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GOOD MORNING/INVOCATION – BS/HS

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

HS: Welcome visitors and church family. Jehovah Tsidkenu – God, the Lord is our righteousness. If you have made Jesus your Lord, you can walk boldly into His presence free of anything that has made you feel less than. You are loved.

BS: We're glad you're with us today, whether you're in the house or watching on TV or online, we're just very, very grateful that in your busy schedule you've taken the time to gather with God's people. And I believe that there's something to be had here, that as you leave, God will give you a word of encouragement, a move from His spirit, and so let's enter into the time today, first and foremost, just to worship God. But second, to also come with an open heart, ready to receive a good gift from Him. Father, we come to you in Jesus' name, and we lay bare before you our hearts and minds. Many of us have troubles and stresses; there's things that are bogging us down. A lot of us don't want to go back to work tomorrow or face the challenges that this week has to bring, and you have a word for us today, God, and I pray that that word would encourage us, and embolden us to be the people you've called us to be. How we love you, Lord, and we thank you, it's in the strong name of Jesus we pray, amen.

HS: Amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – Joshua 5,9-12 - Hannah

In preparation for the message, Joshua 5:9-12. Then the Lord said to Joshua, today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you so the place has been called Gilgal to this day. On the evening of the 14th day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover. The day after the Passover, that very day they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land. There was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year, they ate the produce of Canaan. Amen.

INTERVIEW – Elizabeth Woodson (EW) with Bobby Schuller (BS)

Elizabeth Woodson is an author and Bible teacher who strives to help people grow their faith, and to better understand scripture. Her new book, Embrace Your Life: How to Find Joy When the Life You Have is Not the Life You Hoped For, encourages readers to find joy and a new vision for their life, even in the midst of uncertainty and suffering.

BS: Elizabeth, welcome.

EW: Hello, thanks for having me.

BS: We're grateful to have you here. You're a well-known Bible teacher, and a great thinker, and we're so excited about your book. And one of the things that I really appreciate about this work is your emphasis on joy, even though we struggle a lot of times with worry and anxiety. You're teaching people how to have joy through tough times. Tell us about your journey of faith and sort of what got you to write this book.

EW: I am originally from the East Coast/Midwest, and I grew up in a Christian household and I tell people when I came to faith, I came to faith as a kid at a VBS program with a felt board and a puppet show. When I came to faith, that Jesus is just what we did in my family. It took me awhile to figure out what the gospel meant for myself. And so I went through high school and college and I tell people it was kind of like a dimmer switch went on as I realized the problems in my life, whether I was in college and in bad relationships and making not so great choices, that I realized that the gospel, that Jesus was the only way for me.

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It was during that journey that I found a heart for ministry. I originally have a background in business and that took me to the west side of Chicago, and I was just serving, teaching Sunday school, and I realized I love this, and I love helping people kind of go on the same journey that I have, and so that led me to quit my job, sell my stuff, come down to Dallas, Texas to go to seminary, and have been in ministry ever since. When I think about why I wrote the book, I think about my own season as a single never married, so the book isn't about singleness, but it's about the study of longing. And being a single who's prayed for marriage and hasn't had that answered me affirmative as of yet, and just how I walk through that and find joy in a life, and maybe some of the things I have aren't always the things that I wanted them to be.

BS: Today we're talking actually about that very thing, about when you're in those spaces of life, like when God gives you manna but how to deal with being in an in-between place. When, in your case, you want to be married, but you're still single. Or there's a job you want or a calling you want, but you're still in this season of maybe preparation or discovery. What do you say to people who maybe find themselves in that wilderness time in life, they're feeling anxious, they're feeling worried, they're like God, what's your plan for me.

EW: I tell people the first stop on the journey is just for us to acknowledge that things are hard and for us to be able to lament our pain. I think sometimes we feel like we need to step it down, or we need to make it all pretty for the Lord, but that's not what we see in scripture. We see David, specifically in Psalm 13, lament to God because he feels like God hasn't answered his prayers. God, where are you? You're not doing what you said you were going to do. And what we see through lament, though, is that we find a place of hope. But we got to bring our pain to the Lord first, and then in doing that, we remember the bigness of our God.

BS: A lot of people, a lot of Christians feel like they can't do that, right? Like you're like I can't get mad at God. He's God. I can't be upset at God. He's the boss, right? I have to just shove it down. What do you say to people like that?

EW: I think it's that scripture has so many different examples of the people of God being really honest. Like if you read some of the Psalms of lament, you're like man, it sounds like they're yelling at God. Even when you think about the book of Job. Job is a book of suffering, of suffering that doesn't have easy answers, and for 37 chapters, Job and his friends are really honest, and then God shows up. I think of a book of majority of it is Job being honest about our pain. I think the Lord gave that to us for us to come to Him, but come to Him honest. We don't have to pretty it up for God. He already knows and loves us just the way we are.

BS: Isn't it interesting how Israel doesn't mean one who struggles against evil, or one who struggles with the world. Israel means one who struggles with God. I think it's always so interesting that that's a part of our walk. When was a time in your life; was there ever a time where that lesson really took root for you, where you're like I need to get upset at God about something; I need to bring my broken heart to Him in this way.

EW: I think about a story where I got mad on behalf of another friend of mine; a friend of mine who has a chronic illness. And so she has been suffering with this chronic illness for years upon years upon years. And so just crying out in her behalf, having walked with her through some good seasons and hard seasons, and so it was like Lord why? Like we are praying, we are praying for your healing, we are praying for your deliverance, and it feels like you're not coming through.

And so being honest with my friend, of just where I was at, and was at is I was walking with her through a situation. But even in the midst of that, and being honest, I've seen God do a work in her life. And so I believe that honesty and openness just really provided for both of us in our faith.

BS: I think those experiences, too, can actually build your faith because when you're angry at God, there is a lot of times a lack of faith actually there, and to be like I don't really trust God right now, and that's just how I feel, just to be honest. I think that's a good actually thing to say, and just be like God, I need faith. I need to trust in you again, and I'm really not feeling that. I'm like feeling angry at you. I need to trust your word again; I need to trust that what it says is true for my life. What about anxiety and fear. A lot of people with everything that's going on in the world right now. The news cycle has never been more interesting, in a way. I mean in a bad way, but there's so much going on with Ukraine, with rising inflation. I just saw a farmer saying buy corn, buy wheat, buy coffee, buy the non all perishables. Everything's going to go up. Housing prices are crazy. And there's a lot of stuff that we worry about that's going to impact our personal lives. How does the Bible help us with that, because you're really big on like using the Bible as a tool in your practical in life, right?

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EW: The Bible teaches us who God is. And so for us to remember our situations where we feel powerless, like I remember seasons of my life where it was just hard to pay bills. I didn't know where the next piece of income was going to come from, but I saw God provide. And in those moments of in-between, reading scripture, the entirety of the text, helps us see how God has showed up in the past, and that He is sovereign. He's in control, so in the moments like even right now where we feel powerless and out of control, God isn't powerless and out of control. He is full of power and in control of what's happening. And so scripture teaches us to trust God, even when we don't understand what's happening.

BS: Amen. And He'll bring us through. Elizabeth Woodson, your book is called Embrace your Life. You're a great writer and a great thinker and people should be excited about this book. A lot of people are going to get it, and thank you so much for writing it. We appreciate your time with us.

EW: Thank you.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Would you stand with us? We're going to say this creed together as we do every week. 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. 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. I messed up! With my neighbor. Yes. And that won't be the last time that happens. I changed it last week, if you haven't been here in a while, to neighbor, but we're not going to get into that.. it's just better. All right.

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "The Manna is a Promise of Better Days to Come"

Many of you today are in a season of eating manna. In the wilderness in the Bible, God provides this bread from heaven, and we're going to talk about it later, and it sort of keeps the people alive, but isn't like a great meal. Maybe you're there in your life today, in an in-between wilderness where you're not in slavery anymore, but you're really not in the Promised Land. You find yourself in-between point A and point B, and you're wondering, God, I have this dream, this desire that I feel like you've put in my heart, but I've been waiting so long. When will I be there? That in-between for so many of us can be a scary, uncomfortable time. Sometimes it can be a boring experience and we just want something exciting in our life. But my encouragement to you is today, try and see the manna that God is providing to you as a promise that the Promised Land is coming; that something better is coming for you, my friend. I remember in talking about these in-between things, once when Hannah and I were supposed to go to Seaside Florida for an annual family trip that her parents always throw for everyone; it's a great time, just before that, I was going on these long walks; I still do it often when I prepare my sermon or pray or just enjoy a long walk, and some of them were 10/15 miles, and I started, on some of these walks, to go blind, actually, in half of my vision. I didn't really tell anybody because I'm a dude and men are afraid of doctors, but eventually I was like I need to see the doctor. Actually, Hannah was like you need to see a doctor. I went, and the doctor ran some tests, he asked me some questions, and at the end of it, he said, 'now I don't want you to be afraid, but you might have a brain tumor.' He said 'I need you to go get an MRI done' and I'm like okay. So he hands me this ticket. The next day I went to get an MRI, and they did the whole thing, it's like this big machine they stick you into, and I came out, and then I was like all right, just hit me with it. Do I have a brain tumor or not? And they were like oh I'm just a tech, you got to ask your doctor. And I was like okay, I'll call him right now. And they're like no, no, no, your doctor will let you know in two or three weeks. I go on this vacation with this looming question in the air – do I have a brain tumor? So there I am trying to enjoy the beach with my friends, wondering if this is the last time I'm going to sit out here in this white sandy beach. Everything becomes melodramatic. And every time, the other thing is like every time you have a little headache, you feel a little dizzy, you kind of want to sleep in, you're like is it Joe? Joe the brain tumor doing his thing? I'd named it by the end of the trip, and I got a call and they said, hey we just want you to know you don't have a brain tumor. We're pretty sure you were just dehydrated. Make sure to drink more water. I was like.. I got a new doctor, by the way. But maybe you're there, and maybe the news wasn't so good. Maybe you're waiting to find out what the report is going to look like for your health, or you're not sure. Or maybe you did get a bad report, but you don't know how bad it is, and you find yourself in this like middle place where you're dwelling a lot, meditating a lot on all the bad stuff that could happen. Maybe you find yourself in a more hopeful place, but you're still caught in-between. You applied for a job, or for a college.

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Isn't it fun, those videos that they post of like a young kid who just applied to Harvard or some big university, and they open the email and the family's all around, and they jump up and down, everybody's screaming and celebrating. It's a great feeling, and a lot of that is because that season of waiting – am I going to go to college or not, is over. They have their question answered. Maybe you don't have your question answered yet and you really want that. Maybe you are dating, maybe you're a young person and you're dating, and you want to meet somebody. Maybe you're an old person and you're dating and you want to meet somebody. Maybe you're recently divorced or widowed or for whatever reason, you want to meet somebody and you're discovering that dating isn't what it used to be. Used to be a guy goes and asks a gal for her phone number, and he takes her out, and they go on a few dates and they get married. It's just not like that anymore. That's a hilarious thing because if you're dating today, like Hannah and I, we got married when we were 21. We were super young. And we've been married for 20 years now, no not 20, we've been together 20 years. What is it.. oh, I'm in trouble. I think we're both doing the math; we're not sure. It's going to be 19 in May. I just can't imagine having to date today. My heart goes out to you. There are a million apps, there are all sorts of ways you can date, there are all sorts of ways you can meet people, but in a weird way, people have become less social, even before COVID this was true. PEW actually did a study recently that said 44% of people who are dating say that it's getting much harder to date. That it's just harder to meet somebody. Maybe you're there. You're in that in-between place, and you're like I want to meet a person. I don't want to be alone. I want to have somebody to do life with. That's a rough place to be. And then finally, in general, so many of us have a sort of in-betweenness in whatever point this is in history. You know what I mean? COVID was a whole in-between phase. What's going to happen with COVID? Now we have rising inflation, we have all these worries about prices, housing. In our organizations where we have assets that need to be invested, or we have big decisions that are critical to our organizations and ministries. We find ourselves constantly asking the question – I wish I had a crystal ball. I've heard that question so many times. Heck, I've said it a million times! I wish I had a crystal ball! If only. But these are the times when God says to us that we ought to depend on His character more than ours. We ought to depend on His words more than the words that we hear in society or from our neighbor. In short, it's a time in which faith is so important because we know that we serve a good God who'll get us where we need to go. And the encouragement to you, my friend, is to be here, right here, right now in this moment that God's given you, and to relax and trust Him in the in-between place that you're in. Let the manna that God is giving you now be a promise that better things are yet to come. I have a good friend, Rich Mouw, who's preached here before, is a former president of Fuller Seminary. Pray for him. He actually just had a stroke a few days ago, and pray with us as we ask the Lord to heal him. But I remember in a sermon he gave here not long ago, he said this silly thing that I don't understand for people who read novels, but when he reads a novel, and he starts to get worried about the protagonist or about the situation, he goes to the last page of the book and reads, just to figure it. Oh good, they got together. Oh good, he lived, or whatever. And then he can go back to chapter three or chapter four and read his book in a more relaxed posture. And what he said was I have a book like that about your life. I have a book like that, and I've read the last page of your life, and I don't know everything that's in-between, but I can tell you this: the last page of your story is good. You can trust in the faithfulness of God in Christ Jesus, that the Holy Spirit is doing a good work in your life today. Let's believe it together. Let's stir up our faith this morning or this evening, and trust that God's going to carry us through. That His word is true. Some of you in here are big Avengers fans. You can join me and Haven in that club. The super hero movies, a lot of you hate it, and I don't blame you. They are a little corny, but I really do like them; I'm a sucker. And I remember watching Avengers Infinity War, which is a movie that has all these super heroes, right? You've got Iron Man, Captain America, and Spiderman, and all of these big heroes from Marvel and they're fighting this main guy. And the amazing thing about the movie Avengers Infinity War is that at the end, you're always so used to the hero winning, but what actually happens is in the end, like half the heroes die and the villain wins, and the credits roll. Can I just tell you that I loved that? Nobody expected that. And what happened is this evil guy, Thanos, snapped his fingers, and you watch half of your super heroes disintegrate into ash and fade away. And they were all tough to watch, they were, but the toughest was Spiderman. Spiderman; first can we just agree that Tom Holland's Spiderman is the best version of Spiderman? That's important. If you read in the Greek, the Bible actually says the Tom Holland version would be the best. You have to read it in Greek. You have to read it in Greek! Right, Irene? She speaks greek, Irene knows. I digress.

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Oh yes, Spiderman. There's this scene where you see Spiderman fade into ash and he's being held by his like adoptive father and mentor or Iron Man, Tony Stark, and he says I'm sorry, Mr. Stark, I don't want to die, and then he like rolls his eyes back and he fades into ash. And it's this soul crushing moment for Spiderman fans, and then the credits roll and you're like oh, so Spiderman's dead now? Is that it? But then, you get home and you see an advertisement for this – Spiderman Far From Home starring Tom Holland. Now can I just tell you I think that was a mistake that they let that out because what they basically told people was we're not going to tell you how, but Spiderman's coming back to life. And that put all of us Spiderman fans at ease during that brief year where we didn't know what was going to happen to our favorite superheroes. We were able to know very plainly that Spiderman was going to be okay. And like Spiderman, my friend, you're going to be okay. I don't know how, maybe your life is falling apart, but you're going to be fine. God's going to get you through this. And my guess is at the end of your story, your sentence is going to start something like this: I had no idea, with a smile on your face because of the good things that God's taking you through. My friend, I want you know, take this as a message from the Lord, that God's word for you is true. God is not holding your mistakes against you. God is not punishing you for your sin or your flaws or your shortcomings, or any of these things, all of your sins have been forgiven if you put your faith in Christ Jesus. It's like a blank slate, and it's like every morning you wake up, you do your best and you forget the rest. If you made a mistake, you start over. And you just keep working on being as much like Jesus as you can. You'll never be like Him, but as the moon reflects the sun, someday you'll become the kind of person that people would say wow, that's a Jesus kind of person. And in the meantime, just trust God will get you where you need to go. That's that hopeful spirit that builds faith within us that we can say I know God. I know His character. I know His word. He'll get me through. It's a little weird and frustrating right now, but I trust you, Lord. Amen! So, for now, God will give us manna. He'll give us manna – bread from heaven. The story of manna is an interesting one. The Jewish people have no home. For the first few hundred years of being a nation, they have no place to belong. They have no flag to fly, they have no soil to build their homes, they have no farms to grow their crops. They're a nomadic people. And they end up in Egypt, where really as a people they're sort of formed. And it's out of slavery that God brings them into the desert into the in-between place. Not slavery, not the Promised Land, just a desert; a wilderness. And it's there that God instructs them to build a tabernacle. Now this model for the tabernacle will later be the model for Solomon's temple, and what they're carrying around with them is actually a symbol – please hear me – of the Garden of Eden. This is important that the Garden of Eden is an embedded theme throughout all of the Bible. It begins with the garden, it ends with the garden, Jesus prays in the garden, and the temple is a garden. And you can see here that these are different symbols. This is a modern version done by Bible Projects. Really nice looking. But this gold wall that was inside of Solomon's temple, is meant to look like the Garden of Eden. In fact, the Menorah that's a typical Jewish symbol, is meant to be the symbol for the tree of life. The temple is full of the tree of life, and the leaves of the garden, and so the tabernacle that they bring around with them is almost like a mini garden, and the temple is supposed to be the garden where God dwells. Where even though you're a broken, sinful person, you can enter into the Garden of Eden, which is the temple and be with the Lord. Interesting, huh? So so much of dwelling through the wilderness is getting the garden inside me before I get inside the garden. Many of us are there. In wilderness time, we want to get to the Promised Land, but it might be that God wants to get the Promised Land in you. Lord, let us have the Promised Land in us now. Let us be full of your joy and spirit and faith, that when we get to the Promised Land, it'll be a land that we didn't even need because we always had you all along. I imagine that the Jewish people felt homeless as they wandered through the wilderness. If you're a millennial, many millennials today are feeling homeless. Did you see this, by the way? New York Times wrote an article showing that Wall Street is now getting involved in single family homes. They invested 60 billion dollars in single family residents to rent out homes to normal millennials, which is increasing the pressure on.. the reason I keep mentioning millennials is they're the ones who've sort of gotten boxed out. They haven't been able to save up the money to get their own house. And actually, even here in Orange County, the median home price in Orange County has just broken a million dollars. That's the median price. You see it's that top line. The purple line below it is Los Angeles. Orange County houses now are two hundred thousand dollars more expensive on average. And many people just can't get a house. Hannah and I are included in that. There's nothing available. If you're looking for a house right now, you are super resonating with this because whether you're renting or buying, there's just nothing.

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And that feeling that you have was the feeling, I think, that the Jewish people had for so long as a people; that they wanted to have a place to go, and a place to be a people; a place to grow their own crops. But in the hope of that place, God gave the people manna. Manna. Do you guys know what manna is? Now if you play video games, you think it's the blue bar that allows you to cast spells, but it's not. It's bread from heaven. What would happen was every day when the Hebrew people would wake up, there would be this stuff on the ground. It's like a white flaky thing, and they would go and gather it and they could eat it, and it was the only thing really they had to eat. They had a brief quail season in there, but basically it was just this: manna. And in fact the first time it happens, they're amazed and they decide to try and store it up. They store up the manna, and then the next day, they find that all their stored manna was rotted within a day, and it was full of maggots. And so they couldn't store it, they couldn't do anything, they just had to trust every day for 40 years that when they woke up in the morning, God was going to provide their daily bread. And so every day, they just got manna. Every day they just got this miracle. Dostoyevsky said that a human being is someone who can get used to anything. And I promise you, I don't know what manna tasted like, but even if it tasted like salted butter cake from Maestro's, which is an eighteen-dollar cake that tastes amazing, if you had that every day, you'd be over it pretty quick. What did manna really taste like? You ever wonder that question? If you had bread from heaven, you would think it would be like a fantasy novel, like Lord of the Rings where you eat it and it brings joy to your heart and a song to your lips and this type of thing. But is funny is the word manna means "it's what it is." Literally they went outside and all these guys got around like what is this? And somebody goes it's what it is. And that phrase in Hebrew is manna. So they're literally eating it's what it is. And I've always.. this is just Bobby talking now, I've always interpreted manna to mean boring food. Like it's not good, but it's not bad. It's like rice cakes. Have you ever had a rice cake before? Not only do rice cakes kind of look like what I sort of think manna would look like, but if you've ever eaten a rice cake before, it's not good. But it's not bad. It's what it is. Its manna. I think that's what it was like. I think they basically got rice cakes every day for 40 years. And when you think about it that way, even though it's a miracle, it's kind of a bummer miracle. It's like a miracle, but it's not the Promised Land. It's not really what you'd hoped for. You're glad to be alive. If it's not there you'll miss it. But it's not; it's not steak and wine, right? It's not what they'd really hoped for. Maybe you're there. Maybe you're in like a season in your life where you've got manna every day. It's always there. It's not good, but it's not bad. You'd miss it if it wasn't there anymore but you sure hope for something better someday. Can we agree today that manna is a promise. It's a promise of better days to come. That if God gives us the manna in the in-between, God will bring us to the Promised Land. If God will give us manna now, He will give us grain from our land, cattle from our fields, wine from our grapes, bread from our silos, homes for our stead, soil to tread on, water to drink from. Manna now is a promise that even in our worst days, even in the deepest desert, God will take care of us! Manna is a promise today of better days to come. Will you believe with me today that better days are coming? That if all you've had for years is manna, that the Promised Land is coming for you? Will you believe for yourself today that God has a Promised Land for you? Will you refuse to give up on that dream, on that thing He put in your heart, and endure through the desert so you may reap crops from your own field? Let's make a promise together today that we'll be grateful for the manna, but we'll look forward to the promise. And let's do that together today, can we? Amen. That brings us to Joshua chapter 5, and I'll finish with the scripture. Joshua, who's the great general leading the people, the great person of faith who told them all God can do it. God can get us there. God will bring us there. When they cross the Jordan River into the Holy Land, it says "then the Lord said to Joshua, today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you. So the place has been called Gilgal to this day. On the evening of the 14th day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover." It's very similar, we interpret that as like communion, Eucharist where it's a celebration that the angel of death passed over the doorposts, and for us, the angel passes over the doorposts of our hearts. The angel of death. That we can have life in Jesus Christ. It says, "the day after the Passover, that very day they ate some of the produce of the land – unleavened bread and roasted grain. The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land. There was no longer any manna for all the Israelites, but that year, they ate the produce of Canaan." You know they were stoked about that. I remember when we were in Thailand, and I love Thai food, by the way. I just love it. And I thought being in Thailand was going to be just a miracle. And we were there for two months. And I remember our first breakfast, they served us chicken, rice and eggs. And I was like that's a little odd for breakfast, but I'll try it, and it was great.

The Manna is a Promise of Better Days to Come

And then lunch came and it was chicken, rice and egg. And then dinner came and we got chicken, rice and egg and tea. And then two months later, we'd had chicken, rice and egg for every meal, every day for almost 60 days, and I was over it. I was not into it. I think that they were excited when they got to eat some grain from their own land, when they got to eat from the land of milk and honey. I think you're going to be excited when God gets you to the Promised Land that you get to. If you find yourself in a season of in-between, just four things I want you to do. I'm sure there's others, but this is just me talking. First, we got to recognize that in most cases the manna phase of our lives is not bad or good, it's just kind of boring. It's boring. And boredom is hard, especially for American's. We like to be doing stuff, we like to see progress. So here. First of all I would say, this is the most important one, don't turn to other gods or you'll be stuck in the wilderness forever. What a temptation it is when we're bored to go back to that old relationship that we know is bad for us, to go back to that old habit, or that old thing that we used to do, that we know wasn't good for us, but we're bored. And so we just go back. Or we find some shallow, hollow thing to build our life around. Don't do it. Don't turn your heart to other gods or you'll be stuck in the desert forever. And so number two – if you're eating manna right now, and you're not where you want to be, you're not in that relationship you want to have, you're not in your walk with God, and you want be, or whatever it is, don't be embarrassed. You have no reason to be embarrassed. I want you to know God sees every part of your life, and He loves you. And I don't know everything about your life, but I love you, too, and so does this church. You don't need to be embarrassed; you don't need to hide. If you're struggling with something, join the club. We all are struggling with things in our lives. If you have something you're embarrassed about, it's not like you have to tell the whole world, but don't be embarrassed about it. Don't be embarrassed that God is giving you manna during this time. If your marriage isn't going the way you want it to go, or you're not in the best job of your life, don't be embarrassed by that. Just thank God for now for what it is, and begin to pray that what you really want would come to pass.

Number three – for some of us, that manna season is a job, or like a responsibility. Many of you are caretakers, for example, or you're doing other things in your life that's hard for you. And I just want to say see your job or your responsibility as a calling, or a type of preparation. Most of us in our jobs, it's become rote. But try and see the person that you work with as someone you can minister to; that you can share your faith with or pray for or encourage or take out to lunch, if they're having a rough day. And try and see things in your job as those jobs that you don't want to do, or maybe you wouldn't get paid for. Try to do those things as a way to learn, and you'll find that there's so many things at your job that if you volunteer to do some of those things, you might learn a new skill that'll actually open the door to a better paying job. So see your job or your responsibility or that burden that you have as something that God can use, if you ask Him too, to help you grow as a person. Finally, just be at peace with God's pace. God is never hurried and there's nothing you can do about it. God is just never, ever in a hurry and its super annoying. Very often we'd be like come on, let's go! Let's go! Let's go it on! But He is not worried about anything. He's the most joyful person in the universe, and He knows everything about your life, and He knows you're not only going to be fine He's excited for you to see what you're going to have in your life. But He's not hurried. And so one of the best things we can do is to yield to God's pace. Yes, you can work hard, and you can hustle, but at the end of the day, it's so good to just say Lord, I trust you with my life. I'm not going to hurry, I'm not going to worry, I'm going to trust my friend Jesus and share His love with my neighbor. And you'll find very easily that your life will become more joyful, and that the yoke that you've been carrying will feel a little lighter, if you move at God's pace. If you want to walk with God, you have to walk, not run. If you want to walk with God, you have to walk at a walking pace. And you'll be blessed for it. Lord, we give our lives to you. Many of us, just right now in your own mind, bring into the front of your mind the manna and the Promised Land. Be grateful for the manna but ask the Lord again for that Promised Land. If you think it's too big, nothing's too big for God. Is anything too big for God? Can He do anything? Lord, we bring it before you, and we trust our worries and our woes to you. We bring our dreams before you and we say God, please, we ask for it. Would you help us with these things? And we thank you in advance for your kindness and your generosity to your people. Forgive us of our sins, renew our hearts. Give us fresh vision for our lives. We love you, God. It's in Jesus' name we pray, and all God's people said, amen.

Would you stand with us?