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GOOD MORNING/INVOCATION – Bobby & Hannah

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

HS: Welcome visitors and church family. We're so happy that you're here. You know, God tells us in the Bible I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have loved you with an everlasting love. He is talking about you! You are beloved.

BS: Today we're really going to talk about how to reconcile with our neighbor. We're really glad you're here today and believe that God has a good word for you. Let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, we love you so much, and we're grateful that you have made us at peace with God. We pray with you, and we thank you that your Son Jesus Christ you have saved us from our sins and renewed us and restored us. Help us today to be more like Christ: forgiving, quick to grace. Thank you that you've filled us with your joy. We love you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

HS: Amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – Acts 11:15-18 - Hannah

In preparation for the message, Acts 11:15-18. "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?" When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, even to the Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life."

Amen.

INTERVIEW – CRISTINA BAKER

{VOICE OVER: Cristina Baker is an author and content creator. She started making faith-based videos for Tik Tok as a way to connect with people, and encourage them in their spiritual journeys and prayer life. In her new book, Hope in 60 Seconds: Encountering the God of the Impossible, she includes prayers and stories of lives transformed to encourage readers to have faith in Jesus. Please welcome, Cristina Baker!}

BS: Christina, hi!

CB: Hi!

BS: Thanks for being with us. For those that don't know much about your story, let's begin with your faith journey.

CB: Yes, Bobby, I was born here in America, but I moved to Bolivia after my parents' divorce. Kind of came from a broken home. There was no God in our home. My dad was an atheist, my mom was a non-practicing Catholic, and so by the time I turned 14, I was in the bars, I got into self-harm and started getting into some heavy drug use. Got kicked out of my house by my step-dad when I was 15 and sent to live with my dad shortly after I turned 15. And my dad worked in the oil field so the memories of my dad.. I hadn't seen him in ten years, were of him in suits. He was an executive and I thought I was going to be arriving in this posh home in Hawaii, and when I arrived, he gave me the news that he was homeless. My dad had been.. was kind one of those things where he had an addiction to cocaine, and also went into that descent of drugs, and so it landed him homeless living in a tent on the beach. He gives me the news that I'm going to be living in a tent on the beach with him at 15, and so from there I got off of the beach and was living home to home. Ended up actually going to jail one night many years later after I had been caught for drug possession, and while I was out on bail, a man.. I was working at a university.. so I was kind of living a double life like my dad.

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I was telling people how to live their life and then drugging at nighttime. And a man came up to me in my job, tapped me on the shoulder when I was contemplating suicide and he said he had a word from the Lord for me. And I was like a word from the Lord? I didn't believe in God, but that was my last resort. Like how did this guy know that I was contemplating suicide at that very moment. He invites me to this prayer meeting that they had on the third floor of the break room, and says that the promised word of the Lord, he says it's a matter of life or death, and I just knew at that moment, Bobby, that whatever this man was saying was truth, and he said would you like to accept Jesus into your heart, and in my mind, I was like Jesus, if you're real, come into my heart and fix my life. And all of a sudden, there's people gathered around me. They had their hands over me, praying for me, and it was like the boulders I had been carrying around 20-plus years of my life lifted. I gave my life to the Lord that day. I was still facing a court case, I was facing some jail time, and long story short, that case was dismissed at the very last moment, and the Lord just set me on a path to live for Him and I was set on fire overnight. It was like I was dead in a coffin, and it was in one instant I just came out of the coffin and I was alive. So in a snapshot, that is a bit of my faith journey.

BS: Amazing. So just to be clear, you were using drugs but you were also were working at the university?

CB: I was, yes. I had figured out a way, which is what my dad did, when he worked in the oil field. I was abusing drugs at nighttime, and then getting it together during the day. And so I was doing both.

BS: Its interesting because I think that's more common now that you're seeing that there are people who have like this double life, they're able to be like functionally.. abusing drugs or alcohol, but during the daytime, they're functional. What do you think.. I mean what do you think it was, when you're talking to someone like today, for example that's maybe caught in that, but what is it about Jesus or about that experience you had that worked where other things maybe didn't work?

CB: You know, I explained this to my husband last night. All of my life; if you've ever lost something, maybe you've lost your keys or you've lost your phone or you've lost your card in your house, and you're looking for it everywhere. And then you find it, it was like right in front of your face. That's what He was for me. I was looking for Him in all of the wrong places, Bobby, in drugs, in alcohol, everything I could get my hands on, and when He revealed Himself to me as my Savior, it was like the one that I had been looking for all of my life was always there.

I call Him the beach ball God because He was like a beach ball under the water that my atheism and I don't believe in God, all of my pain, my anger, it was like I was trying to keep that beach ball under the water, but He'd come up at different parts. Like no, stay down, and then the moment came where He was like I've been here all your life and I've been looking at you. I've seen you all your life. I saw you on the beach, I saw you in jail, I saw you.. I also went through brain surgery; I went through brain surgery. I saw you in all those moments and I was always there. And so the hope I had been looking for in that moment, I found in Him.

BS: That's awesome. That reminds me of like C.S..

CB: He's all I ever needed.

BS: Yes. It reminds me of C.S. Lewis' testimony where he was an atheist and he would say like he was always mad at God for not existing. Like he can feel.. it's really interesting. You've started posting videos on TikTok. For people that don't know much about TikTok, it's kind of like Instagram but funnier and more entertaining and more interesting.

CB: Yes.

BS: It's really.. a lot of it to me, I think, seems like a lot of comedy and a lot of dancing. How do you use TikTok to get your message out and what is that like for you and how did that happen?

CB: Yes, couple years ago, three days before the pandemic, the Lord gave me a dream and I'd never been a social media person, so it was a big leap of faith, but He showed me just the darkness of social media, especially what TikTok is known for. And I said all right Lord, we're going to do this. So my husband set up a camera and you know you've got to capture the young generation quickly, and so I jumped in front of the camera, I said hey wait, let me pray for you. And I just asked the Lord for a word and I just began to pray, and to our surprise, the videos started going viral one after the other, and my husband and I looked at each other, we were like wow, like there is such a need right now in this generation. We know the harvest is ripe, but the harvest is desperate right now. People are desperate to know Jesus and so even through a phone screen, through a computer screen, people are receiving His presence and prayer. It's been an exciting journey.

BS: That's awesome. And that's why you came up with this name for your new book Hope in 60 Seconds, I assume, right, because TikTok has to be a 60-second video.

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It's funny they don't say one minute, it's like they really want to emphasize its seconds, not a minute. And a lot of people are enjoying your book. What do you hope people get when they read this book? CB: Somebody asked me the question what is it about your story that is giving people hope in less than sixty seconds. And when they asked me that, I thought well God doesn't need a lifetime to do something impossible in our lives. He needs one moment. Not even sixty seconds. And in a moment of surrender, He can heal, He can deliver, He can change what we think is impossible and make it possible. I've shared, Bobby, the darkest moments of my life in hopes that faith would be knighted in their hearts that if He did it for me, He will do it for them. He'll do it for their kids, He'll do it for their spouses, He'll do it for their loved ones, and the people that they want to come back to the Lord.

BS: That's awesome. Cristina Baker, thank you so much. Your book is Hope in 60 Seconds. Get a copy today. It'll touch your heart, maybe if you need somebody who's going through a rough time, they'll be touched by the gospel. Thank you, Cristina, we appreciate you so much.

CB: Thank you, Bobby for inviting me. Bless you.

WELCOME/COME VISIT – Bobby Schuller

Welcome to Shepherd's Grove. We're so glad you're here. You know, there are a lot of things you can do for your health, but one of the best things you can do for your health is to have meaningful friendships. And I think of that's been lost in the modern world is we become more digital. We've lost; a lot of people have lost things like church, or even having meaningful friendships at work; going out for food afterwards. We do so many things, don't we, for our health. We eat well or we spend hours at the gym, spend money doing these different things, and yet one of the best things you can do for your health is have meaningful friendships, especially in a setting like a church where you have people who aren't just surface friends, but they pray for you and they're involved with your life. And that's what we hope to accomplish here at Shepherd's Grove. That during the week you're able to build meaningful friendships with people that will help you grow in your walk with God, and to be there for you when times aren't as good. I hope you find that here, or even more importantly, that you become that to somebody here. And that's what we're going to talk about today.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

But before we do, would you stand with me? We're going to hold our 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 my neighbor. Amen!

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "Jesus Had an Eating Ministry. You Can, Too!"

I'm going to read from the book of Acts right out of the gate. The story comes when Peter, who's the leader of the church in Jerusalem, is invited by a centurion, Cornelius, who the Bible says is a righteous man, and seems to have some kind of connection with God, and wants to be drawn into the faith but doesn't know what to do. And so he wants to eat with Peter, and Peter is reluctant to do it because he's a Gentile. And this is an irony we're going to see later, but Peter has this vision from God, and God says "don't call unclean what I have called clean." So Peter eats with Cornelius and the gang, and they come to become the first sort of Gentile Christians. And it's this important moment in the Acts of the Apostles. When Peter returns and tells people that he's eaten with these Gentiles and that the Holy Spirit came upon them, at first they're very critical of Peter. How could you eat with sinners? Now if you've gone to this church for a while, you know what that sounds like, doesn't it. It sounds like the pharisees. This new, this body of believers, these Christians saying to Peter, how could you eat with sinners. How could you eat with Gentiles. Peter tells them his whole story, and he finishes by saying in Acts 11, "As I began to speak the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us in the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said. John baptized with water, but you will baptize with the Holy Spirit. So if God gave them the gift, he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way. When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God saying, so then even the Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life." This Gentile is very glad that Gentiles are allowed to come into the kingdom of God. This is Jesus' heart. We're going to talk about this today. The heart of Christ is reconciliation, grace, forgiveness and mercy, and particularly Jesus likes to do it with food. Jesus had an eating ministry. You might not have heard me say this before because back in the day.

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I used to say this every Sunday. We used to serve communion and before I would invite people to take communion, I would say Jesus has an eating ministry and He's continuing it now in communion. He is the bread of life, but He also offers us the bread of life. Come now and eat with us. And that so much of Jesus ministry was inviting sinners or people that weren't supposed to associate with righteous people to His table. And the Lord invites you to eat at His table today; to eat with Him just as you are, not as you want to be or not as you should be. Jerusalem is an amazing place. It's an old, old city. There are old cities like Paris, and then there's old, old cities like Jerusalem that have been around a long, long, long time. There are a lot of wonderful things about Jerusalem. The food in particular is very good. We had the world's best falafel at least four times at four different places. But one thing you notice about Jerusalem, in particular, and the whole nation of Israel, is although its calm, its calm like a bomb, as one band said. It's like a powder keg. Even though it's not exploding, it feels like the smallest thing could cause the whole thing to erupt. There's a saying in Hebrew – shalom. Shalom. (SPEAKS IN HEBREW) This word “shalom” means peace and it's a greeting. It's like aloha. You say it for hello and goodbye. Shalom. Shalom. Shalom. Look at your neighbor and say shalom. I know it's 9:30, just get it off your chest. You guys, come on. Look to your neighbor and say shalom. You too, choir. Shalom means peace. And it's a deep word. Its more than just peace, it means like a wholeness. Like things are right. It doesn't just mean a lack of violence; it means real peace. And when we went to Jerusalem, we found a surface shalom, but not a deep shalom, you know what I mean? When we first got there, we had the real privilege of meeting Dr. Eli Shukron, who's the guy that discovered the temple mount. Here he is.. oh that's a paint.. here he is in the middle. This is Eli here, world famous archeologist on the right, our tour guide, Ronnie who was also a marine archeologist, and behind us you can see there is the southern wall of the temple mount. That's where the original temple Jesus was. To the left of my left ear there would have been the gates where the moneychangers would have been. You can kind of see the steps behind those trees, and that's where people would have entered into the temple after using the Mikvah. This guy Eli is the guy who discovered the Mikvah – it's a giant pool called the pool of Siloam. You might remember it in the Bible in John chapter 9 when Jesus puts mud on the guy's eyes and He tells him go wash in the pool. That's the Mikvah – to prepare your eyes for the temple. And so he discovered it. But that temple mount is in many ways at the heart of the lack of peace because that is the holiest site for all Jews. Its where the temple has to be. It can't be anywhere else. Its where the first and second temple both were, but now there's another holy site, the third holiest site to the Muslim community, the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which has been there for like 1,300 years where they believe that Mohammed ascended into heaven and received the Quran. And so both of these religious communities have this deep religious significance and two very different narratives about that space. The western wall of the temple is the holiest Jewish site, but its only holy because the top of the mount is even holier. And so there's all this tension. There's tension around space, around history, around how things happen, around how people are treated in deep entrenched tribalism. Also in Jerusalem, a lot of people ask me what's your favorite thing, and mine is never what everybody else is. My favorite place, because I love history, is the Holy Sepulcher. A lot of Jews, in particular, and Muslims, find this place very spooky, and a lot of Evangelicals find it spooky, but I love it. It reminds me of a real-life Hogwarts or a dark castle. It does have a villainous kind of feel to it. This is the biggest room where the actual tomb of Jesus.. that's the tomb of Jesus there, according to tradition, and there might be some good reason why it might be the real tomb of Jesus. And then there's all of these caverns, and there's six different denominational groups that all control this space. And so not only was the temple mount, and still a place of great tension, but this church between these six denominations is also an entrenched place of deep animosity, resentment, rivalry. When the first Holy Sepulcher was destroyed by the Caliphate after it came and took it from the Byzantine empire, this was a big part of why the crusades happened, and even after this cathedral was taken back by the Christians, whoever those would be, whether it's the orthodox or Roman Catholics, the Armenians, the Coptics, there's six groups and even when they controlled the place, our tour guide was telling us, there'd be many mornings you would arrive to the gates of the Holy Sepulcher church and there'd be multiple bodies of priests lying around. And that was because sometimes the priests, just like the gangs of New York or something else, they would show up and fight over little spaces and kill each other, literally. They would, in their minds, lay their lives down for some sliver of the church that they're going to have this pocket or that pocket. It's just amazing to me. In fact, there's this ladder out front, this is the entrance of the Holy Sepulcher, and this ladder has been in that one spot for 350 years because nobody could agree on where to move it and who's ladder it was.

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And so they didn't want to start a whole war over this ladder. And it's become.. it has its own Wikipedia page, this ladder does. It's called the immovable ladder, and it's a symbol of what came about about a hundred years ago called the status quo in which now all of the six denominations are at peace, and if they want to change anything in the Holy Sepulcher church, they all six have to get together and agree, including where would we move that ladder. That's not peace, is it? Is that peace? So even in the Holy Sepulcher, the holiest site for Christians, you also find an anti-spirit of Christ, right? Not a spirit of reconciliation and friendship and hospitality, but a spirit of outside tolerance but inside of bitterness, resentment, disagreement. What's the first thought we have reflecting on this. Well it's got to be religion's fault, right? That's why there's been so many wars, that's why there's so much fighting. Maybe your annoying friend has this bumper sticker – coexist. Or you see this around town and it's a very clever kind of out of style bumper sticker, but the message is clear, right? If religions could just get along, there would be peace. And for sure, religions have gone to war, for sure. And Christianity has gone to war. But my argument is that if you think it's just religion, you got to look closer at history. I would argue that the 20th century is so far the least religious century that we've had, except for the 21st, and yet was the most war-torn century in the world. Both the Nazis and the Communists were anti-religious movements, right? The Nazis only abided Christians that went along with the Nazi propaganda, and of course we're anti-Jewish. Communism didn't allow the practice of any religion, and yet both of those groups drove so much of the wars of the 20th century. And if religion went away, I would guarantee that there would still be the same deep-seated resentments in wars, but they'd be over different things that would still have very religious connotations. That's my argument. I don't have time for it, but it's not just religion, is my point. Its religion, too. There's also language. What if we all just spoke the same language? What if we all could just communicate with one another. Wouldn't that make a lot of strife and war go away? In fact there was a guy named LL Zamenhof, who was a Jewish/Polish ophthalmologist who created a language called Esperanto. And this was his dream. He thought what if we could create this language that combines all of these other languages, and it becomes everyone's second language, and we could all just sit at the table and talk. But this too wouldn't solve the problem, right? It doesn't take very long. I love the heart behind this, I love the idea, but it doesn't really solve the problem. I mean look at the feuds in Kentucky, for example. These thousands of young men and women who killed each other back in the day, and they were the same culture, language, everything. Same race and they all killed each other. In the 90's when I was a kid, we weren't allowed to wear solid blue or solid red shirts where I went to school in L.A. because at that time the fights between the bloods and the crips was so bad that the teachers were afraid you'd get shot. They all spoke the same language and had a similar culture. Or look at Democrats and Republicans. They almost speak the same language, and they're always at each other's throats. Maybe language isn't going to be the solution, either. My theory, and I think you'll agree with me, is that there's something under all of these things that is the source of the problem, of all the tension, of the powder keg that many of us even feel in our culture today, and that is tribalism. Tribalism. That there is something about us that longs to belong to a group and a community, and those groups and communities hinge on narratives – a story. This is our story. And this is why, and this is so key, every tribe thinks they're the righteous ones. We're the righteous ones! We're the righteous ones! You will find that yes, the Nazis believed they were doing good. Yes, the Ku Klux Klan believes they are the righteous ones. You will find that the most annoying person that you disagree with ideologically, whether it be in politics or religion, if you disagree with them, they think they are righteous and you are not. That's it. There is a self-righteousness to every tribe that binds the tribe that has key taboos, things you're not allowed to say, or foods you're not allowed to eat, or people you're not allowed to associate with, or clothing you're not supposed to or you are supposed to wear, there's a language, and all of these things deeply embed you in a sense that I belong to a tribe that's a part of a righteous group. One of my favorite books that highlights this idea that I think is supported scientifically, Jonathan Height wrote a book called *The Righteous Mind: Why good people disagree on politics and religion*. It's actually one of the 20 books that we sell in our bookstore. It's not a religious book at all, but I think it's so well written. And he makes the claim, and there's some studies that support this, that whenever we're posed with a moral problem, the question we unconsciously ask is not what's right and wrong, the question we ask is what does my tribe say. What's my tribe say. If you deeply associate with a political party, you're going to say what's my political party say? If you deeply associate with your family, what does my family say? If you deeply associate with your church, what's my church say? And then you employ an inner attorney to defend the position.

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And this is a huge bias that if you want to create a good, moral compass, it's a huge bias to overcome because our need to belong is deeply embedded in that our group is the righteous ones. I'm looking for Craig Bourne, he's around here somewhere. I swear I just saw him. But anyway, he pointed out this quote and when I re-read the book recently.. you're pointing.. I still don't see him. Oh there you are! Nice to see you, sir. This great quote that we are not selfish, we're groupish. We're groupish. That's why people are willing to lay down their lives for their group. This is the problem. The problem that we're facing here in the United States, the problem that is facing Jerusalem in Israel isn't specifically religion, its tribalism that's based on religion. Or its not specifically culture, its tribalism that's based in a culture. And this tribalism has an answer. You know what the answer is? I know you want to say Jesus, and that's right, but Jesus gives us a practical answer. The practical answer is food! Its food. Man, if you're hungry enough, you'll eat with your enemy. Nothing like food that brings people together. We found out a long time ago that small groups don't do very well if they don't have food. The best small groups are the ones with the best cooks. It's true. Food. You see food and hospitality all throughout the Bible, and it's always at the heart of reconciliation. The Bible begins with food. Remember, food that you're supposed to eat and food that you're not supposed to eat. Remember the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life. Food is pleasing to the eye and delicious to the taste. Cool water that's good for the bones. Abraham, when he's sitting at his tent, he sees God passing by with two angels, or three angels, or whatever it is, we don't know. They're not coming to Abraham, they're passing by his tent, and Abraham runs after them and he invites them, and he creates a feast for them. There are many examples, but of course the most obvious is just Jesus Himself who is constantly sitting and eating with people He's not supposed to associate with. This is the number one criticism that pharisees have for Jesus, it's not even that His teachings on sabbath and stuff like this, and those are some big ones. It's that He would associate and eat with prostitutes and tax collectors and Samaritans and people that are sinners and outsiders. To sit and eat with someone was to call them a brother or sister; to call them an equal. You're not supposed to do that back in those days, but Jesus is doing it constantly, and changing people's lives with food. And of course we as Christians believe that Jesus is food. He's living bread and living water, right? And so that's why we celebrate the Eucharist or communion. Jesus invites you to the table. Maybe you can have an eating ministry the way Jesus did. Maybe you can invite people you're afraid of that we are supposed to love to have some good food, especially if you're a good cook. God doesn't make good cooks for no reason. He makes them for reconciliation. That's why you're so good at cooking. Okay. If you're bad at cooking, maybe you got to ask somebody else. Jesus had an eating ministry. One of my favorite stories is a story about a guy named Darryl Davis, who's a committed Christian. Black man. Hugely successful musician. He played with a number of the big like boogie woogie guys. But he tells a story that back in the 60's when he was ten years old, in Massachusetts, he was the only black kid in his boy scout group. He was ten years old and he'd never dealt or experienced racism that he had known of, and he was doing this march through town, through this town he grew up in, and he was the one carrying the American flag. And he said all of a sudden, he started to feel things being thrown at him, like beer cans or food scraps. And his first thought is that he thought these people didn't like the boy scouts, and he's wondering why are they throwing stuff at us? And what happened is the scout leader started to surround him and walk with him to sort of protect him from the things that people were throwing at him. This was in the north, by the way, in Massachusetts. When he got back, he asked his teachers why were they throwing stuff at us? They said oh, they just avoid the question. And then he went to his parents, and they sat him down and it was the first time he was taught by his mom and dad about racism. That the only reason was because of the color of his skin. And to him, this just didn't make sense. He didn't like this answer. He thought how could somebody not like me just because of the color of my skin. And so in life, he would constantly try to reach out to people that he experienced as racist, until.. this is an amazing story. I can't believe this is true. You can see this story on YouTube. Until he finally, one day, invited the Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan over for dinner. Now the Imperial Wizard, I guess, I think is the national leader, so it's like the president of the whole thing, right? Somebody that I'm sure everybody in this building thinks is utterly evil. But imagine, not just being evil, but being black, how scary that would feel. The first touch point was inviting this man for an interview to hear about the clan. And he told his secretary – don't tell him I'm black. And so first he invited.. this is him with the clan leader. Can you imagine how scared he.. I mean he looks tough there, but inside he's got to be feeling a little scared. And he has an interview with this guy, and then he starts inviting the guy over for dinner. There it is, its food. And at first this guy, Roger Kelly, brings his bodyguard.

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He was always armed, and he keeps inviting him over to his house for a good meal. And over years, they become great friends and they have this discussion about.. he tells one story where this guy says well don't you know that there's a gene in black people that makes them more violent? And Darryl says to him, well don't you know there's a gene, its scientifically proven, that makes white people serial killers? And he says well what do you mean? And he says and tell me one serial killer that's black and they couldn't think of any. And he goes I can tell you ten serial killers that are white. And he says well that's just stupid. And he goes exactly. And its these kinds of conversations that over time, because of his character, he's able to endure obviously scary guy full of hate and racism. But eventually this guy Roger Kelly repents, and gives up his costume, whatever that thing is. And over time, Darryl Davis has actually convinced 200 different people to leave the Klan. And whenever they leave, they give him his outfit. What do we think about this? What do we think about this, right? There are some people that might actually be critical of Darryl Davis. How could you associate with sinners like that. How could you associate with someone that is so obviously evil, racist, everything that's not American, everything that's bad, right? Like how could you, as a black man, betray your, you know what I mean? Like how could you do that? But then there's another aspect that's like well Darryl Davis, first of all, is a committed Christian, and maybe he's doing exactly what Jesus taught us to do in the most effective way. He's doing it in a way that as a white guy, I can't do, right? There is something really special about that story. I love that story because I think it's the food part. That the main way he does it is food. Darryl Davis has an eating ministry. And I have an eating ministry. Are you a good cook, by the way? You know what my stuff is? I make a million-dollar mac n cheese. That's what they call it. It's actually about fifty or sixty bucks, but it's million-dollar mac n cheese sounds better because you have to go to Whole Foods, and you have to buy all the really good cheeses. See that's what people miss out on the mac n cheese is they buy the cheap cheese so you get what you pay for. But you got to use the expensive cheese. And you got to grate the cheese. You can't just buy it grated; you have to grate. We got to make America grate again. That's what we got to do. We got to grate. That's what we want to.. that's the joke! And that's the cooking. There's something about preparing and hospitality, inviting people to your table that breaks down so many of these walls that we put up. Don't you want real peace in America again? Not a surface peace, but a deep peace where you like your neighbor and your neighbor likes you? Well, that's what Jesus calls us to do. He doesn't call us to just tolerate each other. He calls us to be hospitable, forgiving and loving to each other. And I'm so glad that there were people when I was a jerk, when I had things in my life that were still willing to invite me to their table to eat some good food on a hard day. Jesus had an eating ministry. And this is where Peter is. Peter was invited to Jesus' table, and in Acts 11, Peter discovers that one of the best things Jesus does is loves people right where they're at. That Christianity and the gospel turns everything upside down. Everything else says behave and then you can belong to us. But Jesus says you belong before you behave. You belong before you get it all right, and you even belong before you believe. Won't you come at the table and sit with me. And they did, and they rejoiced and the Lord rescued them from their sin. I think at the heart of this of what I'm really saying is a type of possibility thinking, actually. To look at someone that you find as scary or evil or an outsider as a Christian and decide to wonder is it possible that they could change. It's the spirit of seeing what is possible in someone. The spirit of seeing a person and wondering yes, maybe they're mean spirited now, but could they become a kind person. Yes, they're standoffish now, but would they let me in. In the spirit of Jesus is the spirit of saying this person may be an outsider to me now, but it's possible that they could come to know the Lord. Maybe I can make for them some million-dollar mac n cheese. Or I also make a very good chocolate chip toffee cookie. That's for another time. And I make a very good smoked honey chicken. Any of these things.. I don't know what your best dish is. Maybe you make a mean bowl of cereal, but it works. Invite people to your table, and begin to listen to people and watch how that will bring peace to your heart, too, and find that not everybody's as bad as you think they are. Lord, we just love you. And I ask that you would give us a true spirit of shalom, not to judge or to blame, but to understand that everyone has a different story, everyone has different parents that taught them different things, everyone grew up in different places, but you love us all, Lord. Help us to understand that even evil people are your beloved sons and daughters, and you want them as a prodigal son to come home. Help us to not be like the elder brother, but to be like the father that waits at the door wanting to see your children home with you. Lord, we love you, and we thank you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.