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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: Hello visitors and church family. It feels great to be with you. Did you know the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead is in you right now. That's real! Wow. You are loved.

BS: We're so glad to be worshipping with you this morning. Let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, we come to you in the strong name of Jesus. There are so many challenges that we're facing in our country. We pray, Father, for your Holy Spirit to bring a sense of peace and change. Lord, we love you and we look to you as always. We pray, Father, that today you'd help us to be more and more like you. Help us never to fall into despair, but fill our hearts with the hope that is founded in your word. Help us to love our neighbor and love you with all our heart, and we ask this in the strong name of Jesus, amen.

HS: Amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – Revelation 22,1-7+17, - Hannah

In preparation for the message, Revelation 22:1-7 and 17: Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and the Lamb of God will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must take place." "Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll." The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" And let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes to take the free gift of the water of life. Amen.

INTERVIEW – James Barnett (JB) with Bobby Schuller (BS)

James Barnett is an author and the President of Dayspring, a Christian company that sells products to make Jesus known through social expression. His new book is called Blue Skies: How to Live in the Extraordinary Expectation of What's Around the Corner. His book takes a look at how his family's travels through America's National Parks gave him new perspective on success, callings, and joy.

BS: James, hi! Thank you so much for joining us this morning. For those who are not familiar, tell us about your story.

JB: Thank you for the invitation to be here, Bobby and just thrilled to be here and be a part of today. But I'm the youngest of seven. I grew up in northwest Arkansas and really was in a hurry to grow up and I was trying to hurry up and get ahead and get my journey going, and went to school, and got married, got a job, and been part of Dayspring here this last 40 years. God has just done amazing things as we continue to do ministry and business here.

BS: Great. And you have this book, we wanted to talk to you about it, called Blue Skies. I'm really into the subject that you're bringing about. It's not a super common topic in Christianity, but the value of being outdoors, I think of you as almost like a.. was it St. Francis of Assisi that was always outside with the animals and things like this. You really have this push to encourage people to take advantage of things like state parks. Is that what your book's about? Tell us a little bit about it.

Get Your Garden On

JB: Really my book is about the purpose of really seeing God through everything we do. God is always working. He's always there, and we just have to be paying attention, and getting outdoors and seeing what God is doing gives us that opportunity. When I was in my 30's, I began to take national park trips with my family. We went to over 44 national parks, and we would do the hikes and see the places, and it was at that time, over that season that I began to look again to see God just through every aspect of nature, and God is always doing something new. No national park is the same. There are so many things that we can see that when we see God at work, and that's really my book is really about even though that we have clouds and challenges in life, there's always blue skies. God is always at work, and we have to see and we have to be looking for where He's working.

BS: These beautiful places really do something, and just the world, like the universe at large, when you really look at it, especially outside of cities, it has a way of witnessing to the Lord in a strange way. Like my brother had this good friend who was a die-hard atheist, and I'm sure he had heard all sorts of arguments for God, and everything, and none of them convinced him, and that's fine. But then he went with my brother to Yosemite, and then afterwards he said maybe. Maybe there's a God. And it's funny how like just visiting, just seeing it and believing it, something like that can soften someone's heart to get a little bit bigger picture of the universe.

JB: It really can and when you see, and by the way Yosemite is one of my favorite parks. People ask me many times what's your favorite? And I said, well, there are about five that are my favorites, but Yosemite is right up there. There's not a more beautiful view when you come through the tunnel and you pull over to the left and you see the view of Yosemite, but I think..

BS: Pause right there. I got to know. I got to know. What are the five?

JB: Okay, oh what are the five? Well, you've got to get Yellowstone in there, the Tetons are there, Glacier is there, Mt. Rainier, when you're at sea level and you're looking at Mt. Rainier at a 14,000-foot mountain from the ocean, it is just amazing. So those would be right up there. And then I'd have to put Zion in there, also, and the hikes there at Angels Landing, and the Narrows, those are just magnificent.

BS: That's great. I'm sure there's a lot of people that are like ah, the Grand Canyon just entered the chat. Anyway.

JB: Yes, the Grand Canyon.. yes, that's right, it's hard to find five. Grand Canyon will be there, too. I tell you.

BS: I'm just having fun. One of the things you talk about in your book is this difference between being driven and called. I really love this perspective. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

JB: Yes, as I mentioned, I'm the youngest of seven and I was in a hurry to grow up. My dad was a pastor of small churches and a schoolteacher. And I always had a heart for the Lord, but I loved business, and I loved achievement, and I was competitive. I was in a hurry to not only grow up, but to get married and have kids and get my job and get a house. We get what we called the American Dream. In my early 30's, I'd achieved that and I was really searching, Lord is this it? And I was praying and asking the Lord, and I went to a conference with a group of about 400 people and the theme of that conference was are you driven or are you called. And I just did not really understand this calling thing, and I had to leave that conference to say I was really driven. I was driven to achieve, and I didn't know really why, and I began to ask the Lord, what are you saying, Lord. And I noticed most of my prayer life was really about me. I would say God, could you help bless me. Could you help do this for me. And when He did, I would be excited and when He didn't I would be disappointed and I would say why God, why. But I discovered I was asking the wrong questions. And the real question is what. What are you up to, God. And the focus is on what He is about, and so I began to look at this calling thing about. A calling is really what is God doing, and am I joining Him? He's always working, and we've got to look again to see that call of God, to see it at work. That scripture in Romans 8, "all things work together for good to those that love God, and are called according to His purpose." It's not my purpose, it's His purpose. Really understanding that, and these national park trips, as I began to look again and see God at work, and see God's beauty and God's majesty, I began to look at life differently, and I wanted to pass that on to this next generation, how do we do that? How do we look again and see God at work, even amongst the clouds, among the challenges that we face, God is always working. There are always blue skies, but we've got to be looking for them

BS: If you are at home and you love the outdoors, or maybe you just feel stuck in a job and you need some encouragement to get out and see what God's created and have your faith encouraged.

Get Your Garden On

I want to encourage you to get *Blue Skies: How to live in extraordinary expectation of what's around the corner*, by James Barnett. James, thank you so much. We appreciate you and thanks for writing this great book.

JB: Thank you, thank you for having me, Bobby. God bless.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving from the Lord. Let's say this together: I'm not what I do. I'm not what I have. I'm not what people say about me. I am the beloved of God. It's who I am. No one can take it from me. I don't have to worry, I don't have to hurry, I can trust my friend Jesus and share His love with my neighbor.

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "Get Your Garden On"

I think about all the terrible things that are going on around the world. It's hard, isn't it? Not just in our country, welcome to our visitors from Syria. Of course it's been a very tough time in that country, tough time in Ukraine, Europe is on edge, and challenges that so many people face, let me just say that we thank the Lord that we know how the story ends. That in a way you read a book and there are these challenging seasons you go through where you think is there any resolution to this thing? And the good news is that the further along we get in the story, even if it seems like it's getting worse, just like when you read any novel, you can go to the last page and see that Frodo dropped the ring in the fire, or whatever. I'm not going to do those books, but you know what I mean. I want to begin with the end in my message today. You know the Bible is not a book. Everybody say the Bible is not a book. It's a library. It's a library. And each book gives us a different part of the whole story. The Bible begins and ends, though, with a theme, and the theme is a garden. You always think of it as being a warm place, a beautiful place and a perfect place. Begins with a place of safety, deep connectedness, the symbol of nakedness is living without shame, the way that little kids love to run around naked. They don't know, they don't care, that there's this no shame, this no fear of life and it begins with that garden, and then it ends with the garden, and it begins with this tree, it ends with this tree and the tree of life that brings healing to the nations. And so we turn to the.. I got an award, not a real award, I got a pretend award from our staff because in the 50 years of Hour of Power, I was the first preacher to ever preach on Revelation. So now I try and do it once a year. But my passage this week will be from the very last chapter of the library of the Bible, the last chapter of the last book of Revelation, and it paints the picture of a garden and of living water and of a tree that gives healing to the nations. I'll read it to you. "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life bearing 12 crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God of the Lamb will be in the city and his servants will serve him. They will see his face and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. There will not be need, the light of the lamp or the light of the sun. For the Lord God will give them light and they will reign forever and ever. The angel said to me these words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets sent his angel to show his servant the things that must soon take place. The spirit and the bride say come and let the one who hears say come. Let the one who is thirsty come. And let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life." Reading that, it reminds me of reading *Lord of the Rings*, which is something I do often. I enjoy *Lord of the Rings* because it, I don't know, it takes me to another world. It helps me sleep at night, actually, and it carries me to a better place somehow, and it helps me think of life in sort of a grander big vision. And this reminds me of reading that, somehow, like it's hard to put a finger on it, but it gives my heart hope and nourishment in some strange way. Recently, or recently a few days ago, Hannah and I returned from a very short trip to Florida for a family reunion. Every year her family throws this, and she has a big family. Her parents have six children: five boys and one girl. So I got the only girl. I'm a lucky guy. I always thought I would get married around 30, but then I met Hannah so I got married at 21. And all those kids are married and they all have kids, so this is a big family reunion. And when I met Hannah, her father wasn't wealthy, but since then, he's become a pretty wealthy man, which is lucky for me because that means I get a free vacation every summer, so that's cool. And one of the things we do is we gather in this big room where they're staying, where they rent this house, and every morning we begin with a very long time of devotional sharing where everybody sort of talks and shares and we pray for one another, and everybody takes turns.

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Well the last day was Hannah's mom's turn. And she had this great revelation. First of all, picture it. A couple in their 60's that's served God a lot of their life, and they've been blessed financially, and they have their family all around them, and they all love the Lord. And all these kids and cinnamon rolls and coffee and all the good stuff. And her mother, looking sort of at her posterity, says sort of this thing that she'd been waiting to share all week, she was kind of excited. And it's a great revelation. She said 'in life I've learned that sometimes as Christians we eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but other times we eat from the tree of life.' And she told everybody that was there 'eat of the tree of life. Eat of the spirit of God. Let the spirit of God nourish your heart and your soul.' I knew instantly what she meant. I went to seminary and I loved it and it was a good thing for me, but sometimes they call seminary cemetery because it's easy to fall into the trap of over intellectualization, or philosophical debate where in your mind you've got this thing for God but you're not nourished by the spirit of God when you wake in the morning. Where when you wake up you look to the sky, you say thank you Lord for another breath and another day and for your Holy Spirit. And thank you for Christ crucified that I can come before your throne boldly as a child of God completely righteous and justified before you. Called and beloved your own, and to be nourished daily by the tree of life. And she said 'there's a danger when you're nourished by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and not by the tree of life.' And then she said something else that I don't think was planned, but I thought was perfect. Looking around at all of her kids and grandkids, she said, 'the older I get, the younger I feel.' I knew what she meant by that. The older I get, the younger I feel. In the world, here in Orange County, there's so much wealth. When I go to the gym, I see Lamborghinis and Ferraris and Range Rovers. And there's nothing wrong with that, but most of the people in that gym don't say the older I get the younger I feel. They say the older I get, the older I feel. And there's something that the world offers right now, but over time gives you diminished returns. But when you're in the kingdom of God and you know the Lord and He lives in your heart, your body may age like milk, but your spirit ages like wine. You get something sweeter on the inside of you the older you get, and to be frank, you become more pleasant to be around, and you even have more to offer a hurting world that is only nourished by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and not by the tree of life. And so she encouraged us – eat of the spirit. Be nourished by the tree of life and by what the spirit has to offer. For believers, the end is always getting better. In the kingdom, everybody will face death. Whether it's today or a hundred years from now, we'll all face the same end. But for believers, that ending, in some ways, is sad, but it's also sweet. That maybe you'll see your parents and grandparents again; that you'll eat of the tree of life for real. That it'll be more like waking up than falling asleep. But the world doesn't offer that. And there's a sense in the world's message to get it now! You only live once. Don't get to the end of your life regretting that you didn't sleep around a little more, or make a little more money, or travel more, or collect more seashells. But I also think that there will be another kind of regret, even for Christians, that we get to the end and we say woe to me that I spent so much time focusing on those things. The only thing we take with us to heaven is the choices we made. My friend, begin with the end in mind today, and know that it's never too late to finish well. Anyone who wants to finish life well, I believe, will live life well. That's what I believe. And I think that's a Christian way to view the world. For many people, death is a scary thing, the end is a scary thing. For you it doesn't need to be that way. You build your life with the end in mind, and you'll go to the grave singing a song with the gospel in your heart and a home with the doors wide open for you. So begin with the end in mind. It is so important, first of all, that as believers, we understand the power of delayed gratification. You might remember this famous study in the 1970's done by Stanford. You've probably heard it a million times, but it's a powerful study. It was on delayed discounting, which is a scientific way of saying delayed gratification. And in this study, they offered children the opportunity to eat one marshmallow now, or, and they would leave the room and come back 15 minutes later, you can have two marshmallows later. And some of the kids just ate the marshmallow right away, and some of the kids waited. You see them on video all tortured. And what they found out is that the kids that waited and ate two marshmallows, they followed them for the next like 30/40 years, and they found that the kids who waited to eat the two marshmallows did better in every aspect of life. They did better financially in their careers, they did better relationally, they had more friends, they were more successful financially, and even measurements, which are subjective. But try and get data of who's happier overwhelming, delayed gratification was a huge indicator and was the only indicator in this case of the difference between the two. And there have been multiple studies on the power of delayed gratification.

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In fact there was just one, an income study that was done in 2018 that they said, they believed delayed gratification, the ability to delay gratification was the number one indicator of your income, more than education or anything else. So it's interesting to see that there's this character trait that I felt I was sort of taught when I was a kid, this idea that good things come to those who wait. Haven and I do this rap every morning on our way to school to get us ready. And someday I'll do it with her here, but it goes we're going to be, and then she goes positive! And then I say cause knowledge is, and she goes power! And I say leaders are, she says readers! And I say if you can dream it, she goes you can do it! And then I say if it's great, she goes it's worth the wait! And then we both go, honor Jesus with your life! And then we play like.. anyway, it's a long story. It's a cool thing WE do. You have to be there; you have to be there to experience it. But I'm trying to train her that if it's great, it's worth the wait. But our world has become so desperate for meaning that we just need something now to survive another day. That is not what God has in store for you. I do not know, for example, the effects of rampant pornography and especially Tinder. This is a little bit Bobby getting pious now. But I feel like in 20 years, therapists are going to say that this is one of the most destructive things that ever happened. If you don't know, Tinder is like you go on the phone and you find someone to have sex with. I also find that in our culture today, we just love billionaires so much, like it seems like very often we're always talking about billionaires, and we secretly want to be billionaires, but we resent them because we're not billionaires, but lessons we can learn from billionaires to become billionaires. You probably can name everybody on this picture or most of them, including Lex Luthor in the middle there. And then we have this sense of the ideal would be non-work. It's nothing wrong with billionaires, obviously. I'm sure they've done some good things, etc., but this feeling of like if I could just have fun all the time, and never work, and like do all this stuff, and then there's this fast, hurried sense that many of us have. We're all kind of like Verruka Salt from Willy Wonka. You remember Verruka Salt? (SINGS – I want the world. I want the whole world. I want to lock it right up in my pocket. It's my bar of chocolate. Give it to me now! I want today! I want tomorrow.) I'm wondering just how many people are like dude, stop, you're losing us. (SINGS – I want..) This is funny. But there is this now-ness. I want it now. I want everything now all at the same time, right now. Can we just say that's killing us. Can we just say that's crushing our soul and our spirit. That there is something relieving and fun and awesome sometimes about getting it now, but can I just tell you what we all know? You get diminished returns on that. That it's a little less cool the next time, every time, over and over. What if there's something that was opposite of diminished returns. And this is what I'm getting at is that when I think of sex, for example, and I don't mean to be 'get off my lawn Bobby' today, you know what I mean? I'm not like trying to be judgmental of everybody, but when I think of sex and relationships, I think like this is what everybody really wants – a couple that has been together for a long time, that grows old together and has shared memories, and a life that was well lived with each other. This is what you really want. That's what everybody really needs. You know Hannah and I were virgins when we got married at 21, and it's not to shame anybody, but I feel like if that happened today, all my friends would make fun of me for being a virgin in my 20's. There's someone that I've.. a life that I'm building with another person that as I grow old, I grow old with her. And as a kid, I was taught to store up for myself treasures in heaven. That there are things you can get for yourself in this life that no one can take from you like wisdom or an education or blessing or favor. And I think about how good and meaningful work is a good thing for a person to have. That non-work is not the ideal. All that to simply say that I think that the Lord offers us something better than the rushed instant gratification of this world. He offers us the ability to lead a truly meaningful life that simply believes in that old fashioned idea I'm going to leave this place better than I left it. That I want to believe that the world was a little better because I lived in it. And as believers, we would say that we were given a way to do that and do it well. To do what's good, not because someone sees me, but just because I love what is good and I hate what is evil. And that's who I want to be. The heroes when I was a kid that I heard all the time, I wouldn't have been able at even 15 to name one billionaire for you, but I knew who Mother Teresa was, and I knew who Frederick Douglas was, and I knew who Nelson Mandela was, and I knew who Oscar Schindler was. And I knew who Neal Diamond was. You know. Anyway. There's an amazing story about a man who just before the second World War, just as it was starting, a man named Nicholas Winton. You might be familiar with the name. Nobody had ever heard of him until 1988. This man, 50 years before as the Holocaust was beginning, was smuggling Jewish children out of Czechoslovakia. He smuggled out 669 children over a short period, found all of them homes and families that they were adopted into, and they believe that nearly all of those kids would have been killed if he hadn't done that.

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Nobody had heard about it until one day somebody found in an attic a dusty like brochure, not brochure, a dusty log of the names of these children and where they went and what their birthdays were, etc., and realized that this was a log of all of the kids he had saved. And so the BBC looked into this and gathered some of those children 50 years later who were now adults, and got them together, and wanted to introduce them to Nicholas Winton, who until this point, nobody had ever heard of. Check this out.

(VIDEO ROLL IN:

LADY: All the letters. Back here is the list of all the children. This is Vera Diamant, not Vera Gissing. We did find her name on his list. Vera Gissing is with us here tonight. Hello Vera. And I should tell you that you are actually sitting next to Nicholas Winton.

And it was just so wonderful, so terribly, terribly touching.

Can I ask, is there anyone in our audience tonight who owes their life to Nicholas Winton? If so, could you stand up, please?

(END OF VIDEO)

I love that story. The thing I love most about that story, obviously he saved a bunch of kids, but even more powerful is that he didn't tell anybody his whole life. He was going to go to the grave and even the kids wouldn't have known who was that guy from England that saved me. To me, this is the epitome of a really good person. How many people today want to be good so that people will think of them as good rather than I just love what is good and what is right. And I believe that this moment that was had here, I think that there will be things in life and people that you'll help, and nobody will ever say thank you to you for it, ever. You might have even forgotten; it's been so long since you helped that person. But I believe that when you get to the end, there's going to be a time when maybe you'll have a moment like that, too, where someone will say thank you for that one day that you helped me. You never know. And so today's sermon, because I'm just beginning.. just kidding, as I finish, as I wrap up. Today's sermon is actually called "Get Your Garden On" because I believe that in life, our life is a garden. Jesus just tells us this plainly. That in life, we're always broadcasting seeds around us that in their season will bear fruit. You might have had an old crotchety aunt that back in the day when you did something wrong, she looked at you and said 'you reap what you sow!' I didn't have one of those, but I've been around judgmental people. Of course this just means she doesn't like you, but what she means by that is 'see, that's what you get for all your ill-gotten' whatever, okay. We think of 'you reap what you sow,' we think of it in a negative way, and it's in the Bible in Galatians, but there's a positive aspect for that too, that when you sow, when you do, when you put seeds in the ground and nobody sees it, you know that's building up for you a harvest, a real harvest, that when you do the things and nobody sees it, but you plant these seeds in life, you're building up for yourself a garden, a life that gets better over time. You don't experience it now, but it will get better. It's amazing to me. I just started gardening with my kids and I'm terrible at it, which is kind of a Schuller thing. Schuller's are always bad at gardening. We're more like fishermen. Even my grandpa got into preaching because he was such a bad farmer - Grandpa Schuller. And I have a brown thumb. Everything I touch turns brown and dies. But if I get seedlings, I do okay. But it's amazing to me, you take this tiny little seed, put it in the ground and it turns into this humungous thing of spinach or jalapenos or an apple tree or strawberries, and these are all things I'm trying to grow right now, but I'm failing at. But it's possible, all things are possible. In life, there's so much power in a hidden seed, a seed that is buried. And in your life, every day you are planting good seeds and bad seeds. Every day you're doing things that are creating the garden of your life. Words are seeds. When you speak blessing over someone who is broken or messed up or having a rough day, you are planting something in their soul that will grow and change their life. And it is faith that keeps that seed in the ground. Faith that this person can become a new creation. And when you speak the word, or when you listen to a sermon, or when you study the scripture, or something that encourages you, you hold those words within you and it is faith that keeps those seeds in the ground. When you give money, even secretly to someone in need, or to something you care about, it is faith that keeps that seed in the ground. And when you spend your time that to so many other people seems like a waste of time, but you spend it with people that need it like little kids or being a care worker or blessing your neighbor or helping someone that you know they'll never change, you are planting seeds of change in the garden of your life. And the scripture tells us that those seeds will have 30, 60 and 100-fold. It's not about planting the seeds it's about keeping them in the ground, and it is faith that keeps them there, and it's a lot of work, isn't it. I heard once that people don't want to do the hard work.

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But can I tell you that a garden full of weeds is a lot harder work than a garden full of tomatoes? It's a lot of work. It's a lot of bugs. It's a lot of pollen and dust. It might be hard work planting good seed, but it's harder work tending to a garden full of weeds. And many of us are planting those seeds every day, we just carelessly spewing negative words, words of fear, we're deceiving people, and it's our fear that keeps those seeds in the ground. Sometimes we curse people with contempt, or we call some group of people or some job or some anything, we call them snakes, or cockroaches, or rats, or pigs, or goblins. Those are seeds you're planting in the garden of your life. And let me tell you, you do not want a reap of that harvest. And it is fear that keeps it in the ground. And some of us have had, maybe parents or a teacher that said things over you that in your head you know is not true, but you hold onto those seeds. Seeds of contempt towards you that you're worthless, that you're a sinner, that you're messed up, that you're horrible person, and it is fear that keeps those seeds in the ground. You're none of those things. That's a lie. The enemy, he just loves to lie to people. The kingdom of darkness is just built on deception. It's its foundation. The whole kingdom of darkness just built on lies about you. And the unforgiveness and the resentment that we feel towards people, those are seeds in the ground and fear keeps them there, and they'll keep growing unless you yank those things out of the ground. Yank them out of the ground every day. Tend to your garden. Your life is a garden. Your life is a garden and you choose every day what you're going to grow. Every day you choose. Choose today to build the kind of garden that will flourish where time is on your side and you'll be very, very grateful you did. Lord Jesus, we ask you to help us with this and to help us to tend to our garden with faith. We just come to you and we say show us how to live the rich, full kind of life that's made available when we love you with all our heart and all our soul, and love our neighbor as ourself. Help us this morning to know what it really means to drink of the water of life, and to eat of the tree of life. We ask it all in the very strong name of Jesus, amen.