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Hour of Power, 19.02.2023

GOOD MORNING – Bobby Schuller (BS) and Hannah Schuller (HS)

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

HS: And hello visitors and church family. We are so thrilled that you're here. Thank you for being here. We love you. You know a long, long time ago, before any human ever thought to ask God for healing, God declared I am the Lord that heals you. Healing is God's idea for you. You are loved.

BS: We're so glad that you're starting the week off here with God's people, and just am so honored that you would invite us into your home, if you're watching on TV or online, just believe God has a good word for you today. Let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, we thank you so much for your Holy Spirit that strengthens us and abides within us as we go through tough times and good times. We pray right now that we would be overflowing with your favor, life and goodness. Help us today to be more and more like your son Jesus. Thank you for the cross and resurrection that we could be saved by you, and come boldly before your throne, and we thank you, it's in the strong name of Jesus we pray, and all God's people said, amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – Hosea 11,1-4, 10-11 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, Hosea 11:1-4 and 10-11. "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. But the more they were called, the more they went away from me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images. It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was I who healed them. I led them with cords of kindness, with ties of love. To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them. They will follow the Lord; he will roar like a lion. When he roars, his children will come trembling from the west. They will come from Egypt, trembling like sparrows, from Assyria, fluttering like doves. I will settle them in their homes," declares the Lord. Amen.

INTERVIEW – Nita Whitaker (NW) mit Bobby Schuller (BS)

Nita Whitaker is a singer and songwriter who has performed on stage as well as the big and small screen. She's co-produced four independent CD's and has sung duets with opera singer, Andrew Bocelli, and singer/songwriter, Michael Bolton. Also an author, her newest book, When Your Hand is in the Lion's Mouth: The Life and Wisdom of a Man Named Green, is a love letter to her father. It tells the story of his faith and the love for his family and community.

BS: So great to interview you.

NW: Thank you. Happy to be here. Thank you.

BS: Of course people here in the house and on television love you. You've been singing with this ministry for years. I think this is the first time I've ever interviewed you.

NW: I think there was one other time..

BS: Okay..

NW: ..at the other church.

BS: With your daughters!

NW: Yes.

BS: Is that it? Yes, that's right. I remember that.

NW: Yes, yes, yes.

BS: That's right. Well welcome back.

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NW: Thank you so much.

BS: I'm so excited to get a chance to talk to you. Was it true, also, I was trying to remember: didn't you sing in "The Bodyguard?" Weren't you the Oscar singer?

NW: That was me!

BS: I remember that!

NW: Yes, yes.

BS: That's amazing.

NW: If you blinked, you'd miss me, but that was me.

BS: No, no, I went back and looked because I love that movie, and..

NW: Yes.

BS: ..you.. yeah that's cool.

NW: Actually, they have the demos for that song, so I was the first one that laid a vocal to that song.

BS: To..

NW: I have nothing.

BS: Is that the.. oh (SINGS – I have nothing)

NW: Yes!

BS: Can you do it? Do it real quick.

NW: (SINGS – I have nothing, nothing, nothing, if I don't have you).

BS: Oh, that's great. Making me blush. That's great. Amazing. Well, for those who maybe have just started watching Hour of Power, or haven't heard your music, tell us a little bit about like your faith journey.

NW: Well I was steeped in church from the time I was a very little girl. My mother and father were very involved in the church. My dad came from a family that was very involved in church, so we were at church Monday through Sunday. It was an everyday, and it was just part of my life, so I grew up with this faith culture, and my father exemplified so much of that because he didn't just talk the talk, he walked the walk. He did all of it. He just lived in that.. he led with love, he had a deep faith, and you can't live with someone and some of that not pour onto you. So he poured into me and just the way that he lived his life spoke volumes. I accepted Christ at a very young age. I was six years old. I was very clear about it. There was no pressure, no one said anything to me. I just said daddy, I want to do this, and he said okay. And so I was baptized at six, and I remember that's the first time I saw my daddy cry. And I said to him don't cry, daddy, don't cry. This is a good thing!

BS: Yeah!

NW: He said..

BS: Awesome.

NW: ..yes it is, baby. And he reminds me that I sang my first solo at three, which I have no recall of, but my entire family tells me this that it was after Sunday school and I had just grown up, mother said, before I even knew the words, I would just throw my head back and just sing the vowel sounds. And so this particular Sunday, my dad said.. I said daddy, I want to sing. Church was over. And someone said, this baby is saying she wants to sing. So they put me on the offering table and I sang yes, Jesus loves me. That was my first solo. Yeah.

BS: So is that.. I mean it's amazing how often you hear some of these big singers, how important church was for them singing as children, and falling in love with music. I think that's true of Justin Bieber and Christina Aguilera and others. Was that important to you, like is that where your love for music began, or where did your love for music..

NW: Absolutely. I talk about it in the book, there's a chapter called Give Me that Old Time Religion. I grew up in a black southern Baptist church in the rural area. It was just magical. The music. There was just maybe a piano, I don't think initially there was an organ, but there was a sound like a roar that would hang in the roof of that building, and the harmonies and the feet on the planks and the chair. It was just a sound that to this day savors in my heart and speaks to me deeply.

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BS: I'm loosely familiar with that because after I made a commitment to be a Christian when I was 15, the first church I went to, because where I got saved, they told me go to Crenshaw Christian Center, which was a black Pentecostal church in Crenshaw. And I was like one of the few white guys there, but it didn't matter. Everybody loved me. But the funny thing was the pastor used to get so upset because people would come for the music, and then when he'd get up to preach his sermon, a bunch of people would like say they're going to the bathroom and they'd leave. People would come for the music and leave for the sermon.

NW: That happened in our church, too, because the music was it.

BS: So good! It was so, so good. And that was the highlight for me there. I don't remember a lot of the sermons, but I remember the music.

NW: The music. The music gets in where nothing else does because sometimes words can speak at you and not to you, and sometimes they can speak to you, but the music gets in the cracks and so the music really spoke to me.

BS: My grandpa Schuller used to say every great movement had its own music. Like if you look..

NW: Very true.

BS: ..at these movements, they have a song or something to them, and that seems to give them power and longevity.

NW: Absolutely.

BS: So this book, I'm so excited. It's called When Your Hand is in the Lions Mouth: The life and wisdom of a man named Green. That's your dad.

NW: That's my dad. And I'm wearing green.

BS: And you said something.. and you're wearing green, perfect. You said something about how this is like, almost like a love letter to your dad, in a way, isn't it.

NW: Well I believe.. what I wanted to do was I had the blessing of a great dad. Not everybody gets that. But what he showed me was something I thought were universal lessons, and what he taught me were lessons I thought we could all use as we continue to walk this thing called life. Some of them are simple, practical wisdom, just everyday things that you can use. Something that makes you think. But he always had a way of understanding the love in everything and the faith in everything. And he gave me these little gems. Every chapter title is something he said, experienced, or witnessed. So I really wanted to share my dad, because he gave me so much of that hard earned, hard loved wisdom that I thought I could share it with all of you, and hopefully we can all take these gems with us, live life a little richer, a little fuller, a little more faithful.

BS: And of course you're a parent now, too. So you've been able to put some of these into play with your own kids.

NW: Absolutely.

BS: What do you think people will learn and take away if they really dive into this book?

NW: That love always wins. That we are not destined to become something just because of our circumstances. That we are not what happened to us. And that with faith and love, we can all get through this thing called life.

BS: Wonderful. I love it. The book is called When Your Hand is in the Lions Mouth by Nita Whitaker. Nita, thank you so much for being with us.

NW: Thank you, Bobby.

BS: I'm so excited about your book.

NW: Thank you.

BS: We love your music, so thank you for being here.

NW: I appreciate you having me.

BS: Thanks so much, God bless you.

NW: Thank you. Thank you.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Well no matter who you are, would you stand with us? Hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving from the Holy Spirit. 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. Thanks you can be seated.

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller – Stay Humble, Keep Growing

Today I want to talk about the importance of keeping good company with the Lord, particularly as it has to do with personal development. I like the phrase personal development, even though its over used, it is a term that I think we could incorporate into our view of discipleship. To be a disciple of Jesus means to be an apprentice, or a student. It doesn't just mean that we were saved by grace through faith; it does mean that, that's at the core of our creeds and doctrine, but it also means that we've made a choice every day to do our best to follow Christ and become like Him. And that means that we apply ourselves with a degree of effort into becoming the best version of us we can be. And the best version of us is the one that looks the most like if Jesus were walking in my shoes. And that version of us is not something we're called to do by duty, but it's the best possible life we can live. And I want to invite you to that today. I want to invite you to commit your life to constantly be a person who wants to grow. Wants to grow. Growing is not something that is a default. It's easy to feel that way, that simply as I go through life, I'm going to grow. And there are things that happen in life that cause us to stop growing altogether. It's easy to fall into this trap because when we're born, growing is just what we do, right? I mean you look at a two-year-old becoming a five-year-old, and that person is growing, and the price of their shoes every year, new shoes, that's expensive. I'd love to invent a pair of kids' shoes that expands somehow over time, that grows with the kid. But in life, we're always growing, and I think there's something, as a kid, about going to school that forces you to have some kind of personal growth. You have to learn how to read and write, arithmetic and all of those. So there's a sort of ongoing growth that happens, but when we leave school, when we go to the workplace, when we get into the rhythms of life, it's now up to you to grow or not grow. And I think what happens is most people kind of stop or only do it when they're forced to do it. And I want to encourage you to commit your life every day, to build little things into the habit of your life to make sure that year after year, you're growing. Maybe slowly, but you're growing. You can look back and say yes, I've learned more, I've grown more, I've become more like Christ than I was a year ago. We serve a God that even when we mess up a million times, He continues to forgive us. Isn't that good news? That God sets aside His ego when we offend Him and He just forgives us over and over. He commands us to forgive people seventy times seven. You know why? Because that's what He does with us. He loves us and there's nothing you have done that can cause you to forever be away from God. He is always waiting for you with open arms. And so to grow, we have to not be afraid of falling in this way. So I want to encourage you that there is a great reward in God's company. Growing and living every day with God, it's the best.. honestly, it's the best kind of life we can live. I remember when I was in college in business school, I was lucky enough to go to a Christian school, but I also at the time worked for a real estate investment company in town. So I did both things. And at the school, most of the kids really were pretty Christian, and they were really committed to God. They chose a Christian university because they cared about that, in most cases. But at the investment firm, most were not Christians. In both places, I made lots of friends, but there's two who's stories kind of went in opposite directions. One, there was a guy named.. we'll call him Brian that I worked with, really great guy. Did have a foul mouth but I really liked him a lot and we became pretty good friends. And I remember at the time thinking if there was anyone that I ever thought was going to succeed in life financially, it was going to be this guy.

He was so set that someday he was going to get a Porsche 911 turbo. He had it on his wall. I don't know if he listened to like Tony Robbins a lot, or something, but he like visualized. This is the dream. And this is my life, this is who I'm going to be. I'm going to make money and I'm going to get there. And I just really did admire.. I don't think he was a Christian, but I admired his drive to want to get into that place. And then there was another guy who lived on our floor named Rick.. we'll call him Richard. Australian guy. He was an old man, though. I remember, I was 19 or 20 at the time. He was 25. And back in college, there weren't a lot of those. We just remember thinking oh, he's like my dad's age or something. Look how old this guy is. But he had a way about him. He was, as I said, Australian but he was just full of God's life and he had a way of just seeing the needs of others. When you were with him and he talked to you, he had very bright eyes and it just felt like his enthusiasm was contagious, and when you talked to him, it was like he was seeking to know how he could help you and love you and be a friend to you. He's the kind of person you would trust everything with. He just seemed like a trustworthy person. And I remember whenever we weren't talking to him, he was reading a lot. He loved to read non-fiction books, and personal development, and read the Bible a lot. And his dream was not a Porsche 911, it was to be a missionary. And I remember years later coming back around, let's say 10/12 years later, within one year I remember both of those guys to hang out and sort of see how their lives were going. And that same guy, Richard, who wanted to be a missionary, he did. He went off and became a missionary. He met the love of his life and was married. He had a really great marriage, and they had like way too many kids. I forgot how many it was, but a lot of kids, and he was just bubbling with joy, had the same kind of enthusiasm. And in the process, invented some.. I forget what it was. Invented some kind of thing.. has something to do with camping. Sold it to a company, and was like now rich as Crassus. I mean the guy like made some huge windfall payday, was still doing different things in ministry, but just because he found a need and invented this thing, he had this big windfall. And so here he was, you wouldn't know he was rich, but as I got to talk to him, I heard this amazing story. Not much later, I met with that other guy, Brian, who I thought would be the most successful guy ever, and he had bounced around a bunch of jobs. He was driving a BMW now, but as I got to know the story better, I realized he probably couldn't afford it. He kind of overleveraged to get it. And it seemed like he was never really happy with his roommates, bounced around a lot and he wanted to be married, but he said well, I'm not going to get married until I really make it, and now he's well into his 30's and I just remember thinking just meet a girl now. If you really want to get married, go meet somebody. And it was interesting how the one friend who wanted to be rich and wanted a nice sportscar. There's nothing wrong with that, but wanted that 911 so bad, it really didn't turn into anything in his life. But the other guy who just loved people and wanted to help people, like as a bystander.. not as a bystander.. as a byproduct, he got this huge payday and he got this great family. And I'm sure his life isn't perfect, but you could see that in one person he wanted to become a better person, and he wanted to help people. And the other guy wanted an awesome car. And how those two lives led to two very different results. Can I tell you something. I need you to hear this today. Results are from who you become. You can desire those things all day long, but it's not until you become a magnet to those things. It's not until you develop into that type of person that the things you want in life come to you. As Jesus said, seek ye first the kingdom of God, that is the reign of God in your life, that you become a Jesus kind of person. And all these things, all the other stuff that the pagans run after, will come to you because God knows you need them. But if you seek first His kingdom, you'll just naturally attract those things. Maybe we can say it this way. And if you hear the next thing I'm about to say, I promise your life will change if you apply it. Victory in life is like petting a cat. Victory in life is like petting a cat. Now we all know what it's like to pet a dog. Piece of cake, right? You see a dog and he's wagging his tail and he looks at you and you're like how you doing and he's like how you doing?! You're like how are you doing?! And everybody is all excited, right?

And the dog comes and they always do this thing when they get close to you, maybe they yelp a little bit because they're so excited, they go you know; this like.. what do you call it? You do that thing to a cat, hey buddy, how are you? And the cat goes gross. And then the tail goes up and he shows you his you know what? And it feels like insult to injury, and this is how cats are. If you want to pet a cat, you have to allure the cat. Like my sister has this great cat named Luna that is so cute and very fun. And like whenever we're gathered as a family, anyone who tries to pet her, she kind of scurries away. But if you ignore her, then sometimes she'll come to you. Actually, what's even better is if you have something like a string and you bounce the string, she'll come around and to like look at the string like.. and if you try and give the string to her, she'll run away. But if you kind of like go oh, this is my string, like this, she'll like come around and like start playing with the string. And not all cats are like this, but you get it, don't you? That to pet a cat, you have to talk the cat in some weird way to coming to you. And so much of life is that way. That if you want victory in life, many of the victories; there are some victories that are all about pursuit and going for it, I guess, but I feel like the big victories that you really want in life are really about becoming a different kind of person. About becoming the kind of person that attracts those things to you. And no one but Jesus can show you the very best way to become that kind of person. Yes, there's other people who have wisdom, but the best person to follow is Christ. Victory is like a cat. So if you want to share your faith with someone, I had to learn this. I used to love to like.. when I was younger, really go out of my way to witness and share my faith with others, and it just didn't work. What worked was living like Christ and being full of joy and people becoming my friends, and then me having a conversation with them. It's very different. If you are looking for a spouse in life, and maybe you haven't found that person, you're always going after this fast, maybe a change to take instead of saying what kind of spouse you want, is to say what kind of spouse shall I become. And the person will come into your life. Too often when I meet young people, or old people, or anybody in-between that's single, maybe divorced, wants to meet someone, is very often they can tell you top to bottom what they want. Got to have a sense of humor, got to be a surgeon, got to be 6'3. And this is the girl. Not a lot of women over 6'3. No, no, but they give you a list of all the things that they want in another person, but if you ask them what kind of spouse do you want to become. What kind of spouse do you want to be when someone marries you. They're like, well, I'm good as I am. Okay. There is a balance, isn't there, between self-confidence and loving people, and also becoming a better version of yourself. And that's what the gospel does for us is it allows us to keep coming closer to God and learning from the scriptures, and learning from people in our lives that can help us. So if you want to be a spouse, you got to become the kind of person that attracts the kind of spouse you want. And this is true with money, too, and of course there are so many things that are more important than money, but money is also like a cat. I've noticed that many of the people who have done well financially are trustworthy people who have a way of seeing opportunity. They're much more like my friend Richard and much less like my friend Brian where their goal in life is not to make money, their goal in life is to find a need and fill it. Same thing with a job. Same thing with so many of the other victories in life. It's about luring those things into your life. It's about becoming a different kind of person. Results in life are from who you become. It's from who you become. And today I want to encourage you to get on the path of discipleship and of wisdom and of feedback to always work on every aspect of your life to become the type of person that attracts the kinds of victories into your life that you need. Maybe today you say I'm never going to this, I'm never going to do that. I can't do this. God is so involved in your life and loves you and is for you. We're going to see that in the passage in Hosea where so much of the healing and goodness that you experienced in life is from God, even though we didn't know it. And how very often we just think we did it, or we just think we were lucky, but really it's God who's doing it. Nita sang a song I'm Not Lucky, I'm Loved. What a positive good way of viewing life.

Stay Humble, Keep Growing

That when good comes into our life, it's because God loves us, even though, even though, even though. God is for you, and not against you. He's on your team. He loves you. In Hosea, which Hannah read today, Hosea is a prophetic book. It's actually a poem, most of it. And Hosea is a very sad poem like so much of the ancient script. Hosea begins like this. He marries, and almost instantly his marriage goes wrong. His wife cheats on him, and God tells him pursue your wife and win her back. And so he does, and he pays off her debts. And then she cheats on him again, and so he pursues her and there's this back and forth when she cheats on him, and he pursues her and pays off her debts, and just keeps going after her, and it's this heartbreaking story of a man who wants to save his family. As the poem goes on then, you see that God uses this heartbreaking story to show the prophet Hosea this is what my relationship is like with my people. If you could read the Old Testament in one sitting, and you can't – it would take forever, but if you could and you really watched it, one of the things.. you'd call it like a motif in literature. One motif you'd see over and over is God's people are troubled. So He saves them and blesses them abundantly. And then they turn their backs on God and do horrible things to each other and to the world. And so God withdraws His blessing, and they get into trouble, and in their trouble, they cry out to God and so He rescues them and blesses them. But then when they're blessed, they turn their back on God. And it's this like how many times will this happen. And I think it happens hundreds of times over and over and over in the Bible. And this is what God is talking about with Hosea. God tells Hosea I want to bless my people. I want them to have victory. I want them to have full baskets. I want them to be healed. I want them to be full of life. But they turn their backs on me, and they neglect the poor and the widow and the orphan, and they turn to Baals, they turn to idols, and they do evil things in my sight, even though I'm the one who blessed them. And he says there's this hypocrisy where they turn their back on the poor and those who are in need. And they worship these idols and sacrifice human beings to them. And then they come into church (we would say church) into synagogue or temple, and they do both. And he says there is no knowledge of God in the land! Now that phrase which is used over and over, there's no knowledge of God in the land. This word knowledge is yada. Everybody say: yada. It's different in Hebrew than it is in English. Knowledge in English is more like you know data. You know things. Yada, though, is intimacy. It's the kind of friendship you have with your brother or sister, your favorite sibling or your best friend. It's the way your mom or your dad just knows you so well, or the way you know your kids so well. Yada means you really know each other super well. When I grew up in the 80's, my grandfather, who is the founding pastor of this church, was super famous. People knew him everywhere. And most people my age have not heard of him, but when I was a kid, it was like everybody, especially in Orange County, knew who he was. And I would meet super fans that could tell me so many things about my grandpa. They could say where he lived between this time and this time, and where he got his thirteenth honorary doctorate from, and when was the first time he had said this, and they could name all of his books. They had all of these data points of knowledge that I'd never heard of, and they would recite it to me. I'd go that's great. And there's nothing wrong with that. If you're a Dr. Schuller super fan, that's great. He deserves it. He did a lot of great things. But they didn't know him, you know what I mean? They knew him, they had the knowledge, but they didn't really know him like I knew him. If you haven't seen the man in an open robe in his underwear drinking a cup of coffee looking at the ocean as I have, the knowledge is different. I had a friend who saw one of his books for sale in a used book store. She said look at this book I found from your grandpa. And I said turn it around, look on the back. And that's me with my grandpa as a whatever, two- or three-year-old. Look at that smile. My grandpa's is good, too. Anyway, I remember I was fixing something, doing something, and my grandpa goes.. and he had a way of doing this sometimes to people as a growing edge for him. Bobby, get me a cup of coffee. And I looked at him and said get it yourself! I'm working! What are you.. get me a cup of coffee. And he says I'm sorry. Will you get me a cup of coffee, please.

And I was like all right, I'll get you some coffee, but you should do it next time. You need to work out more. And I got him some coffee, handed it to him, I was like here you go, stop being snarky. It's a different thing. And that's the thing with celebrities is people know about them, but they don't know them. You know Steve Jobs; our world idolizes him. They think he's this great wonderful marketer, business manager, but you ask his older daughter, she'll say he's a horrible person. He treated me terribly. We don't care about that. Why? We didn't know him. If we knew him, we probably wouldn't like him. And I think that's one of the problems that so many people have turned their back on God. They know about Him; they don't know Him. They don't know God. If they knew Him personally, they'd love Him. They couldn't resist Him. There's no one more joyful, loving and overflowing with passion for you than God. He's the most interesting, intelligent, celebratory, mirth filled being in the universe. There's never been anyone more creative, more full of life and love. The Bible even says God is love. Like if you're going to have one word to describe Him, that's it. But if you've never experienced Him, if all you have is book knowledge, then you never really know Him. And I think this is the problem is that there's no knowledge of God in the land. There's no knowledge of God in the land. We have all our theories about God and our doctrines and our theories, but do you know Him? Do you wake up in the morning excited to be with Him and to live in His kingdom and to know that every moment of your life you're perfectly safe and full of His power. That He sees you and is in love with you as a good Father would be with His daughter or son. Oh, if you haven't experienced God, chase after Him and get to know Him. He loves you. And that's what He says in Hosea 11. After all of the stuff, it's almost like this remorseful thing that God says in Hosea chapter 11. When he says, "when Israel was a child, I loved him. And out of Egypt, I called my son. But the more they called, the more they went away from me. They sacrificed to Baal's and they burned incense to images. It was I who taught Ephraim to walk." Ephraim is another way of saying Israel. "Taking them by the arms, but they did not realize that it was I who healed them. I led them with the cords of human kindness, with ties of love." And then it says, "they will follow the Lord. He will roar like a lion. When he roars, his children will come trembling from the west. They will come from Egypt, trembling like sparrows from Assyria, fluttering like doves, and I will settle them in their homes, declares the Lord." He says it's like they don't know, but they were like a child whose cheek I put to my cheek. They don't know but that when they were blessed, it was I who blessed them. When they were healed, it was I who healed them. Because even when they turn away from me, I forgive them and I love them. Can we just say that there is a great reward to God's company. There's a great reward in just doing life with God. And sometimes that reward is our daily bread. Sometimes that reward is that relationship. But always that reward is eternal living. The best kind of life we can have. God's call to us is to be His disciples, which is a fancy way of saying we become His students. That we devote our lives every day to being more and more like Him. I've run out of time, but I've been asked this question before: Is it okay to follow God for the reward? Everybody repeat after me. Okay? Of course! Of course! Of course it is! Of course it is. Why else would He tell us over and over about the reward. There's this weird western thing where we think, well we have to just follow God out of some abstract idea of duty or honor, and that duty/honor, those are all noble and good things, and I hope you have those virtues. But God does not ask us to follow Him just because we ought to, or because we should. And let me just say, I'm asking you to follow and commit your life to God because I love you. Because I know it's the best most joyful amazing life you can have. That's why! The reward. In Malachi, God tells us that there is a reward for tithing. In Deuteronomy, God tells us there's a great reward for those who follow the commands, and the commands means full barns and healthy flocks and you'll be above and not beneath, and the head and not the tail. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus uses the word "reward" over and over. You'll get a reward. You'll get a reward. You'll get this reward. You'll get a reward.

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And then He finishes with everyone is seeking after food and clothing and fame, and He says, and your heavenly Father knows you need these things, but seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, that means to know Him personally and to live under His care. And all these things – everybody say all these things. All these things will be added to you. It's the word of God. Its either true or it isn't. There is a reward. And there's nothing wrong with getting up in the morning and saying I want the reward of eternal living. I want God's reward in my life, which is a hundred-fold blessing in every aspect of my life. I want to seek out God and train to be like Him because there is a great reward. I remember I had a friend once who had a spiritual director and he said to her, I want to give up something for lent, but I can't think of what to give up. And she stopped – they were walking – and she looked at him and she said give up? Why would you give up anything? She said first, think of what you want to gain, and then you'll know what you need to cut loose from your life. That's a good way of thinking about it. That's a Christian way of thinking about it. God only asks us to give up one thing in order to attain the reward of another thing, which is a thousand times better than the little thing we had to give up. So, I'll finish with this. How do we do that then? How do we change and of course there's a million ways to answer this question. But when it comes to living under God's loving care, having a good relationship with God or with anybody is.. so the main motif in Hosea is either marriage or parenting. How do children spell love? How does your spouse spell love? In almost every case, love is spelled T-I-M-E. It's the most valuable resource we have and everyone who loves you demands it. Good, real, consistent time. T-I-M-E. You have to give your time to God. And that is such a small price to pay because let me tell you, He gives you a lot of time back in return. Can we agree on that? The time we lose that we give to God is given back to us a hundred-fold. The kind of love that your wife or husband wants is T-I-M-E. The kind of love that your kids want, its T-I-M-E. Your best friend? Its time. You need to spend time with people. And time, like money, is elusive, it has a way of always getting away from us, unless we are disciplined, and to be disciplined, you need ritual. Ritual. Here's my ritual. And some of my most important relationships, my wife is, other than God, is my most important relationship. Every Monday, we have a date day. And all of my friends know try and get ahold of Bobby or Hannah on Monday, just forget it. We're off having fun, doing something fun. On Wednesday morning, I get breakfast with my daughter. Every week. On Saturday, I go to Disneyland with my son, and sometimes my daughter. Every week, almost without fail. On Friday nights, I spend time with my friends, almost every Friday night. But now we're getting into almost, because we're going in order of most important relationships. And on Sunday, I'm here with you, and you're here, and I think that's great. And.. thanks. And every morning, I write down my goals, and I have a cup of coffee, it's the best drink of the day, and read my Bible. And these little rituals seem like a lot, but they're not, because I promise you, you already have other bad.. a lot of us already have bad rituals in place of those. You probably do the same thing every morning when you get up, whether it's good or bad. You probably do the same thing most nights that you get home from work. Its ritualized but you don't know it, so change the ritual, and make time for God, and make time for personal growth, and your discipleship, and you'll just see slowly over time, like a year, two years from now, you're going to be like how did I get so blessed? What the heck happened? What happened? There's a reward for those who put the Lord first in their life. There's a reward for people who emphasize their marriages, who emphasize their kids, there's a reward for that, and it is worth it. So I want to encourage you to do that. Hey, if you're feeling beat up, or you're feeling guilty, or feeling shame, God is so for you. He is forgiven you. Today is a great day, a great day to make a change in your life. Just a small change that you do consistently over time. Watch how everything in your life changes. So Lord, we come before your throne, and we just say, Father, that we love you, and we pour our hearts out to you. I pray that you would bring people into our lives that are more like who we want to be, and help us, Lord, to change by making little changes every day.

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Lord, we absolutely love you with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength and with all our mind, and it's in the strong name of Jesus we pray, and all God's people said, amen.

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

Well way to go. I'm so glad that you gathered with us today. You're starting your week off right and you showing God that He is first in your life by gathering with Him and His people on this holy day, so we're glad that you're here. I want to encourage you to go outside and say hi to Nita. She has a book out there. If you're interested in a good read, I would encourage you to pick it up and just thank her for being here with us. She's such a gift to us. And thank YOU for being here. And now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift His countenance upon you and give you His peace in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, amen.