and I had this dream in my heart, but we were struggling. And your grandpa brought me out to the Institute of Successful Church Leadership.

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He paid my way and after I left that place, I knew I needed a big parking lot, an amazing women's bathroom and I started going door to door asking people if they didn't go to church, why they didn't go to church, and I built my church around that, and because of that, Saddleback is what it is today.' Pretty amazing story. But can I tell you that I'd heard it a million times. Not from him, but from other pastors. Bill Hybels said the same thing. Among other pastors of big churches, small churches, there were men and women who had dreams in their heart who came to meet my grandpa, sometimes privately, sometimes in an Institute, but they said, 'that man showed me that I could do so much more.' And he was this way with pastors. He just loved pastors. He wanted pastors to have a big vision of a big God and a big dream in their hearts. And even today, that effect is cascading all around the world, like a meteor hitting water – the wave just continues to spread all around the world. But there's another pastor he did that with, and that was me. Me. On Thursday's, way before I was doing this, Hannah and I were kind of doing student ministry and a little bit of this and that. Every Thursday he would spend like two hours with me. He'd cancel his next meeting, he just keeps spending time with me and I carry in my heart and my body and my mind his stories and memories about doing stuff on camera, and how to communicate well, and how to tell a story and how to think about the scriptures. Most people that are my age or younger have never heard of my grandpa, Dr. Schuller, but most people older than me have. One thing he's famous for is architecture. Every year, they give away a gold medal to the world's greatest architect, and they only give one away and they do it every year. And there's nowhere in the world you can see more than one gold medal architect building anywhere, except one – the Crystal Cathedral. There's three. There's Neutra, there's Johnson and there's Meier. Three amazing buildings. I've heard, I don't know if it's true, I've heard that he, my grandpa, is the only non-architect to be inducted into the Architectural Hall of Fame. Isn't that great? And he's achieved so many amazing things, but the most amazing thing he's achieved is the Hour of Power. I mean all those other things could go away, but all of them essentially came from this one dream: to bring the message of a loving hopeful God, a God in a world full of possibilities for you, just as you are, to everybody, and he did it! Millions of people reached all around the world, and for so long, ripples of lives that were changed by my grandma and grandpa, really both of them, wanting to make a difference. I just remember seeing that and being inspired by it as a younger man. After I graduated seminary, Hannah and I had a dream on our own hearts to plant a church. We started a church called The Gathering, originally, and we called it the Tree of Life after a merger, and we were basically meeting in an American Legion bar. It was like a dance hall then there was a bar below us. And it was Old Towne Orange. This is an actual picture from that church. At our height, we got up to about three hundred people, and it was just a family church. A lot of young people, a lot of kids running around. It was really fun. No money at all. Couldn't do anything financially, really. I remember the first year as an act of faith, we gave all of our offerings away to the poor, just to say God we're just going to sow it back to those who are in need in this community, and Hannah and I, we just found money. She did graphic design, I did this and that, and we were able to piece it together. I remember it was during that time my grandpa began to slip a little bit mentally. He had had a.. I don't think it was Alzheimer's, this is just Bobby talking, I'm not a doctor, but he had a brutal head injury in the 90's and he never was quite the same, and I think that later in life, it was causing a lot of confusion and dementia. But that started to have an effect because the Hour of Power ministry was really built around his vision and personality. He was always doing stuff. And power hates a vacuum, and so he started double booking things, and making decisions and forgetting he'd made those decisions, and I think it just cascaded and created these problems where eventually, the ministry fell into bankruptcy, and it was really, really sad. While that happened, Hannah and I were kind of like Switzerland. We were just kind of staying out of it, even though there was family members and friends we had. We were just praying and watching from afar.

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But after the bankruptcy and there was a huge change and shakeup, they invited me to come back and preach in a season that sort of felt like, and what I was hearing from some, is a season of shepherding it unto death. The building is gone, Dr. Schuller's gone, we're going to start winding it down. And there was this season where like I was preaching at my church, Tree of Life, in like shorts and a t-shirt and flipflops, and then putting on real quickly a suit that my mom bought for me after I graduated college or seminary, it didn't quite fit right anymore, and I would throw that on, and then run over to the Crystal Cathedral, and preach and there would be like Beethoven and fountains and stuff. And it was just very weird. It was for a while that Hannah and I were doing that, and it was during that time we started to do some of these trips, and we would see the people that we were talking to behind the camera. It wasn't just the local church. And we'd hear story after story, all over, Australia and New Zealand, Hong Kong, Canada, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland. And we'd hear these amazing stories of life change. And now some people are starting to say that about me. Most of them were about something that my grandpa had said or done. But when we did those trips and the more stories were heard and the more letters we read, and thank you for those of you who write to us, it became like fuel. And something got in my heart, this will not die! This will not die. And I can't tell you how many challenges we've faced. And it was just one thing after another, but God put this thing in our heart that this will not die. During that time, I continued to visit my grandpa, who had completely slipped. He didn't know any of this was happening, but he would have these moments where he'd be himself. I remember the last time my dad and I took my grandpa fishing; it was not long before he passed away. It was just after the bankruptcy. This was a picture we took, and this is kind of how I remember my grandpa, just always happy and smiling and encouraging everybody. Those glasses are so iconic, aren't they? I remember.. I've always wanted to have his deep baritone preaching voice, but I realized that he got that from smoking. A lot of people don't know he smoked, but his whole young part of his life he smoked cigarettes, and then he was able to quit later by switching to cigars. And I don't know if he ever quite gave it up. My grandma wouldn't let him smoke, but I remember when we'd go fishing, especially before this, he didn't smoke then, but before this, he would smoke cigars but tried so desperately to hide it from us. We were in the bridge, which is like the place where the wheel is, just behind the front of the boat, and he would say 'I'm going to go take a nap' and I would say 'are you going to go smoke a cigar, grandpa?' And he would look at me and say 'I gave that up! Don't ever smoke. Smoking will kill you!' And I said all right, no problem. And then he would go to the forward cabin, and there's this little window on the bow, on the front of the boat that you would see come up like this. We called it the chimney because all of a sudden after about five minutes, you'd see plumes of rich tobacco smoke, actually smelled pretty good, would come out. We don't smoke or anything, but that's how he got that voice, I think. I'm pretty sure. Didn't hurt. I remember the last two times I spoke with him, the second to last time, he was sleeping a lot, he was close to death, and I remember sitting in a chair next to him. And he woke up, kind of sat up like this, and he looked at me and he said, 'Bobby, I love your haircut.' I said thank you, grandpa. And then he went right back on the pillow and went back to sleep. I don't think I've told this story until today. It's a special one and I don't know why I felt led to tell it today, but it's one that's given me a lot of spirit, I think, through tough times. The last time I spoke to my grandpa, very similar thing. Sat up and he looked at me and he said, 'Bobby,' I said hey grandpa. Long pause, just staring at me in the eyes, and he says, 'What do you want from me?' And I wasn't expecting such a strange question, although its typical for him. But I knew the answer. I said, 'I want you to bless me.' And so, laying in his bed, he held his hands out like this, and I reached my hand over, and he covered my hand like this, and he closed his eyes. And so, I sat there for a long time, till I started getting that possibility thinkers sweat on my hands. And I thought he had fallen asleep, and so I was just going to pull my hand away, and either maybe leave. I started to pull my hand away, and it tightens like this. He'd been awake the whole time.

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He looks at me and he says, 'don't leave.' And then he closed his eyes again, and I noticed his lips were kind of moving a little bit. He was praying for me. He was blessing me. And so, I sat there quite a bit longer until he started snoring, and then I felt it was okay to leave. By the time he died, his trust was not in good shape. My grandma had been gone for a while, and of course he wasn't able to mend things. And he's a celebrity and so they took all of his things and on a website, they posted everything, everything that we grew up seeing as kids. Everything. Every little worthless thing that was so special to us. And they posted it on a website, an auction website, to be sold. One of the things that they put on there was a blue ring he would wear all the time, gold ring, he bought it, I believe, in Jerusalem. Had a blue crest, I think it was a lion and you would use it on like a wax seal for a letter, and he always told me he was going to give me that ring. Felt like the family signet, the first son of his first son. It felt like something I should have. And on the website, it said that the appraised value was something like \$200/\$250 dollars. So, I saved up \$800 to buy this ring. It went for \$11,000. I didn't pay for it. Someone else did. If you got that ring, by the way, I'll buy it from you, but only for \$800. There's one thing I did get. Mom, can you hand me that cassette tape? Thank you. This is the one thing I bought for myself. No one seemed interested in it. But as sort of a curator of a lot of his stuff, I felt like it was my responsibility. This is a video of my grandpa Schuller preaching to thousands of people in Kiev in the Soviet Union on Christmas Day. Now there are some impressive things that the man accomplished in his life, and I mentioned all of them. To me, the most impressive thing he did was having a gospel Christian program on national television in the Soviet Union, and then preached a gospel message standing next to Mikhail Gorbachev and Armand Hammer in the late 80's during the Soviet Union. That is crazy! He truly lived the idea that if you can dream it, you can do it; if you can believe it, you can achieve it. They feel like cliches to us sometimes, but when a man or a woman does something like this, it does something to you, if you watch. I learned.. oh, one of the reasons I'm saying this, by the way, is this April 22nd, it will have been ten years since that first sermon I gave on the Hour of Power. Here we are. Can you believe it's been ten years? Five years of hell, two years of purgatory, three years of heaven on earth. It's been such a joy now. But can I tell you the victories that we're experiencing now, that God has brought us through tough times. And the reason I'm saying all of this is not to talk about myself, or even to talk about my grandpa, it's to talk about you, and to show you what I have learned through this, going from a young man to now being a middle-aged man. I'm 40 years old. Can I just tell you that there is something about a last man standing kind of mentality that is going to bring you victory in life? That was my mentality this whole time, and it was because of people like you and others. Most people said I'm not into it, but some people said I believe in this still. I want to give to this, I want to be a part of this, I want to volunteer, I want to share this message, or whatever, and there are many leaders who have now even passed away who helped do that. But it's because enough people believed in it, and enough people said no, we're just going to do whatever we can to make sure it survives, and today its thriving. And this is a lesson in life, that there's something about a last man standing view of life that will help you so much because you never stand alone, you always stand with the Lord. If you're a believer, He's with you now, so you're not standing alone. And the understanding that the path that God has before you is a difficult path, but it's worth it. That week that I was holding Rick Warren's hand was the worst week of my life. First, something good happened that week. The good thing that happened is after volunteering for two years, and after a lot of debate and discussion, and a lot of it was embarrassing to me, the church chose unanimously for me to be the senior pastor and the chief of this organization. That was a great victory. But that week my grandma passed. She was sudden. She went to the ICU; she was having stomach pain. We were going to go see her that night. It was late at night, but they said you should see her in the morning. They won't let you into the ICU anyway. You'll just be sitting in the waiting room.

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The next morning, I got up and I was filling my car with the gas, and I was listening to the news, and he said, 'this morning at 2 am, Arvella Schuller passed away at St. Joseph's hospital.' And I thought what? What? I heard about my grandma dying on the news. And then I called my dad because I thought he didn't tell me. I called my dad and I said, 'dad, why didn't you tell me?' I was the one telling him. He hadn't heard, either. The news made the announcement before they told us. And the next day after that, our son Cohen had a 29-minute tonic-clonic seizure. We spent the next few days in the hospital with him, here he is. And you can see Hannah praying, we were confused and scared. Child protective services came and separated us from him because the first measurement that they had taken made it look like he had taken a blow to the head. Later we found out in the MRI it wasn't a blow to the head, it was just his brain hadn't developed right in birth. And there have been so many other challenges since then. But can I tell you God is so faithful. He's brought victory in Cohen's life, he's brought victory in our family, he's brought victory in this church, and we know it, those who have been on this journey have seen. Some of you in IPC have joined later, but you're a part of that victory story, too. And we have seen that if you hold on with that last man standing kind of heart, God will bring you through. He'll bring you through. He brought us through. And so, this April 22nd, I'm going to celebrate ten years of stepping into that pulpit and believe that the next ten years will be even better. All of this is to say God's plan for you is scary. It's a scary plan because God's plans are big. His plans are big. You can't sleep at night because the fear of the thing itself keeps reminding you this is what you're called to do. So, fear becomes a gift because it shows us who we're supposed to be, and where we're supposed to go, and what a gift that is, that God is revealing that if we trust our lives to Him, He can do great things through you. God's plan for you is scary. I just want to finish with this last passage from Jeremiah. Jeremiah says.. he was a Hebrew priest, and God was going to call him as a young man to be a prophet. And it says "the word of the Lord came to me saying yet before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I set you apart. I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." Isn't that comforting that God says that about you? Before you were born, He knew you. He loves you. The scripture goes on to say his reply, which is basically a no. No, no, no, I'm not the guy. "Alas, sovereign Lord, I said, I don't how to speak." Excuse number one. "I'm too young." Excuse number two. "But the Lord said to me, don't say I'm too young. You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Don't be afraid of them." You see, don't be afraid. "For I am with you and will rescue you, declares the Lord." God says that to you. Don't be afraid. I'll be with you. Very often when God's scary vision will come to you, your first response is to make excuses. If you need an excuse to quit, there are lots of good ones, I promise you. Hannah and I have had at least ten great excuses that if we got up here to quit, everybody in the church would have said we totally get it, we totally understand, we bless you, no problem. God will call you to something that often you'll want to quit. And if you need a good excuse, you'll cook one up, no problem. Its human nature. I'm too this, I'm too that. What it is, is I'm too scared, or I'm too tired, it's almost always those two things. But that's not what we want to say. When you break through fear, that alone, there's like some great thing that happens in your life, your body, your mind, that blesses you. And then finally this. He says to Jeremiah, "then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, I've put my words in your mouth. See today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and to tear down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant." God will transform you into the person you need to be as you go, and this is the last and final thing. God qualifies as you go. The journey itself is sometimes the thing that changes you. You're never prepared for the journey God has for you. Never. He provides for you and transforms you as you go. Doors in the kingdom of God, I heard somebody say this, doors in the kingdom of God are not like our doors. You don't open them yourself. They're like automatic doors at the grocery store. There's no handle, there's no way to push it open. You walk like a crazy person towards closed doors and then just before you get there, they open.

God Will Qualify You

It's in the scripture. When God's people came into the Promised Land, they had to step into a rushing Jordan holding a very heavy box that kills people, right? The arc of the covenant, first, and then it split. That's how doors are in the kingdom of God. For us as believers, the challenges that we face often are really the fuel that makes us who we are. There are billions of people around the world right now, you need to hear this, there are billions of people around the world right now who are not hearing this message. They're on Instagram, they're on TikTok, they're sleeping in, they're looking for a movie to watch. They're wondering what they're going to eat for lunch or dinner. Not you. You're here and this word is for you. You need to hear that it is not trials that bring down Christians, its comfort. It's not difficulty that destroys our walk with God, its ease. There is something weird about believers that we almost need this next scary thing. We need the next goal; we need the trial to draw us and keep our hearts close to the real power of God that destroys burdens and yokes. And the irony about that is Satan does his best to make you scared, make you tired, and hurt your life. No doubt about it, we instantly came under attack by Satan when we took the helm of this church. There's no doubt about it. But it's all wind. It's all wind and leaves and shadows. It's not real. God's power through it all is real. And we have found that those trials show us that we are a threat. Look, Satan doesn't attack people he's not afraid of. He attacks people who are a threat, and his attack is going to be to scare you and make you feel tired. Don't let it happen. When I was a kid, my dad told me about.. I asked him, how does a sailboat, there's always got to be one direction it can't go, right? Into the wind. And he said no, it goes right into the wind, no problem. I said what? He tried to explain to me this thing called tacking where a boat goes back and forth like this into the wind, and it was so hard for me to figure out how that would happen until I finally saw it sitting at the mouth of the harbor, I watched a boat tack out of the harbor, even though it was going right into like ten/twelve mile an hour winds. And my first thought was wow, that would make me feel sick because it was just like this. But it was gradually moving in the opposite direction the wind was blowing. And I realized something. The only thing that keeps a sailboat from going east is not wind that's blowing west. The only that's going to keep a sailboat from going east is no wind. Those who have ears, let them hear. The only thing that's going to keep you from going to where you want to be is not attack, it's not trial, it's not difficulty, its comfort. Its ease, it's no wind. It's no wind. Marcus Aurelius said, "fire thrives on obstacles." Well, that's how we are. We thrive on obstacles as believers. I want to encourage you today, God has a plan for you, wanted you to hear this, and to not give up in the 11th hour. Lord Jesus, stand with us in our tough times. Help us, God, to hold fast and to stay the course in all that we're going through. We love you. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

BENEDICTION:

And now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift His countenance upon you and give you His peace, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, amen.