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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 welcome visitors and hello church family. It is such a delight to be with you today. You know, I felt like someone needed to hear this, but I want you to know you are never, never too dead for resurrection. Jesus is in the resurrection business. You are loved.

BS: Amen. Let's begin with a word of prayer. So Father, we thank you for those of us who have come here today and feel like something has died, or something has gone forever. We thank you that there is no tragedy you can't turn around. We thank you that you hold the whole world in your hands. We pray today, Father, you'd give us faith to believe that even when we're down to nothing, you're up to something. That you are doing great things in our lives, and that its never over until it's over. And so we trust you with our dreams, with our hearts, with our lives, with our children, with our work, and everything else that's important to us, we thank you and it's in Jesus' name we pray, all God's people said, amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – John 5,2-9 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, John 5:2-9. Now there is in Jerusalem near the sheepgate, a pool which in Aramaic is called Bethesda, and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie: the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been invalid for 38 years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, do you want to get well? Sir, the invalid replied, I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes in down ahead of me. Then Jesus said to him, get up. Pick up your mat and walk. At once, the man was cured. He picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was the Sabbath. Amen.

WELCOME / COME VISIT – Bobby Schuller

Amen. Welcome to Shepherd's Grove. We're so glad you're here. Hey, this is a hospitality church. A lot of times when I was visiting other churches, when I'm traveling or things, I'll go to churches that have a lot of tradition and they're great, but I just don't know what to do, do I stand or sit. I don't really know this prayer. We're not like that here. We have prayers and things that we do, but you just be you. We just want you to know we're glad you're here. And church is, in a way, are like throwing a party – the more people that come, the better, and we're just so glad you're here.

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller – Do You Want to Get Well?

In life, we have to make a choice to follow God, or turn our back on Him. Our singer, Robin, sang these words: as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. That's a famous passage from Joshua where the people of Israel enter into the Promised Land, but before they go, Joshua says, some of you are worshipping idols and you're worshipping Yahweh God. But today, as we enter into the Promised Land, you can't do both anymore. You have to choose either idols or the Lord. And he says, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. You only get so many moments in your life to make a decision to follow Jesus before you stand before the Lord in your death or the return of Christ. And what I want to do in just a second here is give you an opportunity to make a decision right now to follow Jesus Christ. I'm doing it at the beginning of the sermon, not the end, so I don't forget. When I made a decision to follow Christ, I just said I'm not going to ride the fence anymore, I'm going to do it and I did and my life was never the same.

Do You Want to Get Well?

Maybe you've made some mistakes or you have something in your life or maybe you grew up a Christian or maybe you went to your grandma's Bible study as a kid, but you've never made a decision 'I want to follow Christ.' Do it today because Christ was crucified and risen from the dead for you. You can be saved and know that when you come to face the Lord, heaven will be your home. Will you make a decision to do that today? If you've made that decision, I want to keep track of it, and the way I'm going to keep track of it is I want you to text me the word HOPE to 252525 and I'll know today you made a decision to follow Jesus. If that's you, make sure you find a good Bible believing church and plug in and your life will never be the same. Well I want to ask you a question today. Do you want to get well? Do you WANT to get well? Do you really want to? If you want to get well, that's good and all, but you'll have to turn your back on the thing that made you sick. Many of us, probably all of us, are trying to lose a little weight sometimes. You know, it's easy with COVID and other things to put on a few pounds. Maybe you want to get rid of it. Or maybe you just want to get healthier or stronger. Maybe you're injured and you need to go back to physical therapy, or back to the doctor, or you need to go into training again. You want to be healthy, but there's a cost. There are things you have to get rid of in your life if you want to have those things. And what you say is Bobby, it's just my coffee in the morning. And I say my cup of coffee looks like a black tea and it doesn't have any milk in it. But maybe your coffee looks like this. It's a venti Frappuccino from Starbucks every single day. That's actually you, isn't it Greg. That's funny. My friend actually does this. I'm not picking on you, Greg. A venti Frappuccino every day. You know what we called a venti Frappuccino in the 80's? We called it a chocolate milkshake, that's right. You just put a little caramel on top, throw some coffee in, and all of a sudden you give it an Italian name doesn't seem so bad for you. They said an apple a day keeps the doctor away. Maybe a Frappuccino a day keeps the blues away. I don't know. Sure feels nice to have a sip of a Frappuccino. Nothing wrong with having a Frappuccino on occasion. But if you have a habit of a Frappuccino every morning, it's almost the same calories as a Big Mac meal from McDonalds every single day. If you want to get healthy, you have to turn your back on the thing that made you sick. Maybe in life, you want to work and you want to succeed in your business in all that you do, and in order to do that, you're going to have to turn your back on your family, on your friends, on your church, maybe on God, but hey, that is the price you pay to win. Some of you are going to have to do that. Or, maybe you heed the wisdom of those who have done that, and you may have to turn your back on some of your work if you want to be the kind of dad, husband, friend, leader, Christian that you know in your bones you were born to be. You have to make a choice. Do you really want to get well? Do YOU really want to get well? Do you want to pay the price of getting well. If you want to get well, you can. You sure can. If you want to be a disciple of Jesus; Jesus didn't want just regular everyday Christians. He wanted something called a disciple. Disciple is the root word for discipline. That means someone who's trained. He wanted experts. He wanted people who were willing to devote their lives and in return for that what do they get? Eternal living. Not just eternal life where you live in heaven when you die, but right now the best most powerful awesome life that's available to any human being, but it comes at a cost. It's the pearl of great price. Maybe you want this life. Maybe you want to devote your life to understanding the scriptures. Maybe you want to devote your life to the things that really matter when you die, and that have an effect on posterity. But you also want to binge Netflix. So do !! Join the club! You want to be on TikTok and YouTube and tickety tack and taggety tock, I don't know. I'm not up to speed on everything. Netflix does this amazing thing, and it's for you. After you watch for several hours in a row, it pauses and it asks you 'are you still watching?' This is my favorite meme online right now. When Netflix asks if you're still watching, and you see your reflection in a black screen. It's happened to us all. There's nothing wrong with Netflix, but maybe seven hours is too much. Maybe. Maybe there's a cost to that, too. Do you want to get well? If you want to get well, you got to turn your back on the thing that made you sick. A friend of mine, good man. Good man, good Christian man. Good family man. Got in a terrible snowboarding accident and broke his back. When his back healed, it healed and it put pressure on a nerve in his spine, and it created excruciating pain. He couldn't sleep, couldn't focus, couldn't think. Had a number of procedures. Went to chiropractors and all sorts of doctors, and no one could help him. So, he got on prescription pain pills and that helped, a little bit. It helped. Four years go by and the man takes these pills, mitigating his pain, and his surgeon calls and says hey, good news. There's a new procedure, I think it'll work for you. Its minimally invasive. It uses lasers and we can cut just a little bit of bone around that nerve and it should relieve the pain. Man goes into surgery, gets the procedure. Comes out, recovers. All the pain is gone! Miracle of miracles. But now, for four years, he's been taking this medication.

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It takes him ten more years to stop. Like ten million other Americans, all good, fine people, addicted to prescription pain pills, he had to look in the mirror and ask himself the question – do I want to be well? Do I really want to be well? Do you want to be well? You can. But there's a big price to pay, but it's worth it. It's worth it. It's like the man who sold everything to get the pearl of great price. It's worth it, my friend. It's worth it. And you can do it. I believe in you. It just.. you know in your heart often it comes at a cost. If you do what everyone else does, you will get the results that everyone else gets. The results you're getting are the result of your plan and your philosophy. Your choices and your philosophy are perfectly designed to give you the results you're getting. I hope that doesn't seem harsh. I hope it gives you hope. I hope it allows you to look in the mirror and say, if I'm willing to have an apple a day, I just might keep the doctor away. Some of you say well that's easy, I'll just have 30 apples in one sitting, and then I got a month covered! No, no, an apple a day keeps the doctor away. It's the small changes deciding I want to be well and I don't want to make huge changes now, but small changes forever that make all the difference in the world. If you want to get well, you can, but you have to turn your back on the thing that made you sick. It's in John chapter 5, Hannah read the scripture today, did a wonderful job. It's a story about the pools of Bethesda. Goes like this. "Some time later Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. There in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate, a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades, here a great number of disabled people used to lie – the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been invalid for 38 years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he'd been in this condition for such a long time, he asked him, 'do you want to get well?'" Do you really want to get well? There's other things in the scripture I could teach on that I don't have time to teach on today, some important things about legalism, some important things about sabbath and the structure of the pharisees, but I want to talk about the most stabbing part of this story. It's when Jesus looks at you in the eyes when you've been sitting there for 38 years and He says 'do you really want to get well? Do you really want to walk?' Is that such a crazy question to ask of someone who can't walk if they really want to get well? Well if the man's been there for 38 years, maybe not. Maybe he did at first, but maybe now he's lost all hope and he's learned to just settle with what he's got. There's lots of reasons why he might not want to get well. We all know them very well because we're all human beings. We all make the same mistakes and we always have and we always will. But Christ will set us free. Maybe he didn't really want to get well because hey, he had friends there. The pool of Bethesda was a special place, said that when the waters would move mysteriously, the first person who got in would be made miraculously well. The problem was pools at Bethesda were a big place. They are about the size of a football field. That's a big pool. That's a big pool. That's a Bobby Schuller sized pool. I would love a pool like that, I don't know about you. King Herod really made that pool into what it was with colonnades and marble. Maybe at first this guy tried to get in and could just never could get there and 38 years he's still trying. Jesus says do you want to get well? And maybe he thinks about his friends. You don't sit in one spot for 38 years full of lots of people and not make a couple of friends and have a couple of good conversations. There's nothing wrong with that. I remember once I met a girl who became a Christian and wanted to devote her life to Christ, and she knew that she had to give up smoking weed. She knew it was dragging her life down. She knew it was clouding her mind. She knew she was a better person at life when she wasn't on the stuff. But she knew a lot of really sweet and good people that she really enjoyed smoking weed with, and I understand that. She said the hardest thing about giving up weed was not the weed it was my friends. But maybe she made the right decision, I don't know. She did what she needed to do for her. This happens a lot with those who are struggling with alcoholism. Nothing wrong with a glass of wine with dinner on occasion, but become an alcoholic, you probably can't drink and you probably can't be around people that drink if they're your friends. That's a hard reality to deal with if you want to be clean and sober. Most people who struggle with alcoholism, they get back into it because their first thought is not, I want to have a drink. Their first thought is I want to see my friends. Very often, people who drink are a lot more fun than people who don't. It's the truth! So you think I'm just going to go down there and have a Diet Coke and say hi to my friends. That's hard to do. Maybe this man at the pool of Bethesda had some really good friends. Maybe he knew if he walked again, he could never go back to that place and he'd have to say goodbye forever. After all, they're all good people. They're all good people. Why would I have to say goodbye to good people? But sometimes in your heart, you know you do. That's hard. Maybe he just felt safe there. I mean you also don't, to sit at the pools of Bethesda for 38 years, I mean, it's one of the nicest pools in the world in one of the coolest cities in the world, and it's nice and warm.

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When you live in the desert and you can live in a nice shaded marble colonnade for 38 years. Probably doesn't have a house. Certainly not starving. Certainly has a roof over his head. Probably feels pretty safe. Maybe he doesn't want to leave anymore. Maybe you feel that way hanging out in your mom's basement. Perfectly safe. It's not a bad place. Houses are pretty expensive. Do you really want to get well? You really want to give up that? You really want to walk again? You really want to live a life that matters? Well, maybe. Maybe he was used to the handouts. For sure people would go and give charity to the sick and hurting people who needed to be well. They would go there and visit Bethesda and give people what they needed. Maybe he got used to that. A young man is on his way to church, a poor kid, riding in a bus, and I ask him what do you want to be when you grow up? And he says I don't need to be anything when I grow up. All I have to do is sign my welfare check. Later we get to church and another young man from Newport Beach is dressed in the illest drip (that means nice clothes) dressed from top to floor, looks great, and I say to him, what do you want to be when you grow up? And he says it doesn't matter, I just got to sign my trust fund check. It's the same kid with the same problem. No purpose. No reason to suffer. Got a handout. Something about handouts, sometimes we like a handout more than we like a hand-up. Sometimes we want to stay there. Reminds me of Willy Wonka. Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory, the good one, the one made in the 60's. That's the right one. I've probably seen Willy Wonka over a hundred times. It's my son's favorite movie. It's always playing in the background if you come over to my house, there's about a 30% chance it'll be on. I've got the whole thing memorized, probably. Here's one thing all Americans can agree on, whether we're rich, poor, Republican or Democrat, we can all agree on this simple thing: Grandpa Joe did not deserve to go to the chocolate factory. No way. Twenty years, look at me, he says! Look at me! Twenty years I've been sitting in a bed and now that I've got a magic golden ticket to a chocolate factory and can spend the whole day there having fun with my son, not only can I walk, Grandpa Joe can dance. Amazing, it's a miracle. It's a miracle. You know who should have gone to the chocolate factory, right? Its Charlie's mom. Single mom, taking care of six people, stirring clothes in a giant like soup vat, whatever that thing was, rooting' for Charlie. And then Grandpa Joe all of a sudden gets to go? No thank you. No thank you. Actually, this was interesting, if you really watch the film, its great writing. And most people miss this: Grandpa Joe is the bad influence on Charlie. Throughout the whole movie, he's telling Charlie to lie, to steal, that its unfair, that he can break the rules. Why shouldn't he have it? He deserves it just as much as anybody else. And at the end of the film, when Charlie gets disqualified because the grandpa suggests breaking the rules, the grandpa in an upset entitled fashion, says let's go give the everlasting gobstopper to slug worth, and Charlie has to turn his back on his vindictive entitled grandpa and do what is right. And that's when Willy Wonka looks at him and says, Charlie you did it! I just knew you would do it! You did it! You won! And Grandpa Joe, of course, completely oblivious still gets to tag along for the elevator ride through the sky. But I digress. Maybe it's the handout. Maybe it's a safety. Maybe it's the friends. Maybe it's something else. But maybe Jesus can see the heart and maybe He could see that the man by the pool of Bethesda didn't really know if he wanted to be well. After all, he doesn't answer the question! He doesn't say yes, Lord, heal me. He gives all the reasons why everybody else gets in the pool before him and that's all he can say. It's hard to imagine he's still trying after 38 years. And who would? Maybe he's lost all hope. Maybe he's given up. Maybe he's not sure if he wants to take a risk anymore. But Jesus heals him. He picks up his mat and he walks. And I like to think that that man walked away and never went back to that pool again. He never stepped foot in that beautiful, amazing place with good people, full of healing and handouts and safety, he said never again, I am done forever. That can happen for you. You can get well, but you have to say goodbye to the pool of Bethesda, though it's a special place. I want to ask you that when you think about your life and who you want to be, and who you want to become, when you think about all of your wins and losses, your regrets and your victories, and then you look in the mirror where you're going, especially as you get older and you're tempted to say it's been 38 years since whatever, to imagine Jesus just simply asking you this question: do you want to get well? Do you? And when you're tempted to give up on that thing that you're called to, just hear Jesus saying it to you: do you want to get well? You can! You can get well, but you have to want it more than anything. You have to want it, really want it. And you have to want it. King throws a great wedding feast. Wow, can you imagine a wedding feast that a king throws? A huge, all the money and fame and glorious beauty in the world for a wedding. That's got to be a great wedding. And he sends out invitations to all of his friends. This is a parable from Jesus.

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And the first friend says, oh I'd love to go to the wedding, but I just bought some land and I have to go look at it. Nobody buys land and then goes and looks at it, right? This is Hebrew humor. And then the next man, he says oh I'd love to go, I really would, but I just bought some oxen, five oxen and I have to go try them out. Nobody buys oxen and then goes and tries them out. The third man says oh I'd love to go, but I've just been married. I just want to pause here. Gentlemen, if you've just gotten married, and you can't go to the king's wedding because you just got married, you're going to be in huge trouble when you tell your wife. Can you imagine going to your wife and because you're newly married, you say listen the king is throwing this huge amazing beautiful wonderful fashionable amazing once in a lifetime opportunity, a king's wedding, invited us, but I said well, we can't go because we just got married. She would look at you, wring you by the neck and say, go buy a tuxedo right now, we're going. Okay, the point is all of these people give silly excuses, and what you actually see is that in their heart, it's not that they don't want to, it's that they don't feel like it. I don't really feel like it. You ever feel that way? On a good day, you want to get well, but other days, do you really feel like it? Get rid of that kind of thinking. Its keeping you in a rut. There's a reason they call chocolate cake sinful. If sin wasn't fun, people wouldn't do it. If sin didn't bring a little happiness sometimes, if sin wasn't enjoyable, if sin wasn't neat, we wouldn't be into it at all. That's the main thing with sin is that it's great. At the frontend, sin is awesome, until you pay the price at the backend. You got to turn your back on the thing that's killing you. You got to turn your back on some of these things if you really want to live the life you know you were called to live. New I-phone just came out. Brand new I-phone. You can get your own for \$1600. It's coming out soon, or it just came out. A man buys a new I-phone and he's excited about it. The audio, the pictures, the apps, everything; just enjoying it in all his free time, he gets free time from work, or maybe during work, or whatever, he sits on the couch and he goes on TikTok, and then Instagram, and then Twitter, and then back to TikTok. He's like oh it's just there, and then YouTube, he goes to YouTube and does this for hours. He's sitting with his friends, his best buddies, they'd just gotten together, and he's there on Twitter looking at what's happening in politics, or the news. He's sitting on the couch, playing Candy Crusher, Crush Royale, or Click Clack, or whatever. And his kids come and say dad, can you help with my homework? And who wants to help their kids with their homework. I never have. I never want to, but I like to think I do it sometimes. He says no darling, I'm checking my emails. Quickly opens his emails, pretends he's reading his emails. Maybe he's on Instagram looking at whatever, his enemies or following his wife's ex-boyfriend and hating him, or doing these other.. it makes it sound like it's me. It's not. Man is on the phone constantly, and I asked the man how much did that phone cost you? And he coyly looks at me and he says, well, cost me \$1600. And I say to him, maybe the phone cost you more like \$50,000 in unmet goals, in uncaptured dreams, in unsolved problems. Maybe it cost you a million dollars, that phone. And maybe it cost you years of time with your kids you'll never get back. Maybe it cost you hours and months of sleep you didn't get that would have healed your body and your soul. You ever wonder when you think all the swiping that someone's done with their thumbs. It'd be so interesting if you could see how many miles. Like if you think this is three, four, three inches, four inches, how many miles we've scrolled in a single lifetime. Can I tell you the new I-phone costs a lot more than \$1600. Cost a lot. A lot. You have to choose. In life, we have to make choices. Not making a choice is a choice. When God created Adam and Eve, the Bible story goes like this: everything He made, He said its good. God created this and He said its good. He created that and He said its good. He created this; He said its good. And then He creates man and He says – it is not good that man should be alone. So He decides to find a companion and He brings before Adam all the animals of earth to see if that will be a companion for him. And so Adam when he names the animals, it's his way of dismissing them. He says no that's not a companion, that's a turtle. No that's a salmon. That's a parrot. That's a golden retriever, just put him here as a maybe. It's this kind of thing. And finally when he sees Eve, he says flesh of my flesh, bone of my bones. What does this tell us? One, it tells us you need people in life. You're not going to do any of these things all by yourself. Can't build a business, can't defeat addiction, you can't really follow Jesus even all by yourself. You need people. But number two, it shows us that we are different than every other creature in the world. We have will. We have a heart. That means we can choose. We can choose. You can choose. Goose can't choose. Winter comes and a goose has to fly south. That's a goose. That's what geese do. Geese. Geese's. That's a Willy Wonka reference. Bulls have to hunt. Beavers have to build dams, and chickens have to lay eggs. But you don't have to do those things. You can make a choice. An amazing thing. Only creature in the world that can really, really choose, can really choose.

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You can choose how you're going to spend your money and your time. You can choose your friends. You can choose how much time you'll spend on your phone or watching TV. You can choose whether you're going to commit your life to a church community, and go every Sunday. You can choose whether or not you're going to commit your life to really understanding the scripture and committing your life to them. You can choose whether or not you commit your life to prayer and being overwhelmed by the refreshing life of the Holy Spirit. There's nothing like it. You can choose the kind of media you consume, or don't consume, or choose to have a moment of quiet peace without all that stuff. You can choose your attitude. You can choose to focus on what you have, or focus on what's missing. Focus on what you have. And more than anything, you can choose whether or not to follow Christ. I just want to invite you again. All this stuff that I'm talking about, it almost doesn't matter if you're not at peace with God. Are you at peace with God? If you died and you faced Him today, would you feel joyful, at peace about that? Or would you be worried and concerned. I want you to make a choice today to follow Christ. Everything will change and you can do that today. You don't have to pray a prayer. You just have to make a choice now – I'm going to commit my life to God, and I want to be at peace with Him. In fact, if you're watching now, or you're here in the church, and you do want to make a choice to follow Christ, just do it right now in your heart, and your life will never be the same again. If that's you and you made a choice today, text the word HOPE to 25252. I want to know who you are and I want to pray for you. Life is full of choices, isn't it. Its full of choices. Don't put off the most important choices. Make them now. Make them now. Pay now instead of later. Trust me, it's a much better way to live life. Do you want to get well, my friend? Do you really want to get well? You can get well. You can get well. You mean me? Yes, you. It is God's will that you be made well. It is God's will that you be made whole. God has forgiven you; He's called you; He's renewed you. Will you just trust today to box out every other lie that says it's not God's will and all this horrible stuff. God loves you. He's for you, trust in it. You can be made well. Just choose today to commit your life to that, and to turn your back on the thing that made you sick. So we do that, Lord, right now. We commit our lives to you, and we just take a second to bring before you all our worries and cares. God cares about your worries. And right now, pray in your heart. Bring that care of worry before Him. Pray in Jesus' name, Lord, that you would break chains. Thank you that you've forgiven us. The past is wiped away. You are given a clean slate. Your sickness is wiped away. Your hurt and fears and unforgiveness and bitterness. Your sins are forgiven in Jesus' name. We thank you, God. We are a whole creature loved by you and we just abide in that and we thank you, it's in Christ' name we pray, all God's people said, amen.

Would you stand with me?

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

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.