

Hour of Power Deutschland
Steinerne Furt 78
86167 Augsburg

Telefon: 08 21 / 420 96 96
Telefax: 08 21 / 420 96 97

E-Mail: info@hoursofpower.de
www.hoursofpower.de

Baden-Württembergische Bank
BLZ: 600 501 01
Konto: 28 94 829

IBAN:
DE43600501010002894829

BIC:
SOLADEST600

Büro Schweiz:

Hour of Power Schweiz
Seestr. 11
8594 Güttingen
Tel.: 071 690 07 81
info@hoursofpower-schweiz.ch
www.hoursofpower-schweiz.ch

Spendenkonto:

PostFinance AG, 3030 Bern
Konto: 61-18359-6
IBAN:
CH1609000000610183596

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WELCOME – Bobby Schuller

BS: This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. Good morning. It's hard to be as enthusiastic when I don't have my wife with me up here greeting you guys. She got sick last night and wasn't able to make it, so I always feel awkward, like this is not how it's supposed to be. Pastor Tim offered to hold my hand coming up here but at the last minute I politely declined. We really are so glad you're here or watching wherever you are, and we want you to know that we are on your side. We want you to know whatever thing you're going through, it's never too late to turn your life around and to turn your heart to God. Life is better when it's in the kingdom of God. Life is better when we have a roadmap for how to do what is right and be who is good and to have everything re-set because of the cross and resurrection. Anyway, we want you to know that we're here to encourage you; to tell you that good things are coming for you if you trust your life to the Lord Jesus Christ. We're so glad you're here. Let's begin with a word of prayer this morning. Father, we thank you that you love us just as we are and not as we should be. We thank you that you are a friend of sinners, Lord, that you're calling people to your table to start over, to begin a new life and to make a choice and so many of us are there today, Lord. I pray for every single person that's here that's in a season of blessing. I pray, God that you continue to double that blessing. I pray for everybody that's going through suffering, to give them hope and faith and trust the difficult times, and to continue to always do what is right. Lord, we love you; it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen. Turn around to those who are standing or seated next to you; shake their hand and say God loves you and so do I.

SCRIPTURE – Luke 12,22-25 – Tim McCalmont

TM: Listen for the word of God from Luke chapter 12, beginning at verse 22: Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: they do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds." This is the word of the Lord.

INTERVIEW – Kate Czechowicz (KC) and Bobby Schuller (BS)

Kate Czechowicz is an advocate and team member at A21, an international organization who aims at abolishing the modern day slavery that is human trafficking. With offices all over the globe, A21 has countless people helping to reach those who are vulnerable and working with others who can help rescue those caught in slavery. They hope to free millions of people who are currently in danger all over the world.

BS: Kate Czechowicz, hi!

KC: Hello.

BS: So, so nice to have you here.

KC: Thank you so much for having me, Pastor Bobby.

Loved Like a Raven

BS: And it's such a great time to have you here with everything that's happening in our society and in our world, to talk about a thing that I think a lot of people in modern America didn't know about until as recently as 10/15 years ago, and that's the issue of human trafficking and slavery. First of all, tell us a little bit about yourself and how got involved with this project, and what you guys are doing at A21.

KC: Yes, great. My name is Kate, and I'm privileged to be a part of the team at A21, where our mission, are you ready for this? It's a big one; is to abolish slavery everywhere forever. And I am so grateful to be a part of the team that just says hey, this exists and we're going to do something about it. And I love what our founder Christine Caine said that not everybody can do everything, but everyone can do something. And I love that the something that I can do is to go and bring awareness about human trafficking, and really mobilize people to understand that not only one: is it an issue, but that we're actually a part of the solution.

BS: Yes, a lot of people who maybe haven't heard this before or might be thinking like slavery, what do you mean? And a lot of times because we picture slavery as people working in fields or in houses, as it's been kind of through the Roman Empire and American slavery in our past, but that's not really always what it looks like anymore.

KC: So human trafficking really does take on various forms and we do still have labor trafficking and the servitude that happens in households and different things, and we also have sex trafficking. And right now, just to put it in perspective is that they're estimating over 40 million people are still enslaved today. And to put that in context and in perspective, they're saying that there's more enslaved people today than at any point of history up until this far.

BS: And that's crazy, too, when you think like in the past there have been entire economies of millions of people enslaved and we think of that as something that died in the 19th century. But there are more people in slavery today, and lot of them are children.

KC: A lot of them are children and so human traffickers really want to exploit the vulnerable and children are oftentimes the most vulnerable. And so what I love is that A21 has this focused approach of reach, rescue and restore where we say hey, we know that human traffickers are out to get the vulnerable, so let's provide prevention. Let's bring awareness to this so that the vulnerable, the number decrease, decrease, decrease, and then we also have our child advocacy centers that are in Thailand and Cambodia that are very specific to helping children, so it's amazing.

BS: Yes, there are some really horrible stories in places like Thailand and Cambodia that you can read about, but tell us about.. you were doing one in Cambodia right now, aren't you?

KC: Yes, we just actually opened it, so we're super excited about that. It's called The Child Advocacy Center, and one of the biggest things about our child advocacy center that is huge is that it takes in children and provides the nurture and the care in this safe place for them after they're rescued.

And then another big part is that traffickers prey on children because they know that their testimony is oftentimes not going to be held up in court because it's so traumatic for the child to re-tell the story, and so we've partnered with law enforcement that provide resources for our social workers, our trained social workers to be able to record those first initial testimonies of the children when they're in a safe place that then can be used in court so the child isn't re-traumatized over and over again, and we can put those traffickers in jail.

BS: That's good. It's funny because when you talk about it, the police and others, many of them will do that rescue piece but that's what I love about the restore piece, too, that you also have the component of helping this child or woman get back so like a normal life.

I remember seeing that prostitutes and porn stars, for example, a lot of them were slaves in this sexual way, but then when they left, they were so broken that they didn't know a better way to make money or provide for themselves so now they're doing it at their own free will.

Loved Like a Raven

But they're still, in a way, stuck because nobody was there for them and that's what you guys are doing, in a way. Right? You're helping rebuild their soul.

KC: Yes, I love that, Pastor Bobby, and that's the thing with trafficking. Victims who become survivors is there's often a chance for them to be re-trafficked, and so what I love is that A21 has freedom centers; what we call freedom centers around the globe that has the opportunity to assist survivors. It's a really comprehensive approach where we say this is an individual that has a story, that has specific needs, that has specific goals, and so what services can we provide to them so that they can live the life that they were intended to have all along. And so we are so excited to celebrate that in the last year, we just had our 1,000th survivor come through our freedom centers and our care, so we're super excited about that.

BS: Awesome. Wow, that's great news.

KC: Yes.

BS: Well Kate Czechowicz from A21, we're just so excited about what you're doing. We are grieving for what's going on in the world, but we're glad that there are people like you that are advocating for those who have been forgotten or abused. How can we help you?

KC: That is a great question. I think the biggest thing right off the bat is just to remember that you are a part of the solution. That there's nothing that you can't do. You can do something, and so we would encourage you just be aware, first and foremost. If you walked in and you didn't know, or you're listening and you're like I didn't know about this. Now you take that first step. What's the next step in awareness? We love that we have something called our Walk for Freedom that happens globally and it's the biggest anti-trafficking, anti-slavery walk that happens. We were in over 500 cities this last year, and so that's a great way for you to say where in my community is that happening? Where can I go right in and be a part of raising awareness. Get involved in your local task force, if you can, and then you can be a direct sponsor of freedom and really help rescue and restore women, children, and men all over the globe. So you are a part of the solution, don't forget that.

BS: And Christine Caine, your colleague in ministry and founder will be here next week speaking..

KC: Yes she will..

BS: ..and so I'm sure we'll hear a lot..

KC: ..and it's going to be awesome, yes.

BS: ..yes, it will be awesome, and we'll be able to hear more about it, but Kate Czechowicz, thank you so much. A21, we appreciate all the work you're doing. We're praying for you, we're going to support you financially any way that we can to be behind everything that you're doing. We love you

KC: Thank you. Thank you so much for having me. Thank you.

BS: Thanks Kate! Bless you.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

BS: Friends, will you hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving from the Lord? Let's 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. It's 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. Thanks, you can be seated.

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "Loved Like the Raven"

Well today I am continuing a series that sounds super boring that I think hopefully has been really interesting. The series is called Consider the Birds of the Air. It's a direct line from Jesus. And it's looking at how birds, some specific birds in general, are mentioned in the Bible and they're meant to give us a deeper revelation of God's word. So for example, the first week we talked about the eagle and how the eagle represents both God and Israel, and how God raises up eagles through suffering.

Loved Like a Raven

Last week we talked about the dove or the pigeon. Pigeon. Depends on how you view them. Same bird and what that dove or pigeon means in the Bible; how it's reflective of new life and the Holy Spirit. Well today we're going to talk about the first bird that is mentioned in the whole Bible in the book of Genesis and that is the raven. The raven. Nevermore. You know I remember the raven; I remember when I was a kid, not a kid, I was 16 or 17, and I was driving the family's minivan. The way we would keep the door closed is with duct tape because the handle didn't work so you'd tape it down to keep it closed. You un-tape it to open it. And I remember, I was with my dad and there was this little road that would go between the main highway into our little neighborhood, and it was a very pretty road, there were always these ravens, maybe there'd be six or ten or something, and they were always right in the middle of the road pecking and eating. And when I started driving, I started to notice things like this because I was learning how to drive, anyway. So we're going down the road, and my dad's just flying down this road. 'I go dad, watch out for those birds, you're going to hit them.' And he looks right at me and steps on the gas like he wants to hit them. And they all, of course, fly off in the last second. But I go 'dad, you got to be careful, you could have killed those poor birds, those ravens.' And he looks at me and he says, 'exactly. Ravens.' He goes, 'you can't hit a raven.' I said 'what do you mean you can't hit a raven? This car goes fast.' He said 'you cannot hit a raven.' We had this argument back and forth. Eventually he looks at them, he says, 'I'll tell you what, if you ever hit one of these ravens, bring it to me, I'll buy you a car.' He's like 'for real. If you can kill one of these ravens, I'll buy you a car.' I'm not 100% sure, but I think my dad has some like hard feelings towards ravens. We're going to see later this is a common theme in history. But you might remember the building the Crystal Cathedral, ten thousand panes of glass, and each pane is put in place by this dark caulking that holds the window in the frame. And crows and ravens, especially ravens, loved to come and sit on the glass and peck and eat away over time that glue that holds the glass in place. So they had special glass where if it fell through and this would happen, the glass would break before it hits, and you say oh that sounds horrible. It's like a candy glass so when it falls there are no sharp edges or anything, so every once in awhile people would sit and feel pebbles fall on them and wonder what that was. But it was expensive to replace those panes of glass and we tried everything and because ravens are so bright, it's hard to catch them. Anyway, he hates ravens, I think. But he said 'I'll buy you a car if you can hit one of these ravens.' And you should have seen me. We grew up fishing and the rule for fishing and hunting is if you kill an animal, you got to eat it. So my plan was to kill a raven, show it to my dad. Anyway, so I see these ravens, and like for like years, even into college, it was a game where I would try and hit them and see how close I could get. Never once did I ever get close to hitting a raven. Well anyway. So it's interesting because ravens really are one of these birds that appear through literature and through history, and it's because they're so smart! They're actually starting to say that ravens may be the most intelligent animal on the planet. They've always thought it was maybe chimpanzees or dolphins, and so zoologists like to make arguments. But one of the biggest arguments for ravens is that they employ logic. They're able to utilize tools. We see that they'll do things like when a raven sees some food that it's going to eat and other ravens are coming, it'll play dead next to the food so that other ravens think there's a predator around and they'll kind of leave. And then when they're gone, they'll start eating. Ravens will do things like rock climbers say if you start climbing towards a raven's nest, the raven will start to push off rocks, very dangerous, to protect its nest from this guy who's climbing up the wall towards their nest. Ravens do things like they'll pull on the fishing line from guys who are like ice fishing. Instead of going for the thing in the water, they actually pull on the string like this to get whatever bait or thing is on the end of the line to eat the food. And one of my favorite things about ravens is that they're famous for playing in the snow. So if it snows outside ravens will roll down the snow.

Loved Like a Raven

They used to think oh this is some process for cleaning or for their muscles. And now zoologists are plainly like no they're just playing. They're literally playing in the snow because they're just having fun. Ravens do stuff like have teenage years, so when ravens get into their teenage years, their stress levels go up and they get all hormonal and they get into little groups and gangs and then they become monogamous with the partner that they mate with. And so there are all these amazing things about ravens. But one of the things they're most famous for is being mischievous. I saw a YouTube video of a guy who had a raven as a pet, and he said don't get a raven as a pet: he's going to drive you crazy. And there's this raven on his shoulder named Bill, and he's like I love Bill to death, but Bill drives me crazy. For example, Bill will go through his wallet and like pull this guy's driver's license and only the drivers license and then hide it, or tear it up. He'll do things like peck on his shoulder. Ravens can be trained to talk better than parrots. I saw this guy train his raven to say nevermore. It sounded like a man, it was freaky. Anyway. So ravens are mischievous and they're brilliant, and they're sort of all always teasing and playing with humans. And for this reason, I think, ravens are probably one of, if they're not one of the, they're the most hated bird in antiquity. When you read history and culture, people just seem to hate ravens. And one of the things we forget is Jesus' audience they're outside all the time. They have houses, but they're not insulated and air conditioned the way ours are. Many people are agricultural or they travel on horseback, and so they live with these birds and they know the difference between a dove and a raven and an eagle, and these images work really well. For those of us in the modern world who aren't around these birds as much, we forget that this is an important thing when we read raven in the Bible, this agricultural people, they're seeing some of these attributes. So ravens, because of their mischievousness and other things, they're one of the most hated birds. Of course we can't forget the famous Edgar Allen Poe poem with the raven that helps a young man descend into his slow fall into madness by saying 'nevermore!' over and over. Incidentally today is Edgar Allen Poe's birthday, did you know that? I didn't know that. I mean I planned this sermon a few days ago, but I saw it on Twitter this morning – he'd be 220-something. Anyway. In Greek mythology they say that the raven was originally a white bird, and he was the pet of Apollo. And Apollo sent a raven to go spy on either his lover or wife Coronis to see if she was having an affair. The bird goes and finds that Coronis is having this affair, and then he comes back as a white raven and tells Apollo, yes sorry bro, she's cheating on you. And in his wrath, Apollo turns the white bird black – scorches him with fire, and that's how the raven became black. And ever since then in Greek mythology, the raven then becomes a symbol of a bad oracle; that old saying dark wings, dark news; this idea that the raven brings something bad with it. Its prophetic. Its Apollo telling us. And this imagery works its way into the Roman Empire. Of course even in the Hebrew Bible, it says that the raven shall be detestable to you in Leviticus. Now what God is saying it's not that the raven is detestable, but that the raven is detestable to eat. I am, too. Right? People are detestable to eat. So it doesn't mean it's gross. Did you guys catch that? Maybe I didn't catch that. Its detestable in that you're not supposed to eat it. All right. Anyway, forget it. So they had this view that ravens are detestable and bad, etc., okay? But then Jesus uses this raven to say God loves the raven; God provides for the raven; God cares for the raven. How much more is He going to care for you? Okay. That brings us to our passage. Now I've taught on the Matthew version of this a lot, but we're going to look at Luke because in this version, this is where Jesus uses the word raven. It says in Luke chapter 12, verse 22, that Jesus said to His disciples, "therefore I tell you do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear, for your life is more than food and your body is more than clothes. Consider the ravens." Everybody says ravens. There it is. When His disciples hear this, there's a boop, boop, boop. He didn't say birds, He didn't say whatever, He said ravens. Consider the ravens. Okay that means think about it. Meditate on it. Take a second and think about ravens. All of us are like what does that mean? I'll show you what it means. Okay? And then He unpacks it. "They do not sow or reap.

Loved Like a Raven

They have no storeroom or barn. Yet God feeds them. How much more valuable are you than birds? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? Consider how the wildflowers grow. They do not labor or spin, yet I tell you not even Solomon," who was considered the wealthiest, richest, coolest guy ever, right? "Not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will He clothe you, you of little faith." This is actually a.. He actually says little faiths. It's like a nickname He has for His disciples; kind of a bad translation there, but anyway. "And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink. Do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all these things." And just say this next part with me. "And your Father knows you need them." Okay now all of this ties together with this last line, okay? If you don't hear this last line, then everything that was said before it is not what Jesus meant. It's all tied together because this is the final bit. "But seek His kingdom and all these things will be given to you." So it's not just a blanket don't worry, don't be afraid, everything's going to sort out, it's don't worry, instead seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be given to you. Jesus is telling us that when things get bad, or when we're worried, we need to look after Him with all our heart, with all our soul, all our strength, and to do what is right. Because when things are going bad, that is when its easiest to make a big life mistake, am I right? Okay. Now again I just want to unpack this a little bit. Jesus uses the word ravens here, and this is so important that we understand, I mean I've said this like a million times, but the Bible is a hyperlinked text, we would say in a modern way. That every time you say raven, you're supposed to think of all the other times it says ravens. I know I've been hammering this but I found a great image by two scholars: Christopher Romheld and Chris Harrison, and they're Bible scholars who were trying to communicate how they found that there's over sixty three thousand cross references that are meaningfully cross referenced in the Bible where a raven, for example, is mentioned in this other place in a similar way. And there are all sorts of software programs like Logos and others that can help you get through this if you're putting a sermon together, but they just wanted to show this is what the Bible looks like in this kind of rainbow picture that this is what it looks like with sixty three thousand, and remember the Jews had the Bible memorized. They had the whole thing in their head so that any kid that was 12 years or under had the first five books of the Bible totally memorized. So anywhere it said ravens, they're going to go boop. Women had Psalms and Proverbs, and a lot of kids had the whole thing. It reminds me of this anybody here have a friend that's a lit person? Literature? See lit people don't have friends. Not one hand! And I'll tell you why they don't have friends. So a lit person, my wife, she got her undergraduate degree in literature at Chapman, and I remember when she was studying there, she invited me to go hear a recording of James Joyce read his famous novel Ulysses, which is considered by some to be the greatest novel of all time. And there's this like grizzled recording from nineteen twenty something, and we're all sitting there and all these lit majors have like all of these things set in their ways. So Ulysses is this book that ties together like on every page some work of novel, something like this, and they're all strung together in a meaningful way for people who understand literature from Shakespeare across, right? And I don't understand any of that stuff. I like nonfiction books. I enjoy novels, I enjoy stuff like Lord of the Rings and stuff that lit people are kind of like oh that's not, you know. So we're sitting there and I can't tell you, I'm not sure I've ever been more bored and annoyed in my life as I'm surrounded by these lit geeks elbowing each other and like oooo, did you catch that? And oooo that's a reference to this, and oh that's that, and that's that. It was so cool for them, Hannah looking at me like ha! That's great, huh? And I'm like about 30-minutes in, I just had to leave. I did not know what was going on. But remember, this is what's happening for the Jews of Jesus' day. When He's preaching these sermons, He's like James Joyce weaving together Ulysses.

Loved Like a Raven

He's pulling all of these deeply meaningful references and stories and creating this incredible revelation of God's life and heart and this is on one part what He's doing with the ravens. Okay. The ravens are a common bird in the Old Testament. Did you know every time a raven is mentioned, its associated with food or provision? Isn't that interesting? Every single time. The two that are most famous: the first is the story of Elijah. Elijah's great. Elijah was considered the prophet of passion, just full of fire and he's called to prophesy against Ahab's sin. Ahab had turned his heart against Yahweh God, and had begin to worship the god Baal, who was the god of rain and thunder and farming and provision, right? So God gets angry because not only is Baal a false god, there's also all of this evil stuff, like human sacrifice and violence and things. So Elijah prophesy's against Ahab and says Ahab you've turned your heart against God, and it will not rain. In other words to say your god is false. It will not rain until I say it will. And then flees, right, because he doesn't want to die. We think about this, if it's not going to rain at all, it's not just bad news for Ahab, it's bad news for everybody, right? Everybody's farms are going to struggle. Elijah's not going to be able to eat. So he runs out into the wilderness to save his life, and God says I'm going to provide for you with the ravens. And what the ravens begin to do, the Mishnah tells us that these ravens actually fly into Ahab's private stash. So these are the best meats, the best cheeses, the best breads, and they steal away this food and bring it to the prophet Elijah. In other words, for Elijah, what should have been a time of lack, of no food, of constantly going hungry, he's eating better than he ever has in his life! He's eating the king's food! I like to imagine the king's men getting so frustrated with these ravens, too, setting traps, and the ravens using little sticks. So the point is this. The point is this: that in the season of lack for the king is the season of abundance for the prophet. Right? You think Ahab, when he hears he's not going to have food, he's not probably too worried about it because he's got this stash, but God steals away that food to give it to the man of God. It's important that Jesus is showing us maybe in His sermon about consider or meditate on or remember the ravens that they're going to think about the times in which the ravens brought this choice great food to Elijah, provided for him when everybody else was hungry. Maybe Jesus was saying this is the kind of God we serve! A God with a sense of humor! A God who loves to provide for us when we're going through hard times. Okay, and I want you to know look maybe you're going through something right now, and maybe you're just scatter brained and you're stressed out and you're angry and you can't sleep and you're frustrated, I want you to know I believe we serve the kind of God that if we focus on doing what is right and we turn our heart to Him completely, that He'll get us through. Sometimes He can turn our deserts into times of incredible, just incredible fulfillment and life and provision. Okay. The second famous raven reference for the Jew is from the book of Job. I wish I had more time to unpack Job. It's an amazing work. But first let me say about Job, that Job may be more of a parable than a historic passage. The reason I say that is because of the way it's written. Job is a Gentile, actually, not an Israelite, and the three friends that talk to him are from three different nations that represent the three greatest philosophical views of the day. And so it could have been more like meant to be read like the Good Samaritan, or another of Jesus' famous parables. And the reason that can stand it because the story begins with this very weird thing where God and Satan are talking to each other, and setting a wager. Okay so take it or leave it, but this is how it goes. Satan and God are talking to each other, and Satan looks at God and says I noticed your man Job down there. He is totally righteous, and totally good. And God looks at Satan and says yes, he's never done anything wrong. And Satan says to God, the only reason he's a good person is because nothing is hard in his life. And God says no, it's the other way around. Because he's a good person, because he's righteous and perfect in all my ways, I provide for him and I give him all he needs. And Satan says you take that stuff away. You let me at him. You let me hurt him and you watch that he's a fake. He doesn't care about what's good, he doesn't care about you, all he cares about is the stuff you've given him. And so in the story, God says all right. Have at him.

Loved Like a Raven

Now this disagrees from what we know about God. Again, this is why I think it might be a parable, but what you're really supposed to see is Job through this process. So Job just loses everything, he's a wealthy man, loses his business, gets sick, loses his family. There's this time where he's got boils and he's using clay scraps to sort of get the boils off of his skin, and while he's doing this, his wife famously looks at him and she says how can you still love God after all this? She says curse God and die. Do you ever feel that way? You ever feel like I've done nothing wrong, I've sought after God and I'm going through this? And there's this part of you that wants to curse God and die, just give up and just quit. Anyway, he continues to go through this horrible time, and he has this discussion with his three friends, and I want you to hear this, this is so important. The main question Job and others ask over and over and over is why is this happening? Why is this happening to me? And you want to know something? On purpose the book of Job never answers the question. Maybe it's not a good question to ask, even though all of us ask it. Why is this happening? Why is this happening? And at the end of the Bible, God speaks to Job, I think in a cloud or something, and begins to speak to him and gives this speech, not about why it's happening, but about how great God is, how much he knows, and how the universe is in a way so much bigger than Job, and how God's purpose is always to move the timeline of the universe towards what is just, good and right. God begins to talk about all the great things that He can do, effectively saying Job just trust me, trust me, trust me, trust me, Job. Trust me through this. Trust me through this. Meanwhile, Job is just at the lowest point ever. And the end of chapter 38, which all these kids would have had memorized, finishes with this line: who provides for the raven? Oh the raven, you catch it? "Who provides for the raven when its young cry out to God, and wander about for lack of food?" I mean everybody's going to be thinking this. God says even the raven who so many people hate, I love the raven and I will provide for him. If I provide for the raven, how much more will I provide for you, Job? And Job famously, when he's going through it, he says "though he slay me, yet I will trust in Him." And of course you probably know that at the end of the story, God doubles everything Job had and restores everything in Job's life. And this is God's way of saying when you're going through difficult times, don't dwell on the why, dwell on the what. What is the next right thing for me to do? Do that, get through, and you'll have what you need. I think the message of Job is this: when we're going through really tough times like that, like the death of a loved one, or a horrible sickness, or we've lost everything, you really have two positions that you can take. The first is curse God and die, and many of us do that. Or the second is just utter and deliberate crazy trust in God. "Thou he slay me, I will trust in Him." Maybe you're there now and I want to tell you continue to seek first the kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. You will cross the finish line when you need to get there. I remember back at the Crystal Cathedral we had a statue of Job that was the best statue on the campus, and it had that written on the side. This was for sure the best statue and people loved it. I think one reason I loved it so much, you may not know this, but they used me as the model for the making of Job. So I really got to meditate on it. But I always remember that line on the left there: "Thou he slay me, yet will I trust Him." I always thought such a beautiful line. Just total reckless crazy trust in God. That warms God's heart. When you're going through really hard times, you're like I trust you, God. I don't get any of this, I don't know why, I can't know why. I trust you. Everybody's telling me curse God and die. Everybody's telling me other stuff. I trust you. I love you. I'm seeking after you. And I think part of referencing Job for Jesus was telling His disciples you're going to suffer like Job, and they did. You're going to go through hard times. You're going to be rejected, you're going to be lied about, some of you are going to be tortured, but it's going to be worth it. I don't think any of us in this room will have to go through any of those things, but I think that suffering is a part of life and that part of the message of Job is that we live in an amazing world, but it doesn't protect us from suffering. But we serve the kind of God that can turn around any tragedy and can restore anything that's been lost. Okay, my last thought, I'll wrap it up.

Loved Like a Raven

My final thought is this: God loves the raven. As much as everybody hates the raven, God really does love the raven and provides for the raven. This says "I just cawed to say I love you." I think that there is a raven type personality; maybe I'm that type of a person. It's the mischievous questioner, challenger of the institution that oftentimes doesn't feel welcome in a religious environment. It's the one who is always pushy but man I think the prophets were that way. I think Jesus was that way. And I think there's something special to say about the raven, the sort of intellectual who likes to ask question that really makes the bureaucratic religious person, or the bureaucratic political person feel uncomfortable. I like that person. I think God loves that person, too, and maybe you've felt unwelcome in the past, I want you to know that God does a lot through people like that, and He can do a lot through you. If you're that type of raven person, number one: stay humble. It's easy to become arrogant or self important when you're like the raven. And number two: remember to just always do what's right. That even when you're questioning things about faith or philosophies or things like this, and you're going deep, still just do what's right. You'll never regret doing what is right. And maybe I'll just finish with this. In honor of Dr. King: he said the time is always right to do what is right. Is that there were a lot of people who knew what was right, but didn't have the courage to do it now. And I want to encourage you in your life, there are going to be times when it's going to be more convenient to do the right thing a little bit later. Just do it now. You'll be glad you did. Now is always the right time to do the right thing, amen.