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

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. It is always, always a joy to be with you. God says I have not given you a spirit of fear, but a spirit of love and power and a sound mind. Those are the things from God. You are loved.

BS: We're so glad that you're here today. We're really believing it's going to be a great morning. So Lord, we thank you, thank you so much for your Holy Spirit and your presence is here. We're grateful that you love us, that you've forgiven us, that you called us, that you're renewing us and you never give up on us. We're so grateful. We love you, and we pray today we'd be more like your son Jesus, and it's in His name we pray, amen

HS: Amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – Numbers 20,7-12 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, Numbers 20:7-12. The Lord said to Moses, "Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out from the rock for the community so that they and their livestock can drink." So Moses took the staff from the Lord's presence, just as he commanded him. He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me" (because he struck it instead of spoke to it) "enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them." Amen.

INTERVIEW – John Bevere (JB) with Bobby Schuller (BS)

John Bevere is a pastor and author who has written over 20 books, which have been translated in over 125 languages. He and his wife, Lisa, co-founded Messenger International, a ministry that translates Biblical resources all over the world for leaders to further global discipleship. His new book, *The Awe of God: The Astounding Way a Healthy Fear of God Transforms Your Life*, looks at how to have holy fear instead of being afraid of God. BS: Kevin, hi! Welcome!

BS: John, hi, how are you, my friend. Great to see you.

JB: Bobby, it's great to see you again. We've been friends for a long time, and I think you look younger every time I see you.

BS: Well, I've got.. yeah. Thank you. I don't know what to say. Well, I'm really excited about your new book. You're one of my favorite writers. You and Lisa both put out some pretty great stuff that encourages the church. My sister and I started following you in college, actually. And I'm excited about your new book. It's called *The Awe of God: The astounding way a healthy fear of God transforms your life*. Now I know your heart and your ministry, you are all about redemption, God's love, you preach grace, and you have an allergy to religiosity, so it's interesting that you're writing this book on the fear of the Lord. And let's just start there. What prompted you to write this book?

JB: Well, I mean the fear of the Lord, the Bible says, is the starting place. And it's actually the same word that God uses in the beginning that God created the heavens and the earth. So it's the starting place of knowing God intimately. Bobby, I know everybody that's sitting there, everybody that's watching us, they have a deep desire to know our creator. God put that in us. Well, the fear of the Lord opens up. I know you personally, but your wife knows you so much better. Right?

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Your family knows you so much better. And then there are viewers that don't know you as well as I do, or your family. There are people that know Jesus Christ. They're under His Lordship. They know about Him. But they don't know Him deeply and intimately. So let's start out with the first kind of like counterintuitive thought. How can I say, or how can scripture say, more accurately, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of intimacy with God because when we fear somebody, we can't have intimacy with them. That's wrong. The fear of the Lord has absolutely nothing to do with being scared or afraid of God and running from Him. It's more about being terrified of being away from Him. So it is what draws us to His heart, and if you really talk about the fear of the Lord in accurate context, it is to stand in awe, absolute reverential awe of Him. We venerate Him, we honor Him, we esteem Him, we respect Him above everything and everyone else. And when we do this, we literally open the door to His heart, knowing His heart. We look at the fear of the Lord, Bobby, it says that "Jesus delighted in the fear of the Lord." That's Isaiah 11 verse 3. Now nobody knew the Father more intimately than Jesus. So this is the reason we want to walk in the holy fear of God. And besides that, the Apostle Paul makes the statement that we work out our salvation with fear and trembling. So He doesn't say we work out our salvation with love and kindness, He actually says we mature our relationship with God through holy fear and trembling, which has nothing to do with being scared of God. I can reference one thing that'll help everybody understand this. When Moses brought Israel out of Egypt, he brought them to the mountain of God and God came down on the mountain, they all ran away, Bobby. And Moses makes a statement in Exodus 20:20 that's amazing. He said do not fear because God's come to see if His fear is in you so that you may not sin. Wait a minute, do not fear because God's come to see if His fear is in you? He's not contradicting Himself. He's differentiating between being scared of God, and the fear of the Lord. Now the difference is the person who's scared of God has something to hide, therefore, they run from the presence of God. That's what Adam does in the garden when he disobeys God. But the person who fears God has nothing to hide, that person is terrified of being away from Him.

BS: When I think of the fear of the Lord, I think of God's power, and this idea that the fear of the Lord takes away being afraid of life. Like weirdly, the fear of the Lord takes away the kind of cowardice that we can feel towards life's challenges and enemies, because the fear of the Lord is like just an.. I hear what you're saying, it's like an understanding of His power, His ability to work miracles. It's like seeing the cloud, and when we carry that with us, the irony is when you fear the Lord, you stop fearing everything else. Is that right?

JB: So all our church fathers, right back from the Ante-Nicene fathers, all the way up to people like Oswald, Chambers, FF Bosworth, if you look at others, they all taught that the fear of the Lord is what eradicates all other unhealthy fears. Now the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the problem we have in our society, Bobby, is that we've lumped all fears into one bucket – bad. We try to eradicate fears. I mean we all wore t-shirts that said "No Fear" in the 1990's, right. We have people that write self-help books – no fear! Get rid of fear! Obliterate it. But yet, we erred in putting them on a bad bucket. If I look at the fear of a mother grizzly bear, that fear gives me the wisdom not to hurt her cubs, otherwise, I'm going to get mauled. And that's good wisdom. That saves my life. Or if I look at the fear of falling two thousand feet, so therefore I'm not going to get too close to this cliff, that wisdom actually saves my life. So unhealthy fears are bad, but the fear of the Lord eradicates all unhealthy fears, which the number one that everybody fights with that's a believer is the fear of man. So the fear of man doesn't necessarily mean being scared of man, it actually is more like the fear of the Lord. Our drive is to please man instead of the one we don't see, and it's much more rewarding both now in this life and eternity to please the one we don't see.

BS: Yes, that's great. Last service, I talked a bit about.. it reminds me of like a kid whose being bullied at school. He has fear of his father and fear of his bullies, but when his dad goes to school with him, he's not afraid of his bullies anymore. Or like my wife's dad has this dog, this little dog that like is always scared of everybody, but the minute her dad picks him up, he barks at everybody and acts all tough. There's probably something like that with the fear of the Lord.

JB: Absolutely. You nailed it right on. And Bobby, one thing I've discovered, there's over 40 distinct promises that God makes in scripture only to those who fear Him. So I'm thinking long life, health, length of days, multiplied effectiveness, our descendants being blessed. I can go on and on. There's 40 of them. And interestingly enough, God says it's only to those who fear Him. And so in scripture, we have 365 references that says do not fear, but we have over 200 references that tell us to fear God. So I'm just trying to help the body of Christ to be able to understand the healthy fear of God so we can all have a more intimate relationship with Him.

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BS: I love it. The book is called *The Awe of God: the astounding way a healthy fear of God transforms your life* by John Bevere. John, thank you so much! We appreciate you.

JB: It's always good being with you, Bobby. We love you and your family very much, Lisa and I.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Whoever you are, would you stand with us? We're going to say this creed together as we do every week. Hold your hands like this as a way of receiving from the Lord, let's say it 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. Thanks, you can be seated.

It's funny, saying that creed, Chad Blake's son, who says the creed with us every single week, he has the whole thing memorized. He says the whole thing and then he says "you may be seated." Really cute.. little guy.

MESSAGE – The Words That Unlock the Promise

Well welcome to Shepherd's Grove again. I want to begin.. today we're going to talk about the importance of words, the words you hear and the words you say. There are words going around us all the time. We see advertisements, whether you're riding on the bus or listening to the radio in the car, there's words that you hear from your colleagues and your friends; words you're hearing now, obviously, words that you have on TV. There are podcasts, there's things.. music. There are things that you hear and very often we forget that these words are saturating our lives. Our brains are wired in such a way that even if you're not paying attention, there's a part of your brain that still catches the words you hear, so that there's some evidence that even when you're listening to stuff when you sleep, although I don't recommend it, your words can even capture it there. And so it's interesting how your life, in many ways, and as a result of many of the words that you're hearing and the words that you're saying, to a much greater degree than most of us want to accept. Before I get there, I want to talk about the first set of words that you need to transform your life, and that is to confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and your Savior. Many of us are living life, and life is going well. Your job is going well, you're making money, your marriage is fine, your kids are doing great, or you're reaching your goals, or maybe your job is going well, your business or school or whatever, but there's something missing, and that even though you've got everything you wanted, there's something missing on the inside. That thing you're missing is peace with God. That we have this need to be at peace with God, and even more, to be in a deep committed relationship with Him to do life in His power. And most of all, to allow His Holy Spirit to not just forgive us of our sins, but assure us of peace even with our death. Many of us, the fear of death, the dread of death is driving a lot of the neurosis and crazy things that we do, a lot of the horrible feelings and sleepless nights, a lot of the fear of death and decay, it's all coming from this lack that we either don't have confidence in God, or we're not at peace with God. And when we grow in peace with God, like everything else gets touched with this amazing peace from the Holy Spirit. So I want to encourage you today to stop riding the fence and to make a decision to commit your life to God through Jesus; to confess with your mouth that Christ is Lord, to believe that He died on the cross for your sins, that He was raised from the dead, and you will be saved. Repent and believe the gospel today. Make a decision today to choose, to choose to commit your life to Jesus, and you'll never be the same. Now speaking of words, Romans 10:9 and 10, this is part of the Roman road, if you've ever studied this, says that "if you declare with your mouth Jesus is Lord," now notice how the first thing is what you say. This is how you get saved. "If you declare with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and you are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved." So it is that profession of faith in Christ that saves you. Let's begin there. It is important to understand the power of what we profess. It is important to understand the power of what we confess, of what we say aloud, of what we declare about ourselves and others, of what we declare about our country, our family, our situation, our health. What we continue to say out loud and hear the words that saturate our lives paint a picture of our future. Our words unlock or lock our destiny. Many a people are locked out of the promise because of the words. Many people are accessing the promise because of their words, or because of THE word. In Fellowship of the Ring, every nerd like me looks up all of a sudden. Fellowship of the Ring, Gandalf stands before the door and it says in Elvish "speak friend and enter." And they need to enter the Mines of Moria.

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So he starts saying all of these passwords over and over and over, and nothing's working. Finally, Frodo says "what's the Elven word for password; what's the Elven word for friend?" And he says? Any fans? Bellok, and the door opens. Very often in life we see in old fairy tales and stories and fantasies this idea of words literally unlocking magic doors, but in a reality, there is some truth to that in your life. Now very often, the words that you're saying are actually locking doors, other words that you're saying are opening doors. I called my bank and I said I need to know the balance on my bank account, and they said what's your password? And I said all one word – bobbyisamansname. And they said, yep, that's your password. There you go. Bobby is a man's name if you spell it with a "y." I was in a café recently in San Francisco for work, and I went into this café to get some work done on my email, and I went to the barista at the front of the counter, there's nobody in there, and I said hey, what's the WIFI password? And he said you need to buy a drink first. I said all right. I'll take a large cup of coffee. And he said do you want cream? And I said just black. And I was thinking this is a little bit rude, like you got to buy a drink first. And then I said to him okay, what's the password? And he says the password is youneedtobuyadrinkfirst, all one-word, lower case. That's not a true story, by the way. It's just a joke. Just a joke. It would work, though, I feel like. If I had a café, that would be my password. So passwords, right? We understand we're ready. These passwords open up life, they open up thing, and we understand that there's words you say that somehow bless life, enlighten life, and bring joy to life. And there's other words that you say that seem to cramp in life, or cause life to shrink, to cause harm. We all understand that there's words you just.. sacred words that you just never say in certain situations, and always say in others, like in worship. We understand that there's certain taboo words. Isn't that crazy, every culture, every religion has taboos and cuss words. When you're in the entertainment industry, what's the thing you never say to someone who's trying out for a role. You never say.. never say good luck, right? You always say break a leg. You know why? Because you want them to be cast. That's actually true. That's not a joke, that's actually the real reason. But also, because there's just this taboo that you don't.. and it's just weird. It's all superstition, but the superstitions are based also in reality, some of them. It's like when they say don't walk under a ladder, it's because there's a lot of ladder accidents. So maybe there's something to what we say that can create or destroy life. And it's actually a theme in scripture that words create life, words destroy life. And that brings us to the passage that Hannah read this morning on Moses. The story used to trouble me. I actually thought it was unfair. I didn't like this story until I got it, I understood it through the lens of an old rabbi. The story goes like this. Moses is leading the people in the wilderness and they're thirsty. So Moses goes before the Lord and he says what do I do? He says you see that rock over there. Go to that rock and strike it and the water will come out. So he brings the elders together. They strike the rock and water flows out and everybody drinks and it's this great event. Sometime later, it happens again, but this time the people are grumbling and they're angry and they're stiff-necked and they've tried to mutiny Moses, and there's just all this tension within the community. And so Moses, feeling angry with them, finally he goes before the Lord and he says, the people are thirsty. What do I do? And the Lord says see that rock over there? Go and.. anybody, speak to the rock! Speak to the rock, don't hit it, speak to the rock and water will come out. So Moses, and Aaron, go to the rock and they make a speech. And Moses says, "must we," the key word there is "we," right? Not must the Lord, but must we, meaning either Moses and Aaron or Moses and God, must we get water out of this rock? Already, you see that there is tension, there's anger, there's an undertone of us versus you, and especially Moses makes it sound like he's the one doing the water and not God, right? So he takes the staff, strikes the rock, (MAKES HITTING SOUNDS) nothing happens, right. And this is God just saying, oh, hold on, hold on, you got to speak to the rock, don't hit the rock. And Moses hits it a second time, and actually, water still comes out and everybody drinks. But then, and this is the part I didn't like. God says to Moses, because you didn't trust me or fear me, you will not enter the promised land. So the punishment to Moses after all he's done, he can't enter the promised land now. He's going to only look upon the promised land and die there. He will never enter, because he hit the rock instead of speaking to the rock. I thought this seems a little rough, like a little unfair. Can't he just like sacrifice a goat or something and go in. And I heard a rabbi speak to this, and he said the reason Moses became unworthy to enter the promised land is because he was no longer aligned with God's vision for the promised land people. That they were to not be a people of swords, but a people of words. And this was, in the bronze age, the idea of the pen being mightier than the sword, was a revolutionary idea, one that almost nobody had thought of. Obviously, the sword is mightier than the pen.

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But here God is telling Moses words are more powerful than swords. And you'll see this very often as the people of praise and the people of prayer are able to overcome larger armies through miracles through the power of words. Won't you trust the Lord with your words? Won't you begin using words full of faith, words that are based on scripture, words that are trustworthy and beautiful and praiseworthy and confident. Words that make a difference, words that lift people up. You won't lift yourself up by tearing others down. Learn the power of words, excuse me. This is why dictators, for example, who are very familiar with the power of guns and swords and bombs and planes, know that the thing that most threatens them is speech. And this is why in the constitution of the United States we have 27 amendments, 27. Which is the one that talks about the freedom of speech? The first one! The very first one. The very first thing that the founding fathers wrote to protect us from tyranny was "you shall have the right to say whatever you want to say about anyone." The freedom of speech. It's a freedom of religion, the freedom to assemble, the freedom of the press, and the freedom to say anything as long as it does not threaten violence or incite crime. Wow. So this is a powerful thing, that is the power of words, and when you make words rhyme, like in poetry, they become more powerful. People can remember them. They are kind of catchy. When you put them to music, wow, they become very powerful. I remember my Grandpa Schuller used to say there was no great movement in history that didn't have its own music, and I think that's true. So words have the power to change, to create, to destroy, to lift up, to tear down. Words are powerful. In the creation story says that in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And He said let there be light and the light was separated from the darkness. Isn't that interesting? That it looks like words can create light. It looks like words can create darkness. A man is walking down the road, sees two painters painting a landscape of the city of Los Angeles. And the first woman he sees, she's painting a beautiful picture, and its a setting on a hill, and the Hollywood sign, and beautiful art deco buildings and new cars and people dressed, and it's a gorgeous sunny beautiful day in Southern California. The next guy painting the same landscape, you see chain-link fences, and people doing drugs and a lot of gray and spray paint and trash and litter. And so what's interesting is both painters are seeing the same thing, but they're expressing a different experience, although they're seeing the same thing, they're experiencing two different things. And very much life is like this, that is, that what you're seeing on that canvas is what's coming from the heart of the artist. And the words that you're speaking in life are coming from your own heart, and they're painting a picture for your life. Just imagine that. Imagine that every time you speak, it's like paint coming out of your mouth, and it's creating a picture for what your future and your present will be. This is a very real idea. So in the creation, we see that God creates.. that He creates light and darkness. He creates everything. In fact, John's gospel says in the beginning He just says it plainly. In the beginning was? The word, and the word was with God and the word was God and the word became flesh and dwelt among us. It looks like words can become flesh, and words do become flesh in you. And then in the creation story, we see that this whole creation then in its perfection and beauty was uncreated, was undone, also with words, by asking one single question – did God really say, is what the serpent asked Adam and Eve. Did God really say, and that question alone has caused more harm today and it continues to reverberate. Did God really say? Every modern church in America, seems like every seminary, every Christian even is wrestling with this question – did God really say? Did He really say that? My friend, I can tell you, He really said it. It's really true. And unlike Adam and Eve, we can just read it, and we can trust it, and we can stake our lives on it. And when you do, you become an endorser of words that create life, words that create life. Words that save, words that rescue, words that turn a life around, and that is exactly what the word of God is. Words can destroy and they can lift up. The great King Belshazzar, at the time the most powerful man in the world, the emperor of the Babylonian empire has all the money, all the power, all the gold, all the military prowess, everything. And one day he's partying with his friends celebrating in the palace. All the nobles and everyone's there, everyone's getting drunk and having a good time. There's a guy with like a middle eastern diaper on waving a palm branch. You've seen the movies; you know what I'm talking about. Another gal eating grapes, somehow. And then they bring out all of the accoutrements from the temple that they stole when they destroyed the temple, the golden goblets and the jewelry, and they begin to drink out of the golden goblets from the holy of holies. And then, I feel like this would be great in a movie today, somebody could do it this way, a hand appears, just a hand, nothing else. A hand, a human hand appears and with one hand begins writing "mene, mene, tekel, upharsin." And everybody freaks out. Knees are shaking, people pass out, and nobody knows what it means: mene, mene, tekel, upharsin? Literally it means numbered, numbered, weighed, divided, but what does that mean?

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They call the prophet Daniel and he says, the Lord says unto you numbered, numbered, your days are numbered and they'll come to an end soon. Weighed – you've been weighed and been found wanting. Divided – your kingdom will be divided between the meads and the Persians. And that night, Belshazzar died and his kingdom was divided amongst the Medes and the Persians. Words make a difference. Words make a difference. Centurion says to Jesus, I'm not worthy to have you in my house. I need you to heal my servant. Just SAY THE WORD! I know he'll be healed. I know how it works. I command my soldiers to go, I command another to come, you just say the word. You don't need to touch him, you don't need to see him, you don't need to do anything to him. I know you say the word and he'll be healed. And Jesus says greater faith in all of Israel have I never seen, and He says, he's healed this day, and he was. Jesus goes before the tomb of Lazarus. They said Lord, don't even bother. The King James says it's been four days and by this time he stinketh. Don't even bother, he's gone. Jesus just says, "Lazarus, come forth," and Lazarus obeys. The man is raised from the dead. On the night that He's betrayed and arrested, Jesus is standing with His disciples and the mob comes with Judas Iscariot to arrest Him, and Jesus looks at them and He says, who are you looking for? They say Jesus of Nazareth. He says to them.. now your Bible will say I am He, but in Greek it literally says "I Am," which is the name of God. He says in Hebrew or Aramaic, He says, "I Am," and all of them fall down. You think your prayers and songs and confessions and declarations don't do anything? They're doing everything! The reason the enemy wants to convince you that words don't matter is that you stop paying attention to them and stop using the kinds of words that paint the kind of future that you need. We need to become crazy about praying more, worshipping more, speaking more, saying words to our neighbors more. Man, a complete stranger you've never met in your life and couldn't give two cents about says something insulting to you, and it affects you, doesn't it. Now there's probably not a single person in this room that could be completely stoic with something like that. It's very hard. You have to train yourself to do it. Why? Because words are powerful. They just are. And yet, think about how loosie goosy lazy we are with the words we say and the words we hear, the music we listen to, the movies we watch, the stuff we say to our neighbors and our friends, to ourselves in the mirror. It's time to change your words. It's time to align your words. You say something like the flu is going around. I'm going to get it. I just get sick all the time. Probably are now. Yesterday I was with my daughter at California Adventure and I was feeling tired. And I just kept saying over and over, I was like man I feel tired. Every time I said I feel tired, did I feel energized? I actually felt more tired. Till the last time I said it, I said I'm pretty sure I'm making myself tired by saying and declaring and confessing over my life, I'm tired. Maybe there's something to that. You go to your boss and you're doing a great job. Everybody loves you, and you say you love your job so much, and you start saying please don't fire me, please don't fire me, are you thinking of firing me? Don't fire me. Please don't fire me. Are your odds going up or down from 'you're fired.' You just meet a beautiful new gal or guy, and you're single and you want to meet someone, and you just start saying to your girlfriend – please don't break up with me, please don't break up with me, please, are you going to break up with me? Please don't. Please don't. And boy are you talking yourself into the doghouse. Your words paint your life. They create light, they create darkness. We need to change our words. Today. We need to start today. You want your life to get better and you think your life gets better when your spouse gets better. You think your life will get better when your job gets better. You think your life will get better when your political system or government get better, or school gets better, or friends get better. Life gets better when you get better. Man, if there's any message I could give to you every single day, this is how life gets better. Your marriage doesn't get better when your spouse gets better, it gets better when you get better. And this is the thing. This is what none of us want to face is that we can become all that God wants us to be by working on us. If Daniel can become a great man of God, full of life and power, while being a slave in the Babylonian Empire, you could get better. You just can and I believe in you. And the number one way you can get better in life is to change your words. You want more from life? Become more. You want to become more? Become crazy about the words you hear, whether it's the books you read or the music you listen to, and become crazy about what you say to people, and what you say to yourself in the mirror. The number one way to get better in life is to improve your words. If you want to improve your life, improve the words you say and hear. Just hear that today. Just think about every word coming into your life. It's like coding going into a software program, and stop downloading viruses, might we say, right? Download the good stuff that's going to make a difference in your life. Words have like an almost divine power. Maybe one of the number one things that makes us different than the noble animals of the earth is that we can talk. Most of us can.

The Words That Unlock the Promise

Two old guys, both in their 80's, both are widowers, they're walking down the road one day, they're good friends, they go on a walk every day, and one day the most curious thing happens. There's a frog about the size of an apple, standing in the road, sitting in the road. What's a frog do? It sits? Yes, it sits. And the frog looks up at them and says mister, I am a beautiful princess that's been cursed by a witch. If you kiss me, I will turn into a beautiful young woman. You can marry me and I will take care of you the rest of your life. The old man looks at the frog, reaches down, picks it up, and puts it in his pocket. And they begin to walk and he says well why don't you kiss the frog? And the guy says John, at my age, I'd rather just have a talking frog. It's a true story. Happened right here. Anyway, so if animals could talk, like if I was a vegan and I wanted everybody to be vegan, I would just be desperately trying to find a way to make animals talk. I love chicken, I love it every way of it: fried, I love it rotisserie'd. Chick-fil-A is the best. That's the Lord's chicken. They're closed on Sunday, as we all know. I have no problem eating a chicken, but imagine chickens could talk. Well then you'd have to be a psychopath, wouldn't you, to eat a talking chicken, right? The only animal I can think of that actually talks is a parrot, but what crazy person would eat a parrot? It'd be like eating.. yeah.. anyway. You get it. You get it. Talking is amazing. And here's the thing. Even with children, this is one of the main ways that we can measure the development of a child as they're getting older. This is my son Cohen. Many of you know Cohen struggles with a.. isn't that a great picture? He's making a silly face. Cohen has a brain disease called polymicrogyria, and it causes him to have epilepsy and cerebral palsy, but he also developmentally is behind. He's 11 years old, but he's more like a two- or three-year-old. But he is making progress, it's just slower than most kids. And the main way you measure his progress is talking. When he starts to enunciate better, he starts to put sentences together better, when he has a new phrase he likes. We just returned from Israel and he gave Hannah a hug and he goes, new phrase, "Mommy's perfect." And she just like melted. Sweet. And what if we measured disciples this way. What if we measured ourselves, what if one measurement of discipleship was how encouraging are their words. How praiseworthy are the words. Are their words full of faith. Do they constantly doubt themselves in others, or do they lift people up. Are they constantly gossiping. Are they bickering with others. Are they stirring up trouble in their family or in their friendships. You see this is why James says that anyone who can control their words is like someone who controls their whole life, that they can be perfect if they just control their words. The way that a bit in a horse's mouth controls everywhere the horse goes, the way that a rudder on a ship controls everything, everywhere a ship goes, so does the tongue guide the whole life of a person. Wow, and that's the word of God that says that. So if you want to destroy your life, I got some great advice for you. Gossip like crazy and cuss and insult people, criticize, see the worst in others, make sure they know it, or even better, say it in secret and hoping that maybe they'll come around. That's the best. Exaggerate. Lie. Mock. These are the things that will destroy your life. You get caught in one lie nobody will ever trust you again. This is why in a courthouse, if someone is giving a testimony, and they're telling a key testimony to the case, but one fact is a lie, they throw the whole testimony out. You say to them, no, no, just that one part was a lie. The rest of it was true. Right? No, James says you can't have saltwater and freshwater come out of the same well. Its either saltwater or freshwater. We all know that. So you can throw away your life with the words you use, or, you can transform your life by just understanding how powerful the words in your heart and the words in your mouth and the words you're hearing are making your life. If you want to have an awesome life, focus on words of praise. Have beautiful words. Increase your vocabulary. Encourage people. Speak words of confidence and love, or at best, just control your words. It's better to say nothing than to say something that's going to hurt you or others. Be like King David, who was absolutely an imperfect person, messed up, but God just loved David. Why? Because David.. I mean the psalms come from David. Just full of praise, full of words and confidence and the Holy Spirit. And David, like you, painted a life with his words that is still resounding today. Father, we thank you in Jesus' name for the word of God, which is the truth. In a day of confusion and frustration and of loss and loneliness, we thank you that you sent us your word. A lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Help us, Lord, to become people of encouragement, of agape love and friendship. Thank you for all you've done for us. We love you, and it's in the strong name of Jesus we pray, all God's people said, amen.

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller 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.