

WELCOME – Michael Mauldin

MM: Good morning, Shepherd's Grove. I'm Pastor Michael. How are you guys? Are you guys awake? (AUDIENCE – yes) Great. Well, you are awake. I was about to waken you up even more, but you're awake. I love this.

I've got a scripture to kind of exhort us into worship this morning, and it is to that point. It's out of Ephesians 5. It says this "awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you. Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the most of your time because the days are evil. Therefore don't be foolish, but understand the will of the Lord. Don't get drunk with wine, for that's debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit. Be filled with the Spirit addressing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and in everything." So it's interesting, a few points I want to relay here. Make the most of your time is what He says, and one of the ways that you make the most of your time is to address one another in songs, hymns and spiritual songs. Being filled with the spirit. And He contrasts being drunk and being filled with the Spirit. Why do people get drunk? They're trying to get free. They're trying to get their junk off; they're insecure, all these things. And it's like a twisted form of what you're supposed to experience in God. So He's saying in worship, to be filled with the Spirit, to be liberated from yourself and be liberated unto God is to address one another in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, make a melody in your heart to God. You with me? (AUDIENCE – yes)

So let's get even more free today as we sing to God and be filled with His spirit and strengthened in Jesus name.

DECLARATION/SCRIPTURE – Bobby Schuller

Today we're going to begin our confession of the scriptures with the Shema. If you've grown up Jewish or have a Jewish heritage, you know the Shema. We don't always do it, but today it's worthy because it's coming up in the scripture. But in the first century, the Jewish Christians and the Jews, when they would gather in synagogue, would begin every service with the Shema. 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone.'

Now, we don't want to dishonor this text. This is to Jews, the most holy and sacred text. We don't want to dishonor the text by doing it in a frozen chosen way. Okay? We don't want to go, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone.'

You know, when they hear western Christians say the scriptures that way, they go, you don't believe what you're saying. You don't believe what you're saying because here's how they would do in the first century: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone!'

Are you ready? I know it's early, but the Lord has blessed us with coffee. First century Jews didn't have coffee? They have the anointing, and we have the anointing, but we have coffee, too. So ours should be one tick higher. Is that right? (AUDIENCE – right)

All right, stand with me. We're going to do this together, and we're going to do this like we're first century Christians, not last century Christians, okay?

Here we go: Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your strength. Amen!

Yes. Good. Praise the Lord.

MESSAGE/PRAYER – Bobby Schuller "The Secret Place is Where the Presence Is"

We had our "Night of Healing" on Friday. How many were there? Let me see? Many of you were there. We saw many miracles, great moves of God. Brother Philip, who's our piano / organist had a vision. He was sitting over there and he said that as we were worshipping; let me see if I got this right, Philip – that it was like small strings of color were going up to heaven, and then it became like a river. Does that sound right? Like a river of color going up to the Lord. Praise God for that. Now he's a Seventh Day Adventist. Can any Christian see a vision from God? (AUDIENCE – yes)

And the reason I say that is because you're not very traditional, but many of us who are traditional, we think we can't hear from God in this special way. You can. You can. You know what the emblem is for Presbyterians? It's a cross on fire with a dove coming over it. Who knows that's a prophetic image for us? (AUDIENCE – yes) For the largest reformed church in the world, okay, the emblem is a cross on fire with a dove coming over it. Who receives that? (AUDIENCE – yes) We receive that.

We thank the Lord. In fact I think one sign that we may be in the last days is that God is pouring out His spirit today like He never has, and that is a prophecy that in the last days, God's spirit will be poured out in a profound way. And we just pray that that's so. The scripture says that we can hurry, in a way. We can move along God's returning. How? Do you remember how? By sharing the gospel with all the nations. When the gospel is proclaimed to all nations, then He shall return and set things right. Who knows we're getting close. We're getting very, very close to that.

Today, we're going to talk about the importance of the life hidden in God; the secret life of God. Who knows we have a public life in God, which is important, but we have a secret life in God which is more important. And this is where many pastors and leaders burn out, get lost, fall into sin and iniquity; they care more about the public job of ministering the gospel than they do about their private conviction and connection and conversations with the Lord. We, all of us, whether we're vocational ministry or not, we are all in ministry; we're all called to preach the gospel, we're all called to heal the sick and to pray for those in need and to minister, amen? (AUDIENCE – amen) First of all to our family, and then to the world. And if we want to do that effectively, we need to see Christ. We need to see the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to fix our eyes on Him.

The core of most sin in our life and loss is that we're seeing other things and not Christ. We're fixing our eyes on something online or on Instagram; we're fixing our eyes on the problem. We're fixing our eyes on what we don't have. We're fixing our eyes on the missing tile in the mosaic. We need to fix our eyes on God. Eve was talking to Satan when she could have been talking to God. Is that right? (AUDIENCE – yes) Eve was looking at Satan and looking at a tree, when she could have been looking at God. That's what the Garden of Eden was! The full presence of the Lord!

We want to become a people like that, and we are a church like that. We're a church that looks for the presence of Christ. If we can see Christ, if His presence is manifest in this building, everything is solved. Isn't that right? Praise the Lord.

One question was asked, and we all know this; you've probably heard many sermons on it, but we always miss one of the most important parts. A question was asked of the Lord Jesus Christ – 'Rabbi, which is the greatest commandment in the law?' Do you remember what His answer was? 'You shall love the Lord your God.' We just said it. It's the Shema. 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart.' Some of your heart or all your heart? (AUDIENCE – all) All of it! All your heart. Sorry, that choir anthem got me excited. All your heart. All your soul, which is your mind and your will and your emotions. All your strength. And then He says this, and this is where we miss it. 'This is the first and greatest commandment. THEN love your neighbor as yourself.' Who knows they're not the same. Yes, love your neighbor as yourself; you do both these things, you obey the law. If you only do the first thing and not the second thing, you're not really obeying the first thing, and you're not really living in the law. But how many of you know there are many Christians today that are trying to do just the second thing. Love your neighbor as yourself, but loving God is an afterthought. In fact, many Americans and westerners today have taken this command as their core command and they're lost because of it. They believe the only command is to love your neighbor as yourself, and they hate God. They say it openly. They say if you were a Christian, you'd love your neighbor. And the answer is no! No! If I was a Christian, I would love the Lord with all my heart, and all my soul, and all my strength, and all my mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.

Then I would love my neighbor as myself. How many of you know that so many of the people today who preach love, hate people. They only love people who love them. Many Christians are that way. I only love people who love me, I only love people who vote the way I vote, I only love people who respect me. Is that what Jesus told us to do? (AUDIENCE – no) What reward is there in that? Love your enemies, He said. It is impossible to truly love your enemies if you don't love God. That's the only way. In fact, loving your enemies is proof that you're a faith person. If you're not a faith person, you think I got to kill my enemy, I got to defeat my enemy, I have to talk down my enemy. But if our command is to wash our enemies feet, to weep for them, to intercede for them, to care for them, to forgive them, to love them, to lay our lives down for them, to preach to them, to guide them, to care for them. If that's our call, we need to be faith people who love God more than ourselves, even on to death.

As a believer, how much of our lives are we called to lay down? (HANNAH – everything) Is it everything or a little bit? (AUDIENCE – everything) Everything. Everything. And when you do that, if you want to love God, never, ever forget you are called to love everyone with all your heart, because He loved us first. Amen? But that's the only path to real agape love for the neighbor is to love God with everything. Not to become a religious person, not to pray a bunch of prayers, but to die to self! And to be made a new creation. Hallelujah. This is the first and greatest commandment because if you disobey this commandment, you can't obey the second one because you'll be constantly offended. Amen?

Here's another one people miss – 'seek ye first the kingdom of God.' My brother, my sister, it is seek ye (AUDIENCE – first) first. First. See every Christian seeks the kingdom of God. They want the kingdom of God. They pray for the kingdom of God. They desire the kingdom of God. They seek the kingdom of God, but they don't seek it first. First. It's the first thing I do. They don't seek it in secret. They don't seek it when they have spare time. And so they're dying spiritually. They have no water. They have no bread. What happens to a man with no water and bread? The man perishes. So does the soul without the river of living water and the bread of life who is the crucified, buried and resurrected Jesus Christ. Amen. And let all the saints praise Him forever and evermore.

There is a secret love and there is a first love that all of us have if we are baptized in Christ. All who have confessed Christ as Lord and Savior have within our story a secret love and a first love. Amen? And this is really at the core of what I'm getting at. If you want to seek God first, if you want to seek His kingdom first, if you want to love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength, and if you consider that the greatest and the first commandment, then you need to seek Him in secret. And you need to seek Him in a way that nobody knows about it, you never tell anybody about it, you take it to your grave. You don't brag about it, you don't Instagram about it. You don't talk about it. You do it. It's just between you and Him. This is where the presence is. This is where the power is. Amen? The secret place is where God is. You need to find God, He's always in secret.

I noticed that demons like to be public. They want to be recognized. I told a story a few weeks ago about a demon who was cast out with the wrong name. He's like, 'that's not my name.' See, this is how those people are, the demons, they want to be recognized. That's why they want images of themselves. God is hidden. He doesn't want to be seen in that way. He wants to be seen in the secret place.

This is important. In Exodus, chapter 33, if you have your Bibles, turn with me. We'll just read it together. Exodus, chapter 33. If you don't have your Bibles, it'll be on the screen, but there's a holy sound when pages flip. There is. The medium is the metaphor. It's better to read it on a book than it is on your phone. You can read it on your phone. No problem with that. I do all the time, but it's better in a book. How many of you know your phone is killing you? A lot of us, but not the book. This is a long passage, but be praying with me as we read this, okay? Moses said to the Lord.. wait, what did I say? Oh, yes. Okay.

It's too long. So 14. "The Lord replied, my presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." Who wants the presence of the Lord? I want the presence of the Lord in this church. Then Moses said to him.. "Moses said to him, if your presence does not go with us, don't send us up from here." Is that a good prayer for our church? We don't want to go without your presence. We don't want to run ahead of you, nor behind you, but always with you in the shadow of your wings.

"How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth? And the Lord said to Moses, I will do the very thing you've asked because I'm pleased with you and I know you by name."

"Then Moses said, now show me your glory. And the Lord said, I will cause all of my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But, he said, you cannot see my face, for no one can see my face and live. Then the Lord said, there's a place near me where you must stand on a rock. When my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I've passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you can see my back, but my face must not be seen."

Notice Moses had to go into a hidden place in a rock to be with the presence of God. And the real, actual glory of the Lord came by. He put his hand on the rock as He passed by. And then as he saw, Moses could see the Lord's back. Whoa. The secret place is where God is. The secret place. If you want the presence of the Lord, you need to go to the secret place.

We'll go through these scriptures really quickly, okay? "He who dwells in the secret place." In the what? (AUDIENCE – secret place) The secret place. Secret "of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in him I will trust."

Psalm 27 says, "For in the time of trouble, he shall hide me in his pavilion." In the what? (AUDIENCE – secret place) "In the secret place of his tabernacle, he shall hide me. He shall set me high upon a rock."

Psalm 31 says, "You shall hide them" where? (AUDIENCE – secret place) "In the secret place" of what? (AUDIENCE – presence) "Your presence." The secret place of your presence. Where is the presence of the Lord? (AUDIENCE – secret place) Where, Church? (AUDIENCE – secret place) It's in the secret place. In our attention seeking, self-promoting, self-protecting world, you need to remember, friend, where are the presences? Doesn't mean we're not public with our faith. Of course we are. It doesn't mean we don't have a public life in God. Of course we do. I've been up here praying and praising all day. But that has to come from something God is doing in the secret life with me, or else it's fake. It's a show. I'm a hypocrite.

You know the word hypocrite, when Jesus said it, was not a pejorative, not a negative thing to say. Hypocrite just meant actor. And that was really common. Almost every city in Rome had a theater, amphitheater. If you were to get a little bill, it would say, first hypocrite, Brad Pitt, second hypocrite, Angelina Jolie. Third. It just meant actor. When Jesus said hypocrites, He meant you're just acting. You're pretending. You're on a stage. You're pretending to do something. That's not real to you. He's God. He can see them. He said you're whitewashed tombs. Everything's all put together on the outside. I can see your heart. You're dead. You're dead. And this is because if those who live by the law, there is no secret place.

I had a vision this morning, even as I was praying, of believers in this church bringing an offering of oil to the congregation, that as you go into your prayer closet, as you're in your car praying, as you're in secret places where nobody knows, nobody sees and nobody hears about it, you have this bowl, like golden bowl and God's just pouring oil.

And the more people, I'm convinced, I am convinced that even one, two or three more people in this church that would do that could totally transform our whole congregation. To just have a few more. We just need a few more people. And that we would all collectively bring this offering of oil on Sunday and pour it out at the cross. And that this place would get thick with oil that only can come from the secret place. That only comes from that private, personal walk with God.

The secret place is also where the reward is. This is a huge teaching for Jesus. Again, we'll go through these three really quick. Matthew 6:4 from the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus says, "So that your giving may be done in" what? (AUDIENCE – secret) secret. "Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret will reward you." He says, if you give in public, that's your reward. And actually there's nothing wrong with that. That's your reward. You got your name on a thing, but there is no reward in heaven. But if you give in secret, there's a special reward there.

There's a lot of large donors who will give, and they absolutely.. I don't even know their names. They're absolutely like, this is anonymous. I don't want anyone to know. Praise God for people like that. They don't want to control anything. They don't want to influence anything. It's an offering of worship. It's not an investment, it's an offering of worship. Matthew 6:6 says, "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then when your father who sees what is done in secret will" do what? (AUDIENCE – reward you) Okay, the reward is in secret.

Matthew 6:18. I love that he says when you fast. He's assuming we're all fasting, sometimes. That's a good assumption. "So when you fast, fast in secret so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your father, who is unseen, and your father, who sees what is done," where? (AUDIENCE – in secret) "In secret, will reward you."

See, there's a secret reward and there's a public reward, and both of them are good. There's really nothing wrong with a public reward, actually. But that's all it is. Meredith told me a story. I thought about it several times, Meredith, since you told me, about I think it was Christine Caine and Joyce Meyer. Christine Caine gave this.. she's preached here a couple of times. She gave this huge sermon in an arena filled with people. Everybody's cheering. Wow! Yes, we love the Lord! We blah, blah, blah, and then she gets down, comes down the stairs backstage, and Joyce Meyer's there, kind of smoking a cigarette, just kidding. But she says something like, 'I hope you enjoyed that. That's your reward.' Is there anything wrong with that? This is Christine Caine telling the story, I assume.

Anything wrong with that? No, but that's all it is, you see.

God's kingdom is upside down from the world's kingdom. It has different rewards, different results, different promptings. Amen? Okay, so again, there's nothing wrong with public rewards, just don't store up more public rewards than private rewards. Warning. Warning. If you are in ministry, make sure that your secret life in God is bigger than your public life in God. Is that right? Praise the Lord.

I don't have permission to tell the story, so I'm going to hide the names, but I know two guys, both are big in ministry, and one was the executive assistant for another, a legend. Worldwide, you would absolutely know this man's name. Huge preacher, preaches to millions of people. And his executive assistant, who was with him all the time, he said anytime pastor would go to preach, if he had a nighttime, he would disappear for four hours and he would spend that whole time praying. Almost every day. Almost every day. And that man is still in ministry today, still crushing it. Praise God.

And so he learned from that, and now God is blessing that executive assistant with his own ministry because he understood that the power is in a secret place first. I can't heal anyone, not without the oil. I can't preach the gospel, not without the oil. Otherwise, I'm an actor. I'm pretending. It's fake. What happens to a man who doesn't have the oil and pretends to give oil to those who need it? He dies. He dies. He dies. He dies.

His spirit is crushed. Now, some of you, you need to get more public with your faith. Don't take this as a license to not pray with people, not share your faith with people, not be out loud. Some of you need to get way more public. So maybe you're saying to me, well, Pastor Bobby, how do I know? Just lay it out for me. Here's how you know. Look at Daniel and look at the Pharisees. Now the Pharisees, Jesus says they pray in public to be seen by them. So right there you're hearing from the heart that the intent is I'm going to pray so everybody knows that their rabbi is a big deal. Jesus can see their heart. Daniel, who's also a prophet, also a religious leader, also a spiritual leader, he prays in his window so everyone can see three times a day. Now is he violating God's heart? No. Because he never did it to be admired by people. And we know that because when the king passes a law, anyone who prays to anyone other than the king, still bop, bop, bop in the window, come and get me.

Here's a basic way you can know: which one is more humbling. Do that one. Okay? Which one's more humbling? Just do that one. It's so easy. Do the one you don't want to do. And do that one the most. Sometimes, like in my case, I do want to get up here and preach. I do want to get here and worship. But for me, and if you're a pastor of ministry, just make sure that there's way, way more time in private or the ministry will crush you.

Part two, last bit. I want everyone to take this with a grain of salt. I've tested this over 20 years, but it's not necessarily scriptural. I think it is, but it's not provable. And this comes from Pastor Juan Carlos Ortiz. Juan Carlos Ortiz, who was a pastor of the Spanish ministry at Crystal Cathedral, also worked with Luis Palau way before that in the great revival in Argentina. Some of you don't know, a massive revival happened in Argentina in the, I think it was in the 60's and 70's. And those two, they were brothers-in-law and they led that revival together.

And in the twilight of his life, Juan Carlos was my great friend. Many of you, too. Glenn was a great friend of Juan Carlos and others. He mentored us and said some things we agreed with and some things we didn't always agree with. But there was a teaching he gave that I've never forgotten and I've tested it and it's this, that there are effectively three types of sins. Okay? Now it's a theory, all right, y'all? It's a theory. Just put a little salt on it, okay? Little grain.

Number one he claimed the first sin is the sins of the flesh. These are the obvious sins that everyone sees: getting drunk. Whatever. You know the ones. Obvious sins: don't smoke, don't drink, don't chew, don't go with girls that do. Right? Sins of the flesh. We all know them. And in Juan Carlos' view, these are the least bad sins because everyone sees them. Now, you might be surprised to hear that, but in God's eyes, in a way, these are the least bad. And this is where the gospel of sin management comes in. Where many in religion, they're like, as long as I can manage and press those away with the law, I am a righteous man. But how many of you know if you trim all the thorns off a thorn bush, you still have a thorn bush? Is that right? (AUDIENCE – yes) You need to be a new bush. Just because you trim all the thorns off a thorn bush doesn't mean it's an apple tree. It needs to become a new tree. Amen? (AUDIENCE – amen)

So then he said, well, you could probably guess where this is going. The second sin was the sins of the soul. That is the sins of the will, the thoughts, the emotions. Much harder to see, but if you live with someone or you're married to someone, they show themselves eventually, don't they? Sins of the soul. Envy, lust, greed, lack, fear. Okay? These are sins of the soul, which ultimately become sins of the flesh. But if you nick it at the soul, you nick it at the flesh. Is that right?

But this is the surprise. He said, there's the deepest sin of all, which is a sin of the spirit that only you and God know. I want to be very careful here. I don't want anyone to become superstitious or under anything, but those of you who have been a believer for a long time, those of you who know the Word and know the promptings of the Holy Spirit, know exactly what this is. A sin of the Spirit. Only you and God know.

It's the kind of sin that on paper isn't even a sin. It seems fine. Nothing wrong with it. You'd never get in trouble. If you told anybody, they would say that wasn't a sin. Don't worry about it. In your heart, you would know it's a sin. And Juan Carlos said, this is the most egregious sin of all. Even though it's so small, it's like its invisible, it's microscopic, like one virus, like just one cell of yeast. Who knows that it can become much more than that, amen?

Some examples of this in the Bible were Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, who offered a strange fire. There's no way you would know there was something wrong with that fire. But they knew they weren't supposed to offer that kind of fire to God. It was a spiritual sin. Or King Saul's sacrifice. When he offered a sacrifice because Samuel wasn't there yet. He knew he wasn't supposed to do it, but he did it. And that's when God canceled his anointing. When he committed a spiritual sin. Not with all the other terrible sins that would seem way worse than that. He simply lit a fire. Big deal.

Or Moses, when the second time He says, speak to the rock. Don't hit the rock. That was a spiritual sin, because he hit the rock instead AND water still came out. So who's going to know? And that was the sin. Not the other sins that Moses committed. That was the sin, that spiritual sin that cut him off from being able to enter into the Promised Land. This is some deep stuff, Church, but this is the stuff revivals are made of.

When we decide that it is the spiritual sins that we attack the most, that more than anything, we want the presence of the Lord; that we want to hear from the Holy Spirit and always do what He says. Amen? (AUDIENCE – amen) Now, praise God we don't live in the Old Testament anymore, and our spiritual sins can be forgiven. But the best way you are forgiven of a spiritual sin, if even now your soul is grieved, is to take communion. We take communion every Sunday before service in the prayer of laying on of hands. We do it in our service frequently. But if you feel like you've done that, you stay till next service and you take communion. You can give your time to God. Amen? (AUDIENCE – amen) If you give everything, that also means you might stay longer, or you might eat a little later, or you might not eat it all today, and you come and you take communion; you take the Eucharist, and God will cleanse you of your spiritual sin and all your sin. Amen? (AUDIENCE – amen)

A couple of real example stories of this. One time Hannah and I were watching a movie. I have already told this story.. in my office. How many of you know it takes a long time for a man and a wife to pick a show? Somebody's got to solve that problem. Thirty minutes go by. Temperature is rising. We finally found a show we both wanted to watch. Ten minutes in the Holy Spirit is - don't watch this. It's like PG. Nothing wrong with it. I don't even know if it's fine for you to watch it. It's just I wasn't supposed to watch it, for some reason. If I told you the name of the movie, you would know it and you would laugh out loud and you would think, that is so silly. But the Holy Spirit was like, don't watch this movie.

And I was like (BBBBBB), it took a long time to find a show. And I was like, that's probably not the Lord. And I was like, don't watch this movie. Don't watch this movie. And the whole time I'm like, get some more candy (MAKES MUNCHING SOUNDS). Stop watching this movie. Stop. About halfway through the movie, it went away, and then when it went away, so did the peace.

We finished the movie, and the next day I was, like, crestfallen and crushed in spirit. I was like, Hannah, I know this sounds ridiculous. I sinned in the spirit. We need to take communion right there on the kitchen table. We did it. Remember, Hannah?

Simon had a similar experience. Bethany's husband went into an antique store. The Holy Spirit told him, don't go in there. There's some demonic stuff on some objects in there. Don't go in there. They went in anyway, and he said the same thing, right? We got to take communion. I sinned. I don't know, and we got to repent. I gave my spirit exposure to this thing. Those who have ears to ear, let them hear. If you want it, take it. If you don't want it, cast it away.

But I believe it's the truth that this is at the heart of experiencing the presence of God, is the secret life with God that's constantly going on here, that's going on in your prayer closet. If you don't have that life, you've got to find it. You've got to get there as a believer. You have to get it to that life. Everything else, that going to church and all that, this is the most important thing. You have to get into that secret place. You have to cry out like Moses did. I don't even want to go if I go without your presence. Amen? (AUDIENCE – amen)

My last final thought. Eric and Philip, come on up here. We need to get our hearts right. I'm going to give you an opportunity to receive the Lord right now. Some of you, you're here. You think that's an accident that you're here. It's not. There are some people probably that came here today that God wanted you to be here to hear what I'm about to say.

I'm going to give you the opportunity right now to commit your life to the Lord. Some of you, you have no idea where you are in your walk with God. You are for sure not at peace with God, and if I asked you, do you know, would you go to heaven or hell if you die? You wouldn't even know. Somebody who is here right now, the Holy Spirit is even beginning to work on your heart. You're getting nervous. Your hands are getting clammy. Praise the Lord! Because God is preparing you to make the most important decision of your life. This call is not for people who are baptized Christians. If you're a baptized Christian, take communion. Get your life right in that way. But if you would say maybe you were baptized a long time ago or something like that, or you're not a Christian at all, and you're like, my life is not right with God. I don't think anyone would call me a Christian, least of all myself, the time has come to be at peace with God.

I want every head up and I want everybody looking around. I want you to just look around because what I'm offering you today is not some cheesy prayer that you pray and then leave and then think you're going to heaven. That's a lie. The Gospel is that you pray a prayer of death. That you say He who lived is now dying, being buried with Christ, crucified with Christ, buried with Christ and raised to dead with Christ.

I'm not asking you to pray a prayer and commit some abstract.. I'm asking you to give up everything. This gospel is not easy. It asks you to give up everything. But there is someone here who knows that what the world has to offer is worthless. You've tried everything. It's time to give all of it up. You don't need a new formula or a new plan. You need a new spirit. And that comes through a very proud, very brave, very public declaration that it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives within me.

And so today, I want you to prepare your heart, and with every head up, everybody looking around, in a moment, I want you to stand because if you can't stand for God in church, how are you going to stand for God out in the world? Amen. (AUDIENCE – amen) So we want to welcome you.

If you're ready to commit your life to Christ, if you're serious about laying down your life and getting a whole new, radically different life, to give up all the things you hold dear and die in the spirit and be given a new spirit, I want you to stand right now with everybody watching. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Stay standing. Stay standing. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Stay standing. God sees you. Stay standing. Everybody else, don't sit but if anybody else wants to make a choice, please stand. You've got one more chance. You never know what's going to happen after today. Okay? Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Hallelujah.

All right, we're all going to pray this prayer together. And Church, if you're sitting, extend a hand towards those who are standing, and we're all going to pray this prayer together because we are one body, one loaf, one baptism, one water. Amen? Let's pray together: In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (AUDIENCE – in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ) Louder, Church. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (AUDIENCE – in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ), I lay down my life (AUDIENCE – I lay down my life). I confess my sin (AUDIENCE – I confess my sin).

I confess that I hate sin (AUDIENCE – I confess that I hate sin) and that I love God (AUDIENCE – and that I love God). I turn my back on all things (AUDIENCE – I turn my back on all things) and I turn my eyes to the cross (AUDIENCE – and I turn my eyes to the cross). I confess that Jesus is the Son of God (AUDIENCE – I confess that Jesus is the Son of God), the Lamb of God (AUDIENCE – the Lamb of God), crucified (AUDIENCE – crucified), buried (AUDIENCE – buried) and raised to life (AUDIENCE – and raised to life) on the third day (AUDIENCE – on the third day). In this hope alone (AUDIENCE – in this hope alone), I put my trust (AUDIENCE – I put my trust). I am saved (AUDIENCE – I am saved). I am cleansed of sin (AUDIENCE – I am cleansed of sin). I am delivered (AUDIENCE – I am delivered). I am given new life (AUDIENCE – I am given new life) in Jesus name (AUDIENCE – in Jesus name). It is no longer I who live (AUDIENCE – it is no longer I who live), but Christ who lives in me (AUDIENCE – but Christ who lives in me). Amen (AUDIENCE – amen). Church, stand with me. Let's give some praise to the Lord. Come on up. Come up, Meredith. Come on. We need to worship the Lord. Come on. Lift your hands like this. Come on. The Lord is in the room. Begin to pray.

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. I love you all. Have a good week.