

GOOD MORNING/INVOCATION – Bobby & Hannah

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

HS: Welcome, friends. It is so fun to celebrate the holiday Christmas season with you.

Thank you for being here. Jesus was born for us and came that we could have life, and not just a little bit of life, but life to the full! So let's worship Him this morning. Thank you for being here. You are loved.

BS: Amen. Let's begin with a word of prayer. We thank you, Father that your Holy Spirit is here, and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. Lord, provision, forgiveness of sin, reconciliation with our family and our friends, new life, second chances. We thank you, God that you're here to do it, and we're here to receive it, and we believe it by faith. Thank you, Lord, 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 – Exodus 14:10-14 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, would you turn in your Bibles to Exodus 14:10-14. Let's feed our faith this morning with Exodus 14:10-14.

As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up and there were the Egyptians marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us out to the desert to die? What have you done by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt leave us alone? Let us serve the Egyptians. It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert. Moses answered the people – do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you. You need only to be still.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING (PEACE) – Philip Hoch & Caitlyn Fonda

PHILIP: Last Sunday we lit our first candle, the candle of hope. Today, the second Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of peace.

CAITLYN: The prophet Isaiah has written of the greatness of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over His kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

PHILIP: God's peace is given as a state of the heart in every believer who follows Christ and believes His word. The Holy Spirit confirms His word. God's kingdom grows and we become true instruments for peace in all of the world.

Let us pray these words together as a congregation: Lord Jesus, you have said these things that we may have peace. You have overcome the world. You give us your Shalom peace, not as the world gives. We will not be afraid. We will not be discouraged. The Lord of armies fights for us! We need only be still. Amen.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Whoever you are, stand with me. We're going to say this creed together. What we're about to say is true for all of those who put their trust in Jesus Christ. The old has passed away and the new has come. The old man, the old woman is dead. A new man, a new woman is alive. And that man or woman receives all that heaven has available to him or her. Amen?

Hold your hands out like this, because this is a gift from God. We can't do it on our own.

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. Amen!

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "God's Promises Are Bigger Than Your Plans"

Today is the Sunday of peace in advent. Who needs some peace in your life today? I know I do. Now, the word for peace in English is different from the word for peace in Hebrew. The word for peace in Hebrew is a lot like the word for hello in Hawaiian, "aloha," right? Hello and goodbye. Shalom. It's how you greet people, but it means peace. But more than this, the word for peace in the Bible, this Shalom word for peace means "the fullness of life." It means a person is put together. It means you're not spending every moment wondering, what if, what if, what if? It's a person that has all they need. It's a person that's doing all that they're called to do. It's a person that's received the gift of the promise. It's a person whose faith has become sight. Who wants that today? The Lord's watching. I want it, too. I want it, Lord.

Today this sermon is about peace, and peace for the believer is rooted in faith, and faith is rooted in trusting in what the Bible says versus what we're seeing in and around us. Today's sermon is about not letting. Not letting. Not giving permission. Not opening the door. Not letting. Not letting words that are negative. Not letting life or people or circumstance or reports, not letting them get to you. Somebody say not letting (AUDIENCE – not letting). Okay? It's up to you. Nobody will guard your mind for you. No one is hovering over you watching what kind of music you listen to, what kind of news you watch, what kind of reports you take in, what kind of friends you have. Nobody's regulating that for you. It's up to you. If you want to have peace, Shalom, if you want to have the fullness of life, it's about not letting. Permission you give or you don't give all the time. Not letting those words, those negative words, those sinful words. Not letting those reports come into your mind and heart. Not letting fear, not letting worry. You can say, no. As Keith Moore said, 'you can slap it down.' You can say, get out! You can say, no, sir. You can starve it and it will die. Who's ready to starve your fear today? Who's ready to feed your faith? I'm ready to starve my fear and feed my faith, and when that happens, faith becomes sight. The responsibility of believers is to stand on God's word. This is our main job. To believe God, and not just about going to heaven. To believe God about your unsaved loved ones. To believe God about your health problem. To believe God for the provision you need in your life. To believe God for your country, to believe God for your state. To believe God for your church. To believe God for your family. Not what you see, but what you read. Amen? I got to be careful because I don't want you to feel like you're under condemnation. You're not. I'm just very into what I'm saying, okay? I'm going to try and smile. Haven, just do.. Hannah or Haven, just go, dad, like this, okay? If I need to cheer up because this is exciting for me, I'm stoked about this. Okay? So we're going to enter Shalom today. Some of you came in stressed out. Some of you came in worried. Some of you almost didn't come to church, and many people didn't because you're worried. You're so worried. And you think if I waste time going to church, if I waste time watching this on YouTube or whatever, I'm not going to be able to be worried and then somehow help the problem that I'm thinking about all the time. No, no. This is the best thing you can do. If you're worried about something, the best thing you can do to help the problem is to stop worrying and start faith-ing; start believing, and then the ideas, then the provision, then the favor, then the open doors. This is what the scripture tells us.

One of the main reasons things don't go well in our life is because of what's happening here. Your future does not come to you. Hello. Your future comes from you. It comes from you. It comes from the way you're thinking, what you're believing, and what you're doing. Okay?

The responsibility of believers is to stand on God's word, despite. Despite what you feel, despite what you think, despite what you're hearing, all these things. And to say, I see that, it's real, but God is realer. God's word is truer. I see that. It's scary, but it's not my problem, it's God's problem. I'll show up, I'll do my thing. I'll do the work, but God can solve this. Amen. All right.

We're going to enter God's Shalom. And that Shalom is part of our reward. That peace; that rest from God is part of the reward of the righteous. It's part of the reward of being in the spirit and it's where the power comes from. The punch comes from the rest.

If you have your Bibles, open to 2nd Chronicles 32. We're not going to read through all of this. Bring your Bible to church. You can smell it, like this. It smells good. That's the smell of victory and ink. All right. All right. This is a story about Hezekiah, the king of Israel, or king of Judah, and he's built these walls around Jerusalem. And there's this army, the Assyrian army, the greatest army in the world. They've conquered city and state after state after state and destroyed them utterly. And this is a mean army. The Romans were not that mean. There were others that were not that mean. These guys are mean. They're like, they torture; this kind of thing, and everybody knows it. They're scary.

Their king is called Sennacherib, and he's leading 180,000 men. King Hezekiah has like a few thousand. We don't know the number, but it's just probably about 5,000, just a few thousand, okay. So it's a few thousand versus 180,000. King Sennacherib gives a speech before the fight and it echoes Joshua. He says, "Be strong and courageous." Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged. And the literal translation of this says, "For there are more of us than there are of them." So he's got 5,000, they've got 180,000, okay? And he says, there is more of us than there are of them. Is that true? Is it? Well, it depends on what you believe. See, it depends on what you believe.

This story, to me, is like the crux for every believer. In the natural, Hezekiah's got a few thousand, and Sennacherib has 180,000 of mean, mean soldiers. Hezekiah has the gall to say there's more of us than there are of them. Is it true or not true? Now Sennacherib will say, that's false. That's a lie. What does the church say? True or false? It's true. It's true. Because Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah, who, by the way, is standing right next to him, they can see something that Sennacherib can't see. They can see in the spirit, an army of angels, an army standing ready to fight, and they are not worried at all.

And he says, for his arm is flesh, but we, the Lord is on our side. And then, this is my favorite part, and this is so important for a sermon on peace. Here's what the scripture says: "And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah, King of Judah." The word I want you to see here is this word. What does faith produce? What does belief in the Word of God produce? Rest. Rest. Rest. Peace. A trust. Some of you, you're still worried. You're still worried. I bet that what you're facing is not as big as what Hezekiah was facing. But the word of the Lord came to the people, and then the people had a choice. They had a choice whether or not to believe God's Word or to believe what they saw. To believe the words of Isaiah and Hezekiah or to believe what they saw. And the Bible says that they believed the Word of God and they rested on the Word.

And then what's even more genius is Sennacherib, who is a smart guy, he starts saying, in Hebrew, he has men shouting in Hebrew. It's almost like he understand.. like the evil Sennacherib understands spiritual warfare because he begins to shout over the wall. He's like, oh, no, they've got faith. It's almost like he can see in the spirit. Oh, no, they believe God, now. Oh, no, and he starts to shout, don't believe Hezekiah. He starts to say, if you read through this whole thing, don't believe Hezekiah's lies. Haven't you, and he says, seen what we've done? Haven't you seen how we've laid waste to the nations? Haven't you seen how we've destroyed them? Haven't you seen? So do we walk by faith or do we walk by sight? (AUDIENCE - faith) We walk by faith, which means we don't go by what we see, we go by what we read, and when we believe what we read, what we read comes true in the future. Okay?

Haven't you seen? Their gods didn't pretend to. And then he begins to say, you are all going to starve to death and thirst to death. Now those who know the story, did they starve to death? Did they thirst to death? Did they die? No, no, no. Why? Because they rested on the Word of the Lord. They believed God. They believed what He said, even though it didn't look true.

They believed that there were more of them than there were of the enemy, even though it didn't look that way in the natural.

And what happens? In the middle, it's like in the middle of Sennacherib yelling these things over to the Lord, Hezekiah and Isaiah look up and they go like, Lord? Hello, Lord? And this angel army comes down and wipes them out. That's cool. That's cool. Who here knows they didn't even have to fight? All they had to do was stand in faith and believe. And the army fled. And that King Sennacherib runs into the temple of his pagan God, and there his sons assassinate him. Thank you, Lord. Okay, where was I?

Can we rest in the middle of a fight? In the natural, no. In the Spirit, yes. Can we rest in the middle of a fight? In a fight for your family, in a fight for your ideas, in a fight for your finances, for your business. When you're in a fight, one of the best things to do is to rest on God's Word.

Turn in your Bibles, if you have them, to Exodus, chapter 14. Exodus, chapter 14. You guys doing okay? Exodus 14. The people.. wait, don't show yet. The people have fled. They've been set free from Pharaoh. The Red Sea is parted. The Hebrew people walk through this part in the Red Sea. They're on the other side, and they go, (SIGHS). Why? Because what they've seen in the natural is good. We got across the water, we're all safe and sound.

Then they turn, and what do they see? The biggest, baddest army in the world, at that time, this is a different time than Hezekiah, is also now coming across that part in the sea, and they freak out because of what they see. And they cry out, not in faith, but in fear, to Moses, 'why did you bring us out here? We're going to die. They're going to kill us. Did He just bring us out here to have us slaughtered? What's going to happen? Oh, no. Oh, no. Oh, no.' And what does Moses say? One of my favorite Bible verses of all time. This is a good one to memorize. "The Lord will fight for you. You need only" what? "Be still." "The Lord will fight for you. You need only be still." And they are still. And what happens? All that water comes crashing down, and Egyptians are not very good at swimming, and they're all killed.

The enemy is destroyed before them, so their faith becomes sight. But this word, this thing, "the Lord will fight for you. You need only" this thing "be still" here? Another way to translate that is you need only be silent. Who knows that will preach? Who knows that will preach? God's doing the work. He's taking the action, and you have this magic wand in your mouth called a tongue, and you can change things with it.

And now God's doing His thing, and you start speaking fear, you start speaking doubt, you start speaking what you see in the natural versus what you read in the Word, and all these walls start going up. It's like friendly fire, friendly fire on your own team, right? The Lord will fight for you. You need only be still, at peace, or the Lord will fight for you, you need only be silent!

In many ways, you've heard me say this before, fear is not what you feel. Fear is what you say. Faith is also not as much what you feel. Faith is what you say and what you do. In fact, being courageous, having faith is about doing the opposite of what you feel so that what you feel comes in line with what you face. Amen?

Man of God, woman of God, enter God's rest. Man of God, woman of God, enter the Lord's rest and He will fight for you. Declare with me: I trust God's Word for me (AUDIENCE – I trust God's Word for me). All right, some of ya'll haven't had your coffee, and if this were China, that would have been ten times louder. Am I right, pastor or friend from Shanghai? He's right. Yes.

Say it with me: I trust God's Word for me (AUDIENCE – I trust God's Word for me). Say, I am entering God's rest (AUDIENCE – I am entering God's rest). Hallelujah. Thank you, Lord.

Here's the mistake: we walk by sight and not by faith. Here's what we think: someday I'll have rest. Someday I'll have rest. Who wants some rest today?

This is what we think to ourselves: someday, when I get enough money, I'll have some rest. People here have said in their hearts, someday when I finish that project, I'll have rest. Someday when I get out of debt, I'll have rest. Someday when everything's right and perfect with my kids, then I'll have some rest. Someday when I meet my spouse, when I meet the person, then I'll have some rest. Someday I'll own a house and then I'll have some rest. Wrong. Wrong. Wrong! Wrong. Enter God's rest now. Enter God's rest now. When is the best time to be at rest? Before the money! Before the victory! Rest leads to the money. Rest leads to the ideas. It leads to the opportunity. It leads to the network and the friends. Rest leads to the victory. The victory comes from the peace of God within us, the Shalom. You can be at peace now. And if you can't get at peace now, you will never be at peace. The world cannot offer you permanent peace. You might have a little peace after the project's done, but you'll get in trouble again, I promise. This is a troublesome world we're in. People in this world are rude. Hardships come our way. And if our rest is what we experience in the world, then we will always be not at rest. If our rest comes from the Holy Spirit and believing His word and seeing victory after victory, mountaintop after mountaintop, then we'll be at rest. And I'm at rest now. So be ready. Be ready for the fight. How do we get ready for the fight? By being what? At rest in God's Word, just like Hezekiah's people. We got to rest on the Word. Be ready for the monster. Be ready for the challenge. Be ready for the rude person. Be ready for the trouble. Be ready for the wall. Be ready for the bad report or the bad grade, or be ready for being fired. Be ready for whatever. Just be ready for it and here's how you're ready for it - you just trust God's Word.

Be ready for death. Where we're going is way better than what we have now. Be ready for that. Anybody who's afraid of death is afraid of life. Anybody who is very afraid of death is very afraid of life. COVID'S been over for five years. Lots of things have been gone for a long time. Do not be afraid of death. You're not going to experience life. Amen? Rest belongs to God's children.

This is God's promise. The Holy Spirit comes into us, confirms our word. All these weird reports and stuff, it just comes up, it just bounces off us like, no, I know, my God. It'll be okay. I'll do the work. We'll figure it out. I got good people around me. I trust God's Word. Lack of rest in the Bible is a punishment for the wicked. The Bible says there is no rest for the wicked. You ever heard that? The Bible says the wicked flees, although nobody chases. The Bible says the wicked shall never enter God's rest. You are not the wicked. If you are in Christ, you are not the wicked, you are the righteous. If you are in Christ, you are not a dirty rotten sinner. You are not wretched. You are righteous if you believe the Bible.

What does 2nd Corinthians 5:21 say: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might" beat ourselves up all the time. (AUDIENCE – no) So that in him we might be dirty rotten sinners. Wait. No, ha, ha, classic pastor joke. "So that in Him we might become the (AUDIENCE – righteousness)." You are the righteousness of God if you believe the Bible. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death. You are the righteousness of God. You are the righteousness of God.

Confess with me: I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus (AUDIENCE – I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus). Say I will enter the peace of the Lord (AUDIENCE – I will enter the peace of the Lord). Say I will not be afraid (AUDIENCE – I will not be afraid). Say I will not worry (AUDIENCE – I will not worry). Say God will have the victory in my life (AUDIENCE – God will have the victory in my life). Amen. We're just like taking corn and we're throwing it out. We're throwing it out into our future. That's the Word of God.

God's Word stands forever. God's Word will not fail you. God's Word is always true despite what you see in the natural. It is our job to believe God's Word and see it come to pass.

God's Word is true for your kids. God's Word is true for your unsaved kids. God's Word is true for your kids if they're stuck on drugs. God's Word is true for your friends if you have faith. God's Word is true for your future. God's Word is true for your body. Be healed. It's true. It's true. Believe it! Believe it, and it will come to pass for you. Increase and don't decrease your faith.

We'll finish with this. The Sermon on the Mount is an invitation from Jesus Christ to just always live in God's Shalom peace. And when you're living in that peace, you're attracting into your life provision, you're attracting into your life peaceful people, you're praying the kinds of prayers that make a difference. You start to have eyes to see. Remember when we talked about how, like, how many red cars did you see on the way to church today? And you have no idea, right, unless you're looking for the red cars. Then you want to know? That's what peace is like. It gives us eyes to see the red cars that, by the way, they're there and nobody can see them because everybody's so worried.

Jesus invites us into the Shalom peace, that is the fullness of God, and He tells us how to do it. And a big, big part of that is right in the middle of Matthew, chapter six. And you can study it later, but He tells us, 'do not worry' four times. It's a command. Do not worry. It's one of my main messages to you. Do not worry. Do not be afraid.

Another translation says, take no anxious thought. Who knows you can take an anxious thought or you can not take an anxious thought. You can let the anxious thought come in or you can not let it come in. You can receive it or reject it. Don't take it. Don't take it.

Come on, don't take it.

In the parable of the seeds, Jesus tells us that there's seed that goes out into four different places and only one of them works. That means there's only a 25% success rate. Okay?

One time it falls on the ground, on the road, and the birds come and they eat it. It just doesn't do anything. That's a person whose heart is ice. Another one falls on a rock and it springs up real fast and then it dies out. That's a person who goes because they're facing tribulation, they're facing persecution for their faith. The good one is the one that falls on good ground and it grows, and it has a return of 30, 60, a hundredfold.

But the one I want to talk about today is the third one, which is the one that falls among the weeds; the weeds, the thorns, the thistles. Who here knows? So it says that the thorns and the thistles, it chokes out. It chokes out the seed. And when Jesus is explaining it later, do you all remember what He said the weeds were? The worries and the riches of this world.

Yes. Deceitfulness of riches. That's true. Leave it to my wife to know it verbatim.

Let me say something first before I get to worry. Let's talk about riches. I've had the privilege of traveling all around the world to do ministry for the Lord. Hannah and I have been on, between the two of us, over 20 missionary trips. We have been to some of the poorest and some of the richest countries in the world. By the way, what is the richest country in the world? (HUMS THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER) I think we're in it, aren't we? By far, this is the richest country in the world.

Now, some of the poorest countries in the world that we've been to, Nepal, Swaziland, parts of Africa. Okay, let me just tell you, rich countries are worried countries. This is a very weird phenomenon that the richer a country is, the more anxious it is. The richer a country is, the more worried it is.

I love going to Mexico. You go down to Mexico, to San Jose to go fishing with my dad, nobody's worried. Standing around talking, having meals together, relaxed. And the richer Mexico gets, the more anxious they get. They're getting more worried, by the way, because they're getting richer. Okay?

So it's the worry that does the choking, right? It's the belief in the riches that often causes the worry. It's riches from mammon instead of God that causes the worry. It's depending and believing in your riches more than you depend on God for your riches that causes the worry, and the worry chokes it out. So if we're the ground, right?

If your heart is the ground that takes the seed, and you're nourishing weeds and you're nourishing seed, you can't do both. You can't nourish faith and worry at the same time. You have to choose. You have to choose. You can't nourish both the promise and worry. Keith Moore, Brother Keith Moore is a pastor, tells this story about a cat. He's like, if you have a stray cat that comes to your door.. now, we love cat, we have a cat, and she's great. Her name is Toast. She's very cute. But if a stray cat comes to your door and you don't want a cat, and the cat is going, meow, meow. And you open the door and there's the stray cat, skinny, and you say, all right, you get out of here, cat. You get out of here, cat. I'm going to feed you this one time. All right? You pull out your can of tuna and you put it down, I'm going to feed you this one time, but don't you come back. That's it. That's it. Then the next day, you come back, meow, meow, meow. You open the door and say, you little cat, I told you, get out of here. I'm going to feed you, and go, meow. This time you give it a can of tuna and like a little thing of milk, like, all right, I feel bad, you look.. I'm going to feed you this one time, but go away.

Meow, meow, the next day, four cans, eight cans. Now you've got this cat day after day that's getting fat. Meow, meow. And every day you say, go away. You scream at the cat, but you still feed it. Will that cat ever go away? (AUDIENCE – no) No, sir.

Why do we do that with our worries? Comes knocking at the door, knock, knock, knock, knock. And in one part of your brain you're saying, go away, go away, go away. But the other part, you start saying, well, what if. What if that. What if this? What if that? We need to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. We need to take captive every thought. Can you do that? The Bible says you can do it. Do you believe the Bible? Is it true? Can you stop worrying?

Here's how you kill or get rid of the cat. We don't want to kill the cat. We just want to get rid of it. Okay? Here's how you get rid of the cat. Here's how you get rid of your worry. You starve it, okay? Starving something takes a little time. You feed the promise, you starve the faith.. the fear. You feed the fear, you starve the fear. I got this. You starve the fear, you feed the (AUDIENCE – faith) faith. Okay, we all got it together. There we go. Starve it. Starve the fear. Starve the worry. Just say, no. No. I trust the Lord. And sometimes you got to say it through tears.

Fear is not what you feel, it's what you think. Faith is not what you feel it's what you say and do based on what the Bible says. I think we got it. Do we got it? Somebody say it is written (AUDIENCE – it is written). It is written (AUDIENCE – it is written). This is how we fight. Okay?

Let me just read some other good ones. It's either true or it's not true. Third John 1 says, "It is my wish that you prosper and be in good health just as your soul prospers." You can say that aloud. It is written. And you can say, "God shall supply my needs according to his riches and glory." That's what's in the Bible. And you can say, "And all these things will be added to me." Some of these things are all of these things? (AUDIENCE – all) Hey, that's good. All. All.

Some of you, you can say this aloud: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." You will be saved, you and your household. Acts 16:31. You can stand on this. It's like a contract. It's like you go before the judge, which is heaven, you say, this is what it says and I believe God, and the court says, yes, there it is. And in the spirit, it's done and it's on its way. Amen?

Thank you, Lord. Stand with me. Is that good stuff? Is it okay I'm going to preach on Mary next week? All right.

Some of you got it today and I believe that if you take this, the worried life versus the faith life are two radically different lives, and both are possible for you. So we're going to receive the faith life.

Lift your hands with me like this: Lord, we thank you that you are here and your power is present. We believe it. We believe what it says for us.

In the natural there are some bad things. In the natural there are some rude people. In the natural there are some lawsuits. In the natural there are some sickness. In the spirit the Lord has the victory. The Lord has the victory.

We believe in the Lord. We believe in His power to heal. We believe in His ability to provide. We believe in His ability to save us and to save our kids, to save our spouse. Some of you are believing for a spouse today. To save our parents. Some of you are believing for your parents today.

Thank you, Lord. We believe. We believe in the Lord, and we believe in your power, God, and we believe in your Word. We thank you, Lord, that you love us; that more is available to us. We pray for the ideas. We pray for the people. We pray for the spirit, and we receive it in the strong name of Jesus and all God's people said, amen.

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

Amen. 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.