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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 hello visitors, hello church family. We are so happy that you're here. We hope you leave here today with a crazy desire for a life and life to the full. You are loved.

BS: Amen. Let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, we thank you so much for your power and goodness. We thank you, Lord, that even now you're doing a good work through your Holy Spirit to transform us into the image of Jesus. Help us every day to grow and become all that we were called to be, and we ask for it in Jesus' name, all God's people said, amen.

HS: Amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – Matthew 21,4-11 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, Matthew 21:4 through 11. This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: "Say to Daughter Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest heaven!" When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee." Amen.

INTERVIEW – Andrew McNair (AM) with Bobby Schuller (BS)

Andrew McNair is a wealth management specialist, podcast host, and author. He advises families on how to plan their estates and how to leave legacies for generations to come. His new book, *The Giving Crisis: Helping Average Givers Become Everyday Philanthropists*, helps others understanding tithing to the church, and giving in the local community.

BS: Andrew, hi, welcome.

AM: Hey, I'm so glad to be here today.

BS: Well of course every pastor likes your message, right? Telling people to give more to the church, and give more to charity. No, it's really great to have you here. Tell us a little bit about your faith and your journey.

AM: My story is a story sadly of greed. And so, what happened was is I read a really great financial book *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* and it really flipped my world upside down that I could make money while I was sleeping, but sadly this voice started creeping into my life, this dark voice that egged me on to make more, invest more, save more. And one of the best things that ever happened to me is I'd saved up \$62,000 from waiting tables in high school, and then the market dropped – 2008 happened, and I stuck my hard-earned life savings of \$62,000 into the stock market and it turned into a \$147,000. So here I am 18, Bobby, thinking I have the Midas touch, and that voice got louder and louder and said you need to be risk taker; you need to take more risk; you need to make more money. You think a million dollars is enough? You should keep on pushing harder. And luckily, the university of hard knocks called in the tuition payment, and I ended up losing every single penny, and I found myself just screaming into my pillow and punching my mattress because I was bankrupt. I'd connected my net worth with my self-worth and that's how sin is. It was there when it was egging me on, but after I was broken, it was the Lord that picked me up and said you don't have to be greedy.

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You can actually give and give and I'll still provide for you. And that's where my story began with giving.

BS: Now you still believe and teach these principles, right? You show people how to invest, how to save, how to be prudent with their money. But there's something about how sometimes when we're squirreling away like crazy, we just become stingy. Where does that fit in discipleship? Is that still kind of how you teach? Do you still have people do that?

AM: Absolutely. As someone that is not a pastor, someone that's a hedge fund manager, as myself, I'm trying to tell people to save so that they're not a burden for their family and a burden on society. But when it comes to the Lord and His discipleship, we can see so many passages in the New Testament where He says come follow me, and many times that does mean giving up things. And so many times people become Biblical scholars overnight, and they say well He didn't ask everyone to leave everything behind, and I say no, He didn't, but He did ask a lot of them to. And so I think as we grow in faith with Christ and He continues to disciple us, and we're in a body of likeminded believers, we're going to be sacrificial givers.

BS: I love the title of your book *The Giving Crisis*. What is the giving crisis?

AM: This is a crisis. Luckily after I had lost everything, my mother said hey, it would be a really good deed if you could go live with your grandfather. Your grandmother's passed away after 67 years of marriage. He needs some company. And I said, well, I'll do my good deed. And so I show up, the shag carpet, the yellow shower, the yellow toilet, back in time, this time capsule, the house and I thought I was doing a good deed, but really I needed him more than anything. And he taught me how that in the Great Depression we actually gave more back then when 25% plus in unemployment at 3.3% giving per capita, per person, and that's adjusted for inflation. And today we give less than 2% of our income, and now we have double income households.

BS: That's amazing. So what happens to a society, do you think, when we become stingy, when we stop giving to people in need, stop giving to church, stop giving to charities. What happens to us as a people?

AM: Well, I know this is a controversial point of view, but I believe anxiety and depression is what happens, and I believe that's why you're seeing a rise of anxiety and depression in a first-world country like ours because people are so reluctant to put God at the center of their universe. They put themselves and their family's needs and their needs, which seems like a good idea to work hard and take care of your family, but we've actually de-throned God from the center of our finances.

BS: I know we were always, my wife and I, were always raised on tithing, that like if you didn't give 10% you were robbing God. This is what we were taught. That's what the scripture says. And I remember when we were eating Ramon and had nothing we still just found a way to give 10%. And I remember we had friends that would say oh we'll give 5% because we can't afford it. We'll give 2% - that's good enough. And we're like no, you're robbing God. We just give 10%. I've always believed that you don't have to give it to a church organization. You can give it to the poor, you can give it to someone in need, but it needs to be a stretch; it needs to be given away from you. Is that how you teach? What do you think is the biggest misconception Christians have about giving?

AM: I think that they think it's a ritual, they think its optional and again, many times people say well Jesus never talked about tithing. And that's just incorrect. Most people, if they spent time in their word, they would see that Jesus affirmed tithing multiple different times when He said give to God what is God's, and give to Caesar what is Caesar's. And He looked at the pharisees and said you've neglected justice and mercy, but He said continue tithing. And it's really silent of the widow's mite. He didn't chase after the widow and say hey, here's your money back. We don't need the money; the temple and the church doesn't need your money. No, He actually let the widow give her last two mites away. And so I think the Bible's not silent on money, and I think really tithing is the floor, not the ceiling, and just like the Sermon on the Mount, it raised the bar on the Ten Commandments. It raised the bar on the commands of the Old Testament. So if anything, we should be giving way more than 10%.

BS: It's interesting, I never thought about the widow's mite. He doesn't pull the mites out and run after her and try and give it back to her because He knows that God's going to do something better for her. That's awesome. Well thank you so much. I'm so grateful for this book, *The Giving Crisis*, and I think people really do.. their lives do get better, in general, when they become more generous people. And not just with their money, right? With their time, with their spirit, with their love, with their ears, finding ways to continually be giving, but of course Jesus told us where your money is, that's where your heart will be also.

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The book is called The Giving Crisis by Andrew McNair. Get a copy today. Andrew, thank you so much!

AM: Thank you for having me on.

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

MESSAGE – The Will to Life

In life every day we're making choices. Choices are hard to make, even the little ones. And we'll spend a lot of time, actually science shows us that we spend a lot of time, and in fact, energy, when we make these choices. When you're trying to figure out what to watch on Netflix, when you're trying to figure out where to go to eat dinner, when you're trying to figure out if you should go to the party or stay home, all these little decisions that you wrestle with each day, they all sort of drain you a bit. And we all recognize that, especially when we're married. Debating and discussing, maybe with your boyfriend or girlfriend, your roommate or whatever, when you're trying to figure out what to watch or what to do or where to go, and these choices affect our lives, and we make them every day. But there's one choice, the big one, and this is true with big choices, that very often we tend to leave on the table. For many reasons, not least of which is that every decision, as it's been said, is a thousand renunciations. When we choose one thing, we deny a bunch of other things. I want to invite you today to choose Jesus Christ. It is a choice. Billy Graham reminded us of this continually. It's a decision that we have to make. When Joshua was about to enter the promised land, he knew that his people, some of them were bowing down to idols, but were also worshipping the Lord. And he said you got to make a choice now. We weren't in the promised land before, but we're going into the promised land now, and you must make a choice. Will you serve the Lord or will you serve these other gods. And he famously says "as for me and my house we will serve the Lord." I want to encourage you, make that decision today. Say to yourself as for me and my house we will serve the Lord. Invite Christ into your heart. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins. Ask Him to transform you and renew you. He'll do it. You won't feel much at first, but you'll see it. That as you commit your life to Christ, your life will be totally different, and when your time comes to an end in this world, you'll be ready for the next because you know where you're going, and you know who's there for you. I want to encourage you today to believe on Christ and you'll be saved. If you do that, text me the word HOPE and we want you to do this just so we can pray for you. I'd like to know your name and our team will pray for you. We've had almost a thousand people this year that have made some sort of a decision and we're very grateful for that. And I also like to count it, just to be honest. I just like to keep a number because it's famously been said that you do what you count. You do what you measure. Today I'm getting a little philosophical, I hope that's okay. This is the second service, so you guys should do.. you slept in. You should be okay. You got it. You're ready, right? I want to get philosophical today by talking about an old idea, it's been around for a long time in philosophy and psychology about this thing that happens in our mind and heart called the will to life, and its counterpart – the will to death. That every day when we're making choices, we are giving in to two separate wills that are at work in our lives: the will to life and the will to death. And many people would say who's operating in the will to death? And I promise you, all of us are doing it all the time. And I hope it'll make sense at the end of this sermon. If not, it's okay. That's my fault, not yours. No bad students only bad teachers, as Mr. Miyagi said, right? Okay. Here we go. Here's the theory. The theory goes like this: my life is ever expanding or ever shrinking based on my daily choices. Every day I'm making these decisions in life and they're making my life bigger or smaller. They're making me know more people or know the people I know less. They're giving me more opportunities or fewer opportunities. And life is always like this. And it's always easier to make the decisions that shrink my life, and its usually harder to make the decisions that grow them. A really good case in point where I've tried to live this philosophy and it worked well for me. There's this beach not too far from my house, and its one reason I like it. Its right at the end of the 55 in Newport on pier 33. If you go on a Friday in the summer, you might find me there under an umbrella reading a book, or writing a sermon. And I love this beach. I don't know why. I think it's because it's the closest one to my house. There's nothing particularly amazing about it. It's a classic beach with sand and water.

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I've gone there for years and when I get hot I'll go into the water and I'll swim and I'll cool off and feel refreshed and dry and go back to reading or doing some work. And one particular summer day it was really hot and I did this exact thing. I went in and cooled off, and just as I was coming back in, I felt a pop in my heel and it hurt. It hurt bad. And my first thought was I think I stepped on my foot weird and might have like fractured my heel. And I came in and the back of my heel was covered in blood. I limped up to the lifeguard and said hey something happened. And he said oh it's one of these guys. Now I know this looks really cute. He's smiling at you. That's a stingray. And they've become more and more common as they've been coming up the coast, and at this particular beach, he said they've been plaguing them at the time, and he said I have to shuffle through the water. Now I've been going to my beach my whole life, I grew up in California, this has never happened to me in my life, and here I am, at the time in my 30's, this never happened to me, and I was like okay I got to shuffle now. And he said, that's going to hurt real bad. You ought to put it in some hot water. And I said I think its fine. This happened like five/ten minutes ago, I think I'll be okay. So I went and washed it off in the water, dried it off and laid down on my towel. And I started to go ow, oo, ow, ow! Whoa! Wow! Have you ever taken a bite of like something that's supposed to be really spicy, and at first you're like that's not bad. And then like oh, oh, woah! And this is what happened to my leg. There's a venom that this particular stingray has that causes the nerves in your legs to flare up. And so it felt like someone was pressing an iron on my skin all the way up my leg. And this was gnarly. I started running.. kind of limping back to my car. There was a couple times I was like woah! And when I got home, I put it in hot water, and instantly the pain went away, but it's hard to describe how painful this was. I've had my arm impaled, I've been burned, I've had all sorts of things in my life playing sports that hurt, all of them paled in comparison to this stingray thing. And I remember thinking I can never go back there. I can never go back there. I need to find a new beach; I need to google a beach without stingrays. That was my first thought. My second thought was you know what? Stingrays, although they hurt, they don't actually harm you. I need to go back and get stung again, because I don't want to lose my beach. Now that might sound crazy to you, but I went back to the beach the next day, and I didn't shuffle, I stomped around, spent a lot of time doing this, and I never got stung. But, what I got rid of was my fear of being stung because I thought to myself, one way to look at it is I never go back and avoid it. Another way to look at it is I know how to handle it next time. I know if I get hit like that, I know how to avoid it. I know if I get hit like that, just put it in hot water, it goes away and you'll be fine. So I didn't want to lose my beach. I didn't want my world to shrink, literally, by being afraid of stingrays. Many of you here today you've been burned, stung, hurt, betrayed by friends, by the world, by life, new people you loved taken away from you. You've have had hardship, illness, things that are unfair. And the temptation is to give in and to say I'm done with that. I'm never doing that again. I'm never going back. But that's not the way. The way for you is actually to say I can try again. And this is what life is about. It's about making a decision to ever grow. To grow as a person and to not be afraid of life or the world. God's good world that He made for us, that yes is still broken, yes has problems, but He also gives us the tools, this holy spirit and the power we need to live life to the full. And that's what I want for you, and that's what God wants for you. Not to be afraid of stingrays or anything else. That brings us to the triumphal entry. Famous story of Jesus entering Jerusalem knowing that He'd be killed. The triumphal entry is a story really of courage, of a Lord who knew He was going to die, but also did it, as the scripture says, for the joy set before Him. He knew that He would die the worst death ever, but He knew that out of that would come the greatest movement and the salvation of mankind, and to Him it was worth it. He was exercising when He entered Jerusalem, a will to live, a will to life, a will to courage. Remember that not long before this, Jesus was on His way to Bethany, and before He went, all the disciples said don't go, you'll die if you go to Jerusalem. Bethany's about a half hour walk from Jerusalem. And there was one man named Thomas. We call him doubting Thomas, but he never gets credit for this line, and I think it's a shame. He looks at his brothers and sisters in arms and he says hey, if He's going to go die, we shall go and die with Him. That's courage. That's a will to life. So they go, they pack up their things, they go to Bethany, and they famously raise Lazarus from the dead. And when this happens, such an outpouring of the spirit and power happens that this mega revolution of people who had witnessed this, would see in a man who had been dead long enough to stink, come back to life, they decided this is the Messiah, this is the man, this is the one we've been waiting for for all this time. And this mob, good mob of cheering crowd, adoring crowd starts to create a parade that goes into the city of Jerusalem as Jesus processes on a donkey. And when He enters into Jerusalem, do you remember what they all say? They say Hoshana – Hosanna. That means "save us."

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And they're saying it over and over as a type of praise but there's also a cry for help – save us. Save us. Save us. And who or what is it that they're asking the Lord to save them from? Do you remember? If you said Rome, you got it right. They said save us.. what they're effectively saying is save us from Rome. In their view, the Messiah was not someone that would be the sacrificial lamb. In their view the Messiah would be a military leader who would kick Rome out of Israel, their occupiers. Now here's what the temple looked like in Jesus' day. It was one of the largest buildings in the world, at the time, built by Herod. It was a wonder of the world. It was the largest temple in the world at the time. And you can see that when Herod made it, it's amazing but you see up in the top right corner, there's like a castle that's attached to the temple. That's called the Antonia Fortress, and that's where the Roman garrison is. There's an extra bit of soldiers there because during Passover, there would have been Joseph says two million. That can't be true, but it's a lot. There are almost a million people, is my guess, in Jerusalem at the time for the holiday. Many of them are young, able-bodied men who want to fight, and so they think this Messiah figure is going to lead these men to the Antonia Fortress and kick out Rome and say get out. But instead of going to the Antonia Fortress, Jesus goes into the temple. He clears the temple, and then He just begins healing people like this. This story to us shows us two things that are happening in Israel – the temple and Rome. And what Israel sees is that the problem is Rome. That's their big problem. But what God sees is no, the problem is the temple. The temple, which at the time was corrupt. Religious people were doing all sorts of things, but especially using religion to steal money from the people. One story famously Jesus says toss me a coin and a pharisee tosses Him a coin and on the coin is an image of Caesar, which you're not allowed to bring in the temple. And here the pharisees, who enforce these rules on everybody else, are blatantly breaking the rule. So Jesus holds it up and He says what? You hypocrite. Give to Caesar what is Caesar. Give to God what is God's. So you see that in the religion itself, there's this problem, but outside there's this temple problem. This is a lesson for us to learn, and I preach it every year, the idea that we always want to deal with Rome, we never want to deal with me. Rome is the circumstance; the temple is the inner life. We want to deal with the outsiders, not the insiders. We say save us Lord! But the Lord wants to save us from us. He wants to save me from me. The triumphal entry is a lesson that teaches us God wants to deal with me before He deals with my circumstances. And that's the last thing we want to deal with is me. Here's the biggest problem with dealing with me is that's very painful. It's painful to lose weight, it's painful to become a loving person, it's painful to be generous. It's painful to go to church. It's painful to read the books. It's painful to do the things that will make us the person we want to become. We just say solve my problems, and the Lord says how about we solve you first. He says that because He loves us! Here's something you've heard me say a million times, and you'll hear me say it a million more times. No doubt almost every person in this room and watching on TV wants their life to be better. Here's how your life gets better: your life gets better when you get better. Your life grows when you grow. Your life gets bigger when you get bigger. Your life gets richer when you get richer, and I mean on the inside. You say 'Lord, solve my money problems' and the Lord says no, first I want to fix your spending problem. Or your stinginess problem. Or I want to teach you how to bring more value to the marketplace by teaching you a new skill you never thought you could do. We say 'Lord, solve my relationship problems. I just can't find a good woman. I just can't find a good man.' The Lord says no, we want to improve you, first. We want to first think about the kinds of people you're choosing. We want to talk about your ego. We want to talk about what you bring to a relationship rather than what the man or woman's going to bring to you. We say 'Lord, save me from my rotten employees! They show up to work and they don't do..' God says no, we're going to make you a better leader. We're going to help you serve more. 'Lord, solve my health problem!' The Lord says no, first you got to put down that thing you've been drinking, that thing you've been smoking, that stuff you've been eating. That bed you haven't been sleeping in. You have to do the painful thing to become the kind of person you want to be. And that's always the thing that lies between us and who we want to really be is the fear of embarrassment, the fear of loss, the fear of the pain and the struggle that comes between us and life. And there is laid before us the will to life and the will to death. That when you press through, when you push, when you go for it, that's a will to life, even though it hurts. When you give in, give up, let go, procrastinate, you give into a will to death and a will to fail. I like to frame it, not as sin and righteousness, because the Bible doesn't do it just that way, either. When it talks about sin and righteousness, it doesn't do it in terms of shame: you should, you ought to, you better. It doesn't say that. It says the wages of sin is? Is death. And the gift of righteousness is? Eternal life. So the Bible in Deuteronomy, in particular, says I put before you life and death. Choose life.

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And that is the choice we have every day, not just the choice to follow Christ, but the little things that reflect within us a will to death or a will to life; a will to give in or a will to push through. And that is the thing about life that is so strange. We all want to become someone more than we are, but we first want God to solve our circumstances. God wants to solve us before He solves our circumstances. Here's something that you might not have thought of, too. You might be someone else's circumstance problem. That's something we never think about. If you have a circumstance problem, it might be your boss, or your client, or toxic relative, your parents or your spouse or your kids. We never think that there might be somebody out there praying that I would change. That I would become the man I need to be or the woman I need to be. We never think about that, and that's what God's asking for us. Even now, people are thinking gosh, my brother needs to hear this sermon. My sister's got to hear.. I'm sending this to my kids. This sermon is for you. A will to life is a will to pay the price. And life just finds a way, isn't it.. so amazing life. It's such an amazing thing. Life always finds a way. Think about you put a seed in the ground and it gets a little wet, and it just starts to dig down those roots through all the dirt and the sand and then it starts to shoot up towards the sky, and it grows as much as it can, it grows as big as it can, it bears as much fruit, as much fruit, a hundred percent, and all that is possible, and no less. If you walk down the sidewalk and we look at this tiny little crack that has this little bit of dry dirt, and out of it is coming a living plant. We call it a weed, but I call that amazing. Life just finds a way and it can use a tiny little bit of dust and a crack to grow a plant. And we see all around us things like a city being overgrown once its abandoned by plants and animals, a watermelon you put a steel beam around it, and it breaks the steel beam. And don't get me started on bamboo, the great curse of San Juan Capistrano. A friend of mine tried to chop down his bamboo, grew back, obviously, better, stronger. Dug down a foot, put plant poison, gravel and cement over it, and not long later, what, bamboo is coming right through the concrete. Life finds a way. Life finds a way, and this is the weird thing: the opposite of life is death, and death gives in and gives up and quits. That's what death is. Death is a soul sleep. Death is numb, death is shrinking, death is stillness. Death is no pain. Death is no hardship, death is no difficulty, but it's still death. A great example, metaphor for this, is the great Everest nap. Every year some of the greatest athletes in the world are challenged to climb the biggest mountain in the world, Mount Everest. And when you get to the top, it's the most dangerous part, they always worry about the same thing. The people that die on Mount Everest are not people that freeze to death first, they're not people that hurt their arm, they don't starve. The thing that kills people in Mount Everest is the Everest nap. When you go up high, your brain starts to get low on oxygen and you get sleepy, and so the temptation is I'm just going to lay here for a minute, I'm just going to rest a minute, and you fall asleep and you never wake up. And the mountain is covered with people like this. Young, athletic, amazing, high will people who gave in to the temptation to sleep. There's one young woman that's called sleeping beauty who died there, I believe in 1998. Forty-year-old, beautiful woman, trained her whole life for this, fell asleep. She's still there. In fact, they use the bodies, you can see them, they're still in their ski clothes and everything, and they use them as markers to know where they are on the mountain. This is a metaphor for life. That in life, the thing that wants to kill us is the falling asleep-ness of life, not resting, not taking a good nap. Jesus did that, right? Taking a nap is Christ-like. Tell someone that next time. But I'm talking about the quitting, the giving in, the not pressing through. If life is anything, one way to think of it is the painful expansion of my life and world. It's an ever-expanding existence. Just think about giving birth itself. The idea of giving birth to new life is always messy, always dangerous, always scary, always chaotic. What's the biggest word that you would ascribe to giving birth? Painful is the word I'm looking for. Not that I would know. I always think it's interesting when men say 'we're pregnant.' No, sir. She's pregnant. It's interesting when you see the old sitcoms of how they used to show giving birth, compared to how birth really is. And it's amazing, the average mother who gives birth for the first time; labor, I've heard, is somewhere between 14 and 19 hours of pain, struggle, and at the end, it gets the hardest. And what does the doctor say? Push! Push! Push! And everybody's screaming, ahhhh! Push! You want to give birth to a new dream? You want to give birth to God's vision in your life? You want to give birth to a book or a song or a work of art or a new movement? It's not easy. You're embracing a will to life, not a will to death. And sometimes you have to push through the concrete, push through the heartache, push through the betrayal, push through the surprises, they all come along. And this is what life is like. I remember when my daughter Haven was born, it was this. It was completely chaos and crazy. She was due like right on Christmas, and she came two weeks early, so nobody was around because everybody had planned for her to be born on this day, and she wasn't.. this was not the date we ordered.

The Will to Life

And I still remember waking up and Hannah goes my water broke. And she's not here so I'll tell you. She said my water broke! And I went splash, splash, are you sure? It was two in the morning, I was.. the whole bed.. it was crazy. Rushed her to the hospital, we had this amazing, chaotic experience, but Haven was born, it gave birth to new life. And we came home – the two front doors to my other car, and the front door to my house were completely open. I'd just left them like that, grabbing things. Sometimes that's what it's like giving birth in God's kingdom, giving birth to new life, leaning into the will to live. And in another story, Hannah recently has been feeling that God put on her heart this ministry for healing, and so she's asking people to like do what you couldn't do before, and praying for strangers, and holding these services, and it doesn't always go well, and sometimes it goes amazing. But she might say to you, God put this thing in my heart, and I've got a choice – I can either give birth to it or I can kill it. God's giving you that choice with a dream in your heart. You can give birth to it or you can let it die on the vine. What will you do? Every day we make little choices that reinforce a will to live or a will to die. A will to win or a will to fail. Every day we're making decisions to press through or to just give in and wait another day. What will you do with the dream, with the thing that God's given you. What are you going to do with it? I want to encourage you to not be afraid of pain, suffering, chaos, messiness, loss, betrayal or any of those things. They all are part and parcel to a will to live. This is why Dostoyevsky said the most Russian thing ever. He said "to live is to suffer." Now we read that and we go oh that's dark. That's negative. This life is all suffering. And that's not what he meant. Dostoyevsky was actually a hopeful person. What he meant was if you want to really live, you got to be okay suffering. And we see it in sports, we see it in trial, we see it in family, we see it in country, we see it in all things, that the greatest things have a price. But the price is always worth it. This is why Jesus pressed through to the cross because the Bible says the joy that was set before Him. The joy. There was a joy set before Him. And this is the challenge that faces each and every one of us every day. Maybe Jesus even said it better – anybody who wants to save his life will lose it, yes. But anybody who gives up their life my sake will find it. And that's just going to be the problem. If you want to get sober, if you want to get healthy, if you want to get well, if you want to fulfill your calling, if you want to ask for a raise, if you want to give a speech, if you want to ask a girl for her number, if you want to go on a rollercoaster, whatever it is, that there lies before you the fear, the resistance that is always pressing. It will never, ever go away. The day it goes away is the day you've embraced a will to death and a will to fail. This is the challenge that wealthy people face. Very often, most wealthy people became successful by pressing through. And that's why there's an old expression 'resting on your laurels.' You'll find that very often when you've done well in life, you think my goal, I thought my goal my whole life was to sit on a beach or to play golf or this and that, but what I have seen and what I've found from so many other people who have succeeded in life is that you still have to find something to struggle for. And most people do, and that's a good thing. Here's the problem: if you don't suffer for something in some way, life itself will become suffering. Life itself will become a suffering thing. And I think this is the challenge that so many people have is they have their basic needs met, but they don't have something to wake up for and die for. They don't have something to wake up for or grind for, to earn. But when you find that thing and you start giving for it and you start seeing, it makes all the difference in the world. The point is not suffering, the point is the joy set before you, and having utter contempt for the suffering; having utter contempt for the fear. If I just wanted you to suffer, I'd say go and stab yourself or cut yourself. That's not what I'm saying. I'm not saying cut yourself. I'm saying don't be afraid of chopping garlic just because you're afraid of cutting your fingers if God's called you to start a restaurant, that is. And I'm not saying go out and starve yourself, but I'm saying sometimes if you want to lose some weight, you're going to have to feel hungry. And I'm not saying go outside and embarrass yourself, but I'm saying if you want to write that symphony or make that work of art or that film, or write that song, or give that sermon, you're going to embarrass yourself sometimes. And just say it's okay. I have a will to live and to press through, and to live in a bigger world, not a smaller world. Isn't that a good thing? That's what God's calling us to. So don't be afraid. There's this resistance that's always pushing against us. Just be ready for it when the time comes for whatever it is you're called to do. Many people have come up with little things of like how to press through that resistance that pushes up when we want to make that call or write that thing or do that thing that we're called to do. Go to that class. Mel Robbins famously said just countdown from five and go. Go 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, go to the gym, and you just go. That works, I've tried it. Dorothy Brand, a hundred and some years ago said you just say to that blank page before you start writing – it is impossible for me to fail. Steven Pressfield, in talking about resistance, said you should pray a prayer to the muse, and he does.

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Many Christians would say, and I think this is good, you find a Bible verse, all things are possible or something like that before you face your thing. And that's what I do. Although I don't use any of the Bible verses that most people think you would use to face the spirit of fear. You want to know mine? It's a little bit silly. In King David's day, he was a young man, he was invited to the court of Saul, and they were standing on a battlefield facing the philistines, and on the other side was this famous giant. You might know his name. Come on. Thank you. Goliath. There he is. And Goliath, the whole time, is mocking and teasing the armies of God, and David looks at his king, who's taller than he is, and looks at these brave men, and he says this famous line: "who is this uncircumcised philistine." And a cloud of fear just disappears. It's like a cloud just vanishes from that whole army, and the giant is slayed. That's my Bible verse. When I'm afraid - I have never told anybody until this morning - when I'm afraid of something, not of a person, but of a thing, a task, a goal, a sermon, a speech, a song, whatever it is, I have to confront someone, I have to do something embarrassing or difficult, I look at the spirit of fear, this resistance, this thing that presses against me, and I emasculate it, and I have utter contempt for it by saying who is this uncircumcised philistine. Try it, it works. It's fun to say, too. People will think you're crazy, but that's good. It's good for people to think you're a little bit crazy, then we don't have to be sane all the time. I want to encourage you that there will always be a slab of concrete between you and the sun. There will always be a difficult conversation, there will always be a challenge, a mountain, a river, something lying between you, it just will never go away. And you say it shouldn't be that way, and I don't deal in should's and shouldn'ts. When you get your own universe, you can make it different. I didn't make it this way, but this is the way it is. It's the way it is. But, with enough time, you'll learn to be a pro, and you'll do great. So Father, we ask for that in Jesus' name to see the spirit that lies between us and where we're called to be, and we pray, Father, that you would help us learn what it means to press through for the joy set before us. Lord, we pray that you'd place in us a will to live, that we wouldn't be afraid, and we thank you, Lord, we love you. It's in Jesus' name, all God's people said, amen. Would you stand with me?

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 and give you His peace, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, amen.