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WELCOME – Bobby Schuller & Hannah Schuller

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

HS: Welcome visitors, welcome church family. We are so happy to have you here. Remember today that faith in God includes faith in His timing. You can trust Him. Thank you so much for being here. You're so loved.

BS: And we really are so glad you're here, and all of you in the church, man, we're just so glad that you've, on a rainy day, you know for Californians, it might as well be war outside and you went through the enemy lines to make it to church. It is actually interesting because rain in Israel is considered a great blessing from God, and I think we actually maybe do feel that way here in California. Always grateful, whether or not we have water problems, we just feel thankful, so it's a reminder of God's blessing and life and goodness to us, and let's begin this morning with a word of prayer: Father, we thank you that you love us, and I pray in Jesus' name that with everything that we're doing here today, that the main thing, Lord, that you would be glorified. We want you to know that we love you with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength. And we ask, God, I ask as a pastor of this church, that every single person would leave here with like a full tank, just full of energy, full of joy and life, that we leave encouraged. And Lord we love you and we thank you so much, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen. HS: Amen. Turn around and shake the hand of the person next to you and say God loves you and so do I.

SCRIPTURE – Matthew 10,26-30 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, Matthew 10:26: So do not be afraid of them for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight. What is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Church family, we can let go of fear because we belong to the living God. Amen.

INTERVIEW – Kirk Douglas (KD) with Robert H. Schuller (RHS)

In honor of our 50th year on television, here's Kirk Douglas.

RHS: My guest this morning is one of the giants of the greatest times of Hollywood, Kirk Douglas. In six decades since he took to the stage and screen, Kirk Douglas has starred in 83 films, nine plays, breaking Hollywood's notorious blacklist in the 1950's. He's written eight books, made a remarkable commitment to humanitarian causes throughout the world. Kirk Douglas is a legend in his own time and serves as an inspiration to us all. Now in his new book My Stroke of Luck, and isn't that a positive spin in a title? His vivid and very personal reflection upon his extraordinary life, Kirk Douglas shares his story by offering a candid and heartfelt memoir of where it all went right, revealing not only the incredible physical and emotional toil of this debilitating stroke, but how it has changed his life for the better. Welcome.

His Eye is on the Sparrow

KD: Thank you, thank you very much.

RHS: Most people say stroke is just a negative event, but you've turned it into a positive event. Why did you title the book My Stroke of Luck?

KD: You know, when you.. you see I was so self-centered. For a big part of my life, I would make one movie after another, thinking it's always of some fictional character. And when these things happened to me culminated in my stroke, it made me take some self inventory. And another thought, I think that my stroke me a better person. I learned how to deal with depression. So I began to think when you have a depression, think of other people. Try to help other people. It may not take away your depression, but it would relieve your depression. And so my book My Stroke of Luck made me a better person. I began to really believe in God. I began to think yes you've always prayed to God, sometimes the answer is no But God would help you. And I learned, Dr. Schuller, one prayer that I say every day: God, how do we find you? How do we know you? You are as close to us as breathing, yet you are farther than the farther most star. You are mysterious, and yet, as familiar as the rays of the sun. We try to find you, amen. And that prayer has helped me. So that's why my book is called My Stroke of Luck because I realized that anything that happens to you in life could be worse. Here I am, I have been invited to speak to you, so life is not so bad.

RHS: I've never imagined that Spartacus could become so spiritual. You are wonderful. I want to say to the people here: his honesty and his humility stands out beautifully. And you read about his faith in God, page 159: Medieval rabbi once explained prayer with a parable. When we pray, he said, we think we're changing God. Think of a man in a rowboat who's pulling himself to shore. Someone who doesn't know what's going on, it might appear that he's pulling the shore closer to himself. Similarly, when we pray, it may appear that we're trying to pull God closer to us, but we are really pulling ourselves close to God. Beautiful.

KD: Yes.

RHS: And people are talking about you. They love you, Kirk Douglas. They respect you, Kirk Douglas, and they are very thankful to you for sharing openly the blossoming, blooming, beautiful faith in God. You've had it since a child, it's gone through phases, does for all of us, but it's never shone more beautifully than in this time, and you've never expressed it more beautifully in this book, and I thank you.

KD: Thank you. Thank you very much.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving from the Lord. We're going to 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.

Bobby talks about Kirk Douglas Segment

For those of you who are watching on television, you might have seen in our introduction a brief thing about Kirk Douglas, who was an interview guest on this program, and he passed away recently, and so we kind of did that to honor his life. Lived a long.. I think he was 103, so that's why that's there.

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "His Eye is on the Sparrow"

Well today we're continuing our bird series. Yes! Yes! Birds! Birds are a big deal in the Bible, and trees are a big deal in the Bible, but I think I'm going to wait on the tree thing till next year because you can only take so many of a certain type of.. anyway. Okay, so today we're continuing on birds and we're going to talk about sparrows today, and that's apropos because we are doing our sparrows offer. Now I know that we.. it probably gets old how much we ask for money on television, and I feel a little embarrassed about that sometimes.

His Eye is on the Sparrow

The reason we ask for money is because TV is expensive, and we have to buy airtime, so we're like PBS or anything else. And one of the things we do with the Sparrows Club is we're actually just asking people to give \$20 a month if this show means something, if it's a meaningful thing. And what that helps us do is sort of know what money is coming in and what's not. Charities really struggle because they tend to have ebbs and flows, feast and famine, and ideally in an organization you sort of have a little bit more of a steady eddy flow. But no matter who you are, if you've given at all to this ministry, we're just very, very thankful for you. But anyway, if you're wondering why sparrows today and not some other days, it because we're launching Sparrows Club and that's exciting. So we love our sparrows. A sparrow is an important bird in the Bible. Its mentioned 40 times in the Old Testament, and it's almost always a symbol of God's love and protection for the innocent; for children; the elderly. People with special needs. People who maybe are struggling with an illness and they can't get out of the house as much as they'd like to. Jesus tells us on a regular basis that such is the kingdom of God. That in the kingdom of God, the last shall be first and the first shall be last. And He shows us that some of the most powerful people in the world can be the sparrow type person. In our world, in America, we're always looking for the next sort of Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great type figure, but God is always looking for what? His eye is on the what? (AUDIENCE RESPONDS: sparrow) It's on the sparrow. He's looking for the innocent, the little ones, the ones who are overlooked to do great things in His kingdom. And so we're going to talk about that today, that God loves the little sparrow. And for the Jewish audience in Jesus' day, this is a hyperlink to Psalm 84. In other words when they hear sparrow or swallow, they think of a very famous Psalm – Psalm 84, and you probably, if you like Matt Redman, and I know you do, then you know Psalm 84. So Jesus mentions the sparrow in the famous sending out of the 12 and the sending out of the 70, and I did this tangent last service; I swore I wouldn't do it again. I'm breaking my oath. There's a lot of debate about whether or not Jesus had 70 disciples or 72 disciples, and to me it is so clear that there are 70. Numbers are really, really important in the Bible. If it says a few or many, that's for a reason. If it says 70 or 12 or 10 or 7 or 6 or 3, that means something. It's important. First, why did Jesus choose 12, does anybody want to guess? Why are there 12 disciples and not 11 or 13? Twelve tribes of Israel! Exactly. You guys are good. Twelve tribes of Israel. Jesus is painting Himself as Abraham or Moses, so Moses to the 12 tribes – a leader of the 12 tribes of Israel. So why then would He pick 70 other disciples in that sort of outer circle? So 70 is an important number in the Bible, but after Noah, there are 70 nations and 70 languages which are represented. So it sort of means the whole world. When Moses goes on to the mountaintop, he pulls together 70 elders who are going to rule over the people. Later on when the Sanhedrin is put together, there are 70 judges that are put in place after Moses. And 70's just a very common number. Seventy names for God in the Bible, Jerusalem is mentioned 70 times in the Bible, there were 70 days in the Babylonian exile, Jacob had 70 family members that were with him when he went into Egypt. Why is all of this important? It's not. I just went on a tangent and I thought you'd find it interesting that there's 70, not 72, because it makes sense. It is important in the sense that Jesus is saying something about Himself. By picking 70, He's saying I'm going to the whole world. By picking 12, He's saying I'm going to Israel. And He is very much pitting Himself as Moses. This is really important. Jesus didn't just come to save us from our sins, and He did. He also came to make disciples. He wants to save us from our sins today from the destruction of sin that happens in our life today. He wants us to see that living a Jesus kind of life is the most joyful, peaceful amazing life you can live, and that's a promise to you. Remember what He says: anyone who hears these words of mine is like someone who built their house on the rock. Anyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice. And anyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like someone who built their house on the sand. Jesus actually wants us to become like Him and do what He said to do, not just for moralistic reasons but because He loves us, because its wisdom.

His Eye is on the Sparrow

Because it'll bless our lives. Okay, I'm losing everybody. Numbers, discipleship, tell a story for goodness sake. All right. I'll tell you a story. Jesus pulls together His 12 disciples, and who can remember their ages? They were what? Teenagers. They were kids. Jesus was about 33 to 35 so He'd be a little younger than I am – I'm 38. I think I'm 38. Yes, 38. And He was maybe 33 to 35. It would be like if I brought up the youth group, the junior high and high schoolers, and I brought them up here and I said kids guess what, I'm sending you out like sheep among wolves. You're going to go two by two and you're going to go raise the dead and cast out demons. This is what it was like for Jesus' disciples, who were probably between the ages of 14 and 25, in that range, so maybe early college, or late college. Anyway. And as a disciple, they have signed up to become like the rabbi. They're supposed to look like Him, talk like Him, think like Him, do what He does, mimic Him, tell His jokes. If He was left-handed, they'd have to write left-handed. When they walk behind them, they literally try and put their feet in His footsteps because their goal is to take on His yoke, which means to take on His interpretation and become just like Him. And now they've been with Him for awhile, they're learning His lessons, there's teaching, they're memorizing things, they're getting His lunch, they're spending time with Him. But now He's like okay it's time to level up, guys. You're going to do something scary that's going to show you how awesome God in your life is. He's looking at sparrows and showing them that they're about to become lions or eagles or something powerful. Now remember, these kids, I had a church history professor who said the average person in their lifetime before the industrial revolution pretty much everywhere, never left about 14 miles from the place they were born in their whole lives. Isn't that amazing? I mean think about that. And now Jesus is telling them like you're going to be going to all these places, and you're going to be in dangerous situations, and you're probably going to get beat up a little bit. And this is what happens, okay? Now before I keep going, I want to walk about smicha again. And I was talking to Hannah about this last night in bed, because I go over my sermon in bed. We're in our PJ's and we're thinking about the next day. And I decided I'm not going to talk about smicha because last time that put everyone to sleep. But then I did it this morning and it went over pretty good and so we're gonna do it again. I want you to learn what smicha is because it's such an important part of the New Testament, and it informs what we're about to read. Okay. In Jesus' day, there are two types of rabbis. Ninety-nine percent of rabbis are called teachers of the law, or Torah teachers, all right? Everybody listening? So almost every type of rabbi is called a what? (AUDIENCE RESPONDS – Torah) Torah teacher, good, yes! Yes! Every once in awhile there would be a special kind of rabbi that had smicha. Everybody say smicha. (AUDIENCE RESPONDS – Smicha) Got to get it.. smicha. Unless you're German, it's hard to do. Smicha. Reinhold. Smicha. It's the same thing. All right. Smicha – today it means ordination. It's kind of like leaning or the laying on of hands, but the short version is essentially this that there are some rabbis with smicha, and those rabbis are different than the Torah teachers or the teachers of the law. They have effectively two things that makes them different. Yes, they're Torah teachers, but on one hand they actually perform miracles. Now there are rabbis the 500 years before Jesus that performed miracles; that heal the sick that cast out demons. Did you know that? I was surprised to learn that, actually, in seminary. That every once in awhile you'd have a John the Baptist type person. John the Baptist had smicha, and probably performed miracles, in a way. He was considered a prophet like Elijah, would do these amazing things. And that was smicha. So on one hand its effectively miracle working power, okay? The other thing that it is is the ability to bind and loose. So binding and loosing in a Jewish context means that you can make moral claims about society with moral problems that are not directly tackled by scripture. One example would be cocaine or heroin. Heroin is not mentioned in the Bible, right? But if you came to me and said as a Christian, can I do heroin? I could say based on the Bible, loosely based on the Bible texts about caring for yourself and loving your neighbor, or texts about not getting drunk and things like this, I could say with authority, no, you can't do heroin. That's a sin, right?

His Eye is on the Sparrow

Probably everybody in this room would agree that that would be an appropriate thing to do. But what I would effectively be doing as a minister would be binding and loosing – making a new rule that solves a moral problem for today. This is what Jesus is doing when He says you have heard that it was said, yada, yada, yada, but I say, right? The word for smicha that we see in the gospels is the word authority. This is really important because this word appears a lot in the gospels. Every time you see this word “authority” in the gospels, think smicha. Where did you get your smicha, right? By what smicha are you doing this? And this is so important. Remember what they say about Jesus? He didn’t teach like the Torah teachers taught, but He taught as one having (AUDIENCE – smicha) smicha. And by the way, I think, this is Bobby talking now, that for the first century Jewish mind, it wasn’t just the miracles that made people think Jesus was the Messiah, it was His teaching. It was His wisdom. There was something that would shake in the bones of people when they heard Jesus speak that at the very least they would say He is a prophet. Like at the end of the Sermon the Mount, it just says that the people marveled at His teaching. It’s almost like when He was done, people who love education, love studying, love the word of God, love reading, when He finished speaking, they were all just utterly at awe with what He said, because He taught with someone who had authority. Okay, this is important because in Matthew chapter 10 and Luke 9 and 10, which mirrors this story, Jesus says to His disciples: I am giving you authority. What is He giving them? (AUDIENCE – smicha) He’s giving them the power to bind and loose, and He’s giving them miracle working power. Okay? In a Jewish context. And He’s saying to these teenagers, I want you to go to these different cities and places, and you’re not going to bring anything with you. Like just bring what you’re wearing. Don’t bring any gold, like a purse or anything, don’t bring a sword, don’t bring a bunch of extra stuff. And you want to find a home of peace, or a person of peace, depending which text you’re reading. You want to find a place that you can sort of stay in, and while you’re in that town, I want you to proclaim the coming of the kingdom of God, and I want you to heal the sick and raise the dead and cleanse the lepers and cast out demons. And then as I read the story, I sort of feel like these kids are all standing there and they’re looking at the rabbi Jesus, whom they love and they’re never supposed to really leave Him, and they’re like are you coming? They’re nervous, they’re feeling worried, they’re like is God really going to help us? Jesus says to them no student is above his teacher; no servant is above his or her master, it’s enough to become like the teacher. It’s enough to be like the rabbi. In other words, He’s saying remember as my disciple, you’re supposed to do what I do. You’re supposed to be like me. You’re supposed to go where I would go. That’s a message to us, by the way. That God has called us to do great things. And in John, it’ll even say greater things. Okay. So they’re a little nervous. And this reminds me, by the way, of stories I’ve heard of people in ministry. Hannah and I used to go on missionary trips with an organization called Teen Mania. And they had this program of interns, most of them were like young college students: 18/19 years old, and they would be committing maybe a year, two years of their life, I don’t remember all the details, but as a part of their training, they would send these kids out somewhere in Dallas, and they would go out with nothing for days, and they would bring a cross with them, and they would just rely on the kindness of people to give them meals and water and shelter. And at the time, that sounded utterly crazy to me. Today, I’ve heard enough stories to know that, I don’t know, there was probably something really good about that. And when you met these kids later, at the time they were older than I was, but when you met these 18/19 year olds, the miracle stories and the power and the testimonies you heard were profound. We could all think of ways in which God provides for people in ministry. I remember there was this guy Keith Wheeler who also carries a cross around, and one time he told us this story, and I’m going to get it wrong, but he was like super thirsty, he was in the middle of a desert, and he was like I want a Cactus Cooler. And like 30 minutes later, a guy at a stop sign was like ‘hey, I got a Cactus Cooler, do you want one?’ He said yes.

His Eye is on the Sparrow

There was another time, I remember my grandma Persley and her family, she talks about how when she was a kid during the Great Depression in the 1930's, her father was a minister and they didn't have a salary. They relied a hundred percent on people in their congregation giving a portion of their food. And so whatever would show up on the door in the morning, would be whatever it was that they were going to eat. And if there was nothing there, they wouldn't eat anything, or they would have to sort it out. So it would be bread, or whatever, rice and things. And I remember she talks about how she was like maybe, I don't remember, eight or nine or something, and she said to her family 'I want bananas.' Now you may not know this, but bananas don't grow well in the Ozarks of Missouri. It's not likely to get bananas, and she just said 'I want bananas.' And she said her brothers and sisters, they just teased her like crazy over that. That it's so silly that she wanted a banana, or if she prayed for a banana or something like that. And the next morning a sack of bananas showed up on the door and they have no idea who it was from. This is a His eye is on the sparrow kind of story. There's something about the innocent, the children, those who seem forgotten or overlooked. That God just loves to do something special for them. Okay. So Jesus is telling them, you're going to go out and you're not going to bring anything with you, and He actually says I'm sending.. you can tell they're worried in the story, and He says to them I'm sending you like sheep among wolves! And they're like thrills, okay. He's saying you're going to get beat up, there are going to be some people that reject you, and some places you're going to be imprisoned, and other places you're going to be brought into a courthouse. But when that happens, don't worry, I'm going to send my Holy Spirit to give you the words that you need to say. And when I hear this, 'I'm sending you like sheep among wolves,' it makes me think of this movie Lambert the Sheepish Lion. Do you remember that? Our kids, they love to watch these old Disney propaganda films, and that's exactly what they are. Disney was putting out in the 1940's propaganda films, where you have like Hitler and Mussolini marching along, and then an eagle, bald eagle comes along and beats him up or something. It's these kind of films. Well one of them was this movie called, a little bit after that era, I think, called Lambert the Sheepish Lion. And it goes like this. In Lambert the Sheepish Lion, there's a stork who delivers lambs, little babies to the sheep mothers, the ewes. And he flies down and he's got this like little pillowcase that's like full of little babies, and he says to those little lambs, go to your mothers. Go pick a lamb or go pick a sheep and whichever one you like, that's your mother. So you have this like sheep that's in the front that's all excited, she wants to be a mother, and all of the little lambs bounce past her, and she's all alone. And so she has a little tear in her eye because she doesn't get to be a mother. She goes and kind of puts her head down with a little single tear. But then you see inside that storks pillowcase thing, a little yellow ball, and as it unrolls, it's a little baby lion cub. And he's looking around, kind of dopey, and he pounces along to this ewe sheep that nobody picked, this mother, and instantly they bond. And the stork tries to take the little baby lion back because he got the order wrong, and then the ewe chases him away. Anyway, Lambert then grows up and as Lambert is growing up, he is the loser of the group. Everybody makes fun of him, he's super cowardly and embarrassed, he can't baaa right, he's not good at charging, and as the story goes on, he turns into this like gigantic muscular long-toothed scary lion with a sheepish grin, they say. And all the sheep, they love to tease him and bug him, and he's just this cowardly lion. Well in the story comes along a wolf who attacks the flock, and they all scatter, and he goes after Lambert's mom, and she's on the edge of a cliff and there's this thing where the wolf is like nudging closer and closer to his mom, and she's going "Lambert! Lambert!" And he's looking for someone to help because he's a coward. He doesn't think he can do anything. He's like help my mom! Someone help my mom! And then she goes "Lambert!" and the narrator says then all of a sudden something in Lambert snapped! And he just, you know, his eyes do the weird twirl like thing, and he goes (ROARS) this giant thing, and the wolf runs away and he realizes he's a lion. Okay. You guys know one, right? (SINGS – Lambert, the sheepish lion). Okay we're going.. move on.

His Eye is on the Sparrow

I think Jesus in this story is effectively helping His disciples see what they've been given! That they are not sheep among wolves. That there is something really special inside of them. And there's something about life that when we go through really difficult, really scary, high pressure situations, sometimes it destroys us, or sometimes it brings out the lion that has been sleeping within us. And that is what Jesus wants these kids to see that His plan for them is bigger than just being moral teachers. He's looking for world changers, people that are going to do miracles that are going to change the whole face of the Roman Empire, and all of history. And they will! He's looking at the future of the world. He's looking at the 12 apostles, but they're just kids. And so what happens when they go out. When they come back, they're just like amazed. And they're coming back with bumps and bruises and black eyes and busted ribs and cut lips, but they're fine. Jesus says to them don't be afraid of those who can destroy the body but not the soul. Be afraid of the one who can destroy the body AND the soul, right? God's on your side. And so before He sends them out, one – I think the sheep among wolves is Him effectively saying that you're going to see what you have. But two – in comforting them, He says to them, don't worry. Don't worry, you're going to be okay. Maybe you need to hear this today. Don't worry. There is not one sparrow that falls without falling in the care of the Father. He sees it all. He knows the numbers of hair on your head, no matter who you are. Some of you have more than others. More hair.. Hannah told me not to make a bald joke and I did it anyway. I'm sorry, Hannah. You're right. No, but really, God knows. The point of saying He knows the number of hairs on your head, that not even a sparrow falls, is that we think God doesn't care about the little things that are bugging us in our life. He does. He cares a lot. He knows a lot about even stuff that we think is stupid, like how many hairs there are on my head. This is a link, by the way, to Psalm 84. So when He says the sparrow or the swallow, every Jew is going to be thinking of the very famous hymn Psalm 84 – about God's protection for the innocent. "How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty. My soul yearns, my soul faints for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow" even the what? (AUDIENCE – sparrow) that's it. "Even the sparrow has found a home and the swallow a nest for herself where she may have her young, a place near your altar. Lord Almighty, my king and my God, blessed are those who dwell in your house. They are ever praising you." Later, the psalmist will say "better is one day in the house of the Lord than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a door keeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked." So I think what the psalmist is describing, it's almost like he's in the temple, or she's in the temple, and looking up, and they see like a little bird up in the rafters. This is an actual picture of a bird nest in like top of a church. It's kind of too hard to reach. And I think this is what the psalmist is seeing that there's a nest or something with a little sparrow in it, and it's in the holiest place, most special place in the whole world. It's in God's temple, and its left untouched, its left alone, safe and protected. And the psalmist is almost saying like God, this is how you care for every little creature, even the little sparrows that peck at the crumbs around our feet. Sparrows that really aren't worth much to trade. You can't eat much. I mean you'd take a lot of sparrows to get a sparrow meal, wouldn't it. You'd probably get some sparrow popcorn meat but you'd need like at least 20 sparrows but they're so cute, aren't they? That those little innocent cute sparrows. God loves the sparrow. God loves the innocent ones, and He will care for you. And Jesus says to them, whatever you're going through, don't worry, have faith – God will take care of you, whatever you're going through. Towards the end of the gospels, Jesus points out, He says you remember that time where I sent you out and I told you don't bring a sword, don't bring any extra stuff, don't bring extra clothes, don't bring anything and they're like yes, Lord! We remember and we had all this power and it was great. And He said now, bring a sword. Bring some stuff. Bring some money. What's the change? What do we learn from that?

His Eye is on the Sparrow

I think what we learn from that is that God doesn't always want us to be poor and broke and have nothing, but when we go through these seasons of nothing, it's an opportunity to learn that He who has a cattle on a thousand hills is going to find a way to provide for us and get us through whatever needs we're in and that those are opportunities to grow in our kingdom power for God. And it requires faith. Okay. Just as closing thoughts, just two minutes on faith. First of all, faith is a substance like gasoline or wax or sugar. Faith is a thing that you have substantially more or less of. But faith very simply is just like trust. It's trusting something. The Bible says that faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes by the word of God. So the first thing we can do to grow our faith is to understand the word of God, and to understand the whole thing, including the Old Testament. That we understand this whole deal. It takes years to learn the Bible. But as we learn it, and we don't get lazy, it will cause us to grow in life and faith and joy and power. Okay? The second thing is faith also comes by experience. So all of you have faith in your pews, or faith in your sofa, if you're at home, or your chair. And the reason I know that it's because you're all sitting in them. Faith comes by experience. You've sat in chairs and pews before enough times that when you got to your chair, you didn't like check it, you didn't wait for somebody else to sit, you weren't anxious about it, you just sat down because of the experience. You can see this with people who are flying. People who don't fly a lot are very nervous, and people who fly all the time are not nervous. Experience has built their faith in airplanes. And it's true with friends. If you have faith in a friend, it's because you've had experience. In other words, if you want to grow your faith, you need more experience. You need to do things that are scary. You need to do things that stretch you, in a way. You almost want to do the thing that you know is right that's super difficult. The more of those types of things you do, the more your faith tank will fill, I believe. And finally, and if you hear anything I say about faith and about getting through scary and difficult situations, hear this, friends: this idea that you have to face your fears alone, this lone ranger, hero complex that you have to be this super heroic person that's always going at stuff alone may be a western idea. It's not a Biblical idea. Did Jesus send them out one by one? He sent them out two by two for a reason. He didn't want them to face their fears alone. How often when we're worried, anxious and frustrated do we think if I share my fears with others, I'm going to be a burden to them. I'm going to be annoying. Or I have to press this down, right? I have to think about something else. I've just found that when you invite people who love you to walk with you through a scary difficult thing, that most people feel honored by that, and you end up bonding with them, too. So there's like this side benefit to it. So don't feel like God would ever ask you to face your fears alone. He won't and He doesn't because that's not a good thing to ask somebody to do. God put good people around you and in your life so that you don't have to face your fears alone. And maybe if you're at home and you don't have good people in your life, find a church. Plug into a church, a small group, and find friends who want to encourage you and love you and walk with you through your fears and difficult times. You don't ever, ever have to face it alone and that's a good thing about knowing the Lord is He not only connects us to Himself, but to each other. I want you to know that no matter who you are under the sound of my voice, the potential of your life, if you just had faith, is incredible. If you decide that you want to be just like Christ, that you want to be Christ like in everything you do, just watch as you have more experience and study God's word that God will do incredible things in your life. So don't be afraid, keep pressing through, get a friend to help you get through, and I'll be cheering for you as you cross the finish line. Lord, we thank you and we love you. You are for us and not against us. You love us just as we are, and not as we should be. You are merciful and kind and compassionate to your children. You love us as a father or mother loves their child, and we thank you for that, God that we are always in your loving care. That you see as we would look upon a sparrow; innocent and yet you also see an eagle, a lion, Lord you see incredible potential to do great things for your kingdom. And so God we love you, and we thank you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.