

Hour of Power Deutschland
Steinerne Furt 78
86167 Augsburg

Telefon: 08 21 / 420 96 96
Telefax: 08 21 / 420 96 97

E-Mail: info@hourofpower.de
www.hourofpower.de

Baden-Württembergische Bank
BLZ: 600 501 01
Konto: 28 94 829

BAN:
243600501010002894829

BIC:
243600501010002894829

Büro Schweiz:

Hour of Power Schweiz
Poststr. 8
3594 Güttingen
Tel.: 071 690 07 81
info@hourofpower-schweiz.ch
www.hourofpower-schweiz.ch

Spendenkonto:

PostFinance AG, 3030 Bern
Konto: 61-18359-6
BAN:
241609000000610183596

Hour of Power vom 16.09.2018

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.

HS: And welcome, church family. You are loved. Thank you for being with us here today. You know in my quiet times this week, I have been feeling so much joy knowing that God is on my side. Whatever it is you are going through right now, you can have joy this morning, because the God of the universe is on your side. Thank you, Jesus.

Turn around and shake the hand of the person next to you and say God loves you and so do I.

BS: Well good morning. We're so glad you're here and we want you to leave this place with a full tank, full of joy and fresh vision.

And so let's begin today in prayer. Father, thank you that you've invited us to this wedding feast, to this gathering. We thank you, Lord that your presence, your power, and your life are here. Lord, we love you so much, and we couldn't even live without you and we're so thankful that you love us in return, and we thank you. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

SCRIPTURE – Matthew 25:1-13 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for Bobby's message, the words of our Lord found in Matthew 25:1: At that time, the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

At midnight, the cry rang out: here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!

Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.

No, they replied, there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.

But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet and the door was shut.

Later, the others also came, Lord, Lord, they said, open the door for us! But He replied, truly I tell you, I don't know you.

Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Church family, we are preparing ourselves for the next great thing God is doing in our lives. Amen.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Friends, let's say this together. Hold your hands like this, and 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 the world.

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "Be Ready for the Invite"

Well today I'm going to talk about the importance of being ready; being ready when these great moments and opportunities come our way; being ready, in particular, for the kingdom of God. And when I say the kingdom of God, I don't mean just heaven and hell and judgment and the return of Christ, I also mean the things of God that are happening today in our daily life.

And I want to talk about the importance of having oil in our lamps; of being full of the Holy Spirit so we can have spiritual ears and eyes to see when God is doing great things in our communities or in our lives so that we can get aboard those things.

Be Ready for the Invite

It's important that we recognize that opportunity is a rare thing, but when it comes, and when we take advantage of it, it can have incredible results. You think about a decision you made maybe once or twice in your life that maybe took some risk or courage, and you were just ready, just primed for it, and you leaped on that opportunity and it made all the difference. Maybe it's even having an impact on your life today. And maybe you think of something in your life in which you didn't jump on it. You thought you should of and you didn't. But you know something where you missed out on a relationship, a date, a trip and you recognize man if I had only done that, if I'd been ready and leapt for that opportunity, you ask yourself how might my life be different.

So today I want to talk about the importance of recognizing that life is not a very seamless singular line, but it's these big spiking moments. Too often, as people are too busy, too hurried, too out of energy, and too out of sync with God's voice, to leap on these things, and that's a bad thing, and we want to remove the things that get in the way of us living in the life of the spirit.

So think about an opportunity that made a difference in your life. I know one for me, one huge opportunity that made a difference in my life was when I started dating this beautiful young woman over here, my wife Hannah. And I remember I met Hannah when I was 15, and I feel bad saying this, but I was introduced to her by a girl I was dating at the time. We weren't super serious but this girl introduced me to Hannah, and Hannah turned around and I was stunned. If there was ever a love at first sight moment for me, that was it.

And I remember for really years, I think it was four or maybe even five years, I had this big crush on Hannah. She was dating another guy at the time and so I wasn't really.. I hadn't learned yet that you should just go for it anyway.

So she was dating, and I dated other people and I at the time too, I had acne and I was nervous when I talked to her, and I had these big fluffy shoes, so she hadn't seen the Lord's will yet for her life. I mean she wasn't that interested.

So when college came around, and maybe I'd blossomed a little bit, she had broken up with her boyfriend, this guy. Anyway, and there was a window of opportunity for me, but it was the day before I was supposed to leave on a six month trip for Germany. So I left and didn't get to see her. When I came back, she was with that guy again. It was a mess.

And finally, as summer came around and she was single again, we happened to go on a missionary trip together. Her brother was a dear friend of mine, and so we're on this missionary trip in Panama. And we got to know each other a little bit better, although I wouldn't say we were even great friends at the time; we were just sort of getting to know one another. And when we were there, I was talking to her and one of our mutual friends, Natasha, and I said you guys should come out to California and visit me sometime. We'll go fishing, and go to the beach, whatever.

So later that summer, her brother and one of our friends Nate, and she came out, the three of them, to visit me in California. And I just went for it. I was flirting with her, and I was trying to get the other two guys busy so I could talk to her and get to know her. And there was this moment. Her brother, Chris, who was a friend of mine, he was getting married only a few days later. And she said, gosh, I wish you were coming to Chris' wedding. You know there's all this chemistry all of a sudden. And I said, well what if I do come? I said I'll tell you what: I'll come out to that wedding, if you give me either the first or the last dance at the wedding. And she said, if you come out to the wedding, I'll give you both. So when she.. yes, she's like I'm going for it.

Look I was 19. I had no money, right? I had no money, I had no way of knowing how I was going to get out to Tulsa, but I knew that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity. I had to get to that wedding, and I had to dance with this girl, and if I had to walk to Tulsa, I was going to start the day she left. I was going to get there, hitchhike, whatever I could to get there. And I did. And so we went and we danced the night away, and we really hit it off, and that was kind of when we.. it was at the beginning of our like kind of dating relationship. And we talked about it later, had I not gone out to that wedding, I'm not sure we would have dated and then gotten married because there were lots of other good looking, great guys out there who were very interested in Hannah, and if I'm back in California, my opportunity is shot.

By the way, I took a camera with me, and this was the picture from that night. Isn't that adorable? She is so beautiful, isn't she? She still is more beautiful than ever. And anyway, I'm so glad for that, okay, you can take the picture down.

The reason I begin with that is that if you think about it, much of your success in life is probably the result of a few key decisions. Maybe they're big risks like that. You had to go for something. You didn't know how you were going to do it, but you knew this was a once in a lifetime opportunity.

Be Ready for the Invite

I think when we're young, we feel like we have more of those opportunities, but I think that's because when we're young, we're not as busy and bogged down, anxious and worried. That's maybe not true for all of us, but I think that something happens to us, opportunity doesn't go away, but something happens to our ears and our eyes where we lose the ability to see whoa, this is something. I need to get aboard this, whatever this is.

It's really true. There was this economist named Vilfredo Pareto, and he noticed that in his garden, the peapods, that twenty percent of the pods produced 80% of the peas. And he created this thing that he noticed that was in almost everything, what he called the Pareto Principle. Sometimes we call it the 80/20 rule. That 20% of the stuff in life gives us 80% of the results. And 80% of the stuff gives us 20% of the results. And what he noticed is that most of the stuff that we do in life doesn't really produce that much. That most of the stuff that makes us wealthy, successful, good in our relationships, good at whatever craft that we're working on; the stuff that makes us excellent comes down to a much smaller sample group than we think. It comes down to some of those important decisions, and some of that critical work that makes all the difference.

We need to recognize this. That most of the stuff that we're doing is a waste of time. That the most important things we do, whether it be professionally in our relationship, but most importantly the kingdom of God, comes down to these moments. It comes down to a small time. It comes down to little things that make all the difference.

And so it doesn't matter. If you make millions of dollars and if you conquer the world, and if you hold the world in your hands, but you lose your soul, you've lost everything. What life is worth is our friendships, our marriages, our kids, our family, and most importantly our relationship with God.

And it's also true that the Pareto Principle, that the 80/20 rule, the opportunity that's available in our happiness in our life, comes down to these key moments in life. And we need to become the kind of people who are ready to seize those moments when they come. And not only ready to seize them, but able to see them!

And this is what Jesus is going to teach us in Matthew 25, the importance of having our lamps lit; of being oil filled people who are ready to get into the moves of God, and they are many, and they are great. When God is on the move, to be ready, to jump on that wave. It's like surfing, actually. Here we are in Southern California, that the moves of God are like everything else – it's not one fluid thing, but they come in waves. If you're a surfer, you sit out on the water and you wait for a long time, sometimes, for a set of three, four, five big waves, and you don't want to miss out on them. And you can only usually grab one of them.

And so in that same way, the Holy Spirit of God and the kingdom of God, moves in history through waves, and we can be ready for those waves, or we can miss out on them. So we need to become people of the spirit who are listening and who are always in the presence of the kingdom of God, that have oil, that are ready, amen?

That's what Jesus teaches: Matthew chapter 25. Hannah already read it. I'm going to read it again just so we can think through this. Now when Jesus is preaching, He's getting ready to go to the cross, and He is for sure here talking about eschatology. It's just a big word that means the end of all things. The end of my life, or the judgment of God, but He's also talking about the kingdom of God, which is not just the end of life, but is happening now.

So He says, "At the time, the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins," we'll just say that means unmarried women, in particular. So ten teenage girls, "who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five of them were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps, but did not take any oil with them. The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps." You get that? So some brought the lamps with oil in it so they could be lit, but others brought a lamp with oil in it, and they brought like an extra bit of oil. Make sense? Like a side jar of oil to refill. "The bridegroom was a long time in coming and they all became drowsy and fell asleep." Notice how both the wise and the foolish are sleeping. That's okay to sleep, huh? It's okay to wait. It's okay to take a nap. Jesus took naps. Next time your spouse bugs you for taking a nap, just say I'm being Christ-like; just following the Lord.

"At midnight, the cry rang out: here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him! Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, give us some of your oil. Our lamps are going out. No, they replied. There may not be enough for both of us, and for you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves. But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins, who were ready, went in with him to the wedding banquet, and the door was shut. Later, the others also came – Lord, Lord, they said, open the door for us.

Be Ready for the Invite

But He replied, truly I tell you, I don't know you. Therefore, keep watch because you do not know the day or the hour."

Now in this passage, Jesus is talking about the end of things, but He's also talking about the present. He's talking about the fact that many of the Pharisees who are there, don't recognize that in Himself, in the very body and life of Jesus, the kingdom of God has come. And before I get too much into that, let me explain Jewish weddings. In those days, those ancient days, weddings were weird, and it's like why is a wedding happening in the middle of the night. And the reason is because it's a Middle Eastern culture. This is just a thing they do. The bride and the groom would get together, and we're not really quite sure what's happening here, but the bride and the groom either had a wedding, or the parents were meeting to discuss essentially the contractual agreement between two families becoming one, things like a dowry, transfer of property, and that could take awhile.

And then what happens is these bridegrooms, and everybody else in the village, they get into this processional. Now this is a big deal because in those days, people were pretty bored. They're farmers, there's no TV, they're not wealthy, and so when a wedding happens, it's this huge, amazing, big, sometimes it'll go on for days celebration, and especially the young girls. I mean this is like the greatest thing that's going to happen all year.

This is so important because when Jesus is talking about the wedding, He's talking about joy! Laughter! Singing! Dancing! Jokes! Being alive! Being human! And this is the invitation that the kingdom of God, the arrival of the kingdom of God is this big celebration, and He's telling them don't miss out on it. And that's exactly what happens is these women, these girls, they don't bring extra oil and so notice how the oil, the lamps, they burn out.

So it's not that they were never burning, they just burned out. And they just didn't have enough, and didn't have any left, and so they became people with lamps without oil.

In those days, too, they would then go to the groom's house, and there they would gather and they would celebrate, but it was illegal to be out on the street at night without a lamp because that's when thieves would do their thieving. And so if somebody arrives at a house, again when its only candlelit, and they knock on the door, and you can't see who's out there, you're not going to open the door. You don't know who's out there. You're not going to allow somebody to come in and rob your wedding and to damage this most important day of this young family's life. And that's what Jesus says it's like that if you're not ready, if you're not prepared, whether it comes to the end of your life or whether it comes to these great opportunities in life, your hopes will be dashed. You'll be like these young girls, who because they ran out of oil, they weren't prepared to be a part of what God was doing.

He is telling us look for the kingdom of God. Prepare for the kingdom of God, and be full of oil. Full of oil.

In the Bible, the oil is always, always a symbol of the Holy Spirit. It's the Holy Spirit; the spirit of God within us. And that's why I believe when Jesus is telling this parable He's in large part talking to the Pharisees. Probably men who started out with oil full of joy, full of the Holy Spirit, but as they got older, ran out of flame, ran out of fire, and just simply became men of rules, statutes, and rights. In Jesus' words, they became whitewashed tombs. They were gorgeous on the outside, but dead on the inside. They were lamps without oil. They had everything on the outside they needed to burn, but no fuel; nothing on the inside to bring light or warmth or fire. They were oil-less lamps.

And this is the greatest temptation for every religious person is to run out of oil. You got the lamp, you got everything that you need for burning, but no oil. This is why Jesus says to the Pharisees you study the scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. But these are the scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me and have life. The kingdom of God, it comes in waves, and when it comes, it is a celebration, it's joyful.

I think it's really interesting how often Jesus uses weddings as a parable. He does it a lot. And He uses wine a lot. Like actually you remember Jesus' first miracle? He turns water into wine at a wedding for people who drank too much! They ran out of wine! And then He made the good stuff. It's this idea of the celebration, the joy, the laughter and the goodness of the kingdom of God. It really is joyful.

That's why, and I've said this a lot, I mean really be wary of religious people that don't have joy. Be wary of religious people that can't laugh at a joke. And I'm 100% serious about that. That people who can't laugh, who can't celebrate are people who don't have love. The scriptures teach us that the fruit of the spirit is love and joy, the two first two things it mentions, love and joy they are describing the same fruit.

Be Ready for the Invite

In the same way an apple is red on the outside and white on the inside, so the spirit of God, love on the outside and joy on the inside. And that's why Jesus uses a wedding and not a funeral as a description for the kingdom of God. It's a celebration. Awesome. And something that we don't want to miss out on.

We need to become people full of the Holy Spirit of God, full of oil, full of oil, and friends, let me tell you, there is no shortage of oil, and that's the good news. No shortage. The Holy Spirit is available to every believer. When you were baptized, when you confessed Jesus as the Lord of your life, it's like He gave you a pilot light, and that little light, it doesn't have much light at all, or warmth, or anything, but then He also gave you gas, and that gas is the Spirit of God, and He's also given you, what is it called? A gas valve or something like that? So it's like this: you have this pilot light, and you've got gas available, and you've got that little gas knob. Turn it on, baby, turn it on! Have some joy! Life, spirit, so that you're ready, you're ready for the things of God. Ready. Full of courage, of joy and eyes to see and ears to hear. Amen? So we got to be people who are ready for the kingdom of God.

I hate to quote Nietzsche in church but Nietzsche, who's in many ways, very brilliant, was criticizing the church of his time, and of course he had the famous God is dead line, and the contents of that line was in the parable of the madman. The story goes like this. Nietzsche says that there's a crazy, madman walking in the streets in rags, holding a lamp, a lightly lit in the middle of the day on a sunny day, and he's looking for God like this. He's looking for God. Where is God? Where is God? And everybody starts to mock him and laugh at him. Where's God? I'm looking for God. Where is He? And he takes this lamp and he shatters it on the ground, and it's a symbol of the light, the light of God going out, and he says this famous line, he looks at them:

"God is dead, and we have killed Him. What after all are these churches now, if they are not the tombs and sepulchre's of God?" You hear that criticism at the end? The people in Nietzsche's day and many of the people in our day, they don't see oil in our lamps. They don't see joy and the Holy Spirit on the move in the way that they should.

This was especially true in the 19th century when Nietzsche was writing, when he looked at a church that, in many ways, in Germany was overly academic. And I love academics, I love learning, I love books, but relied too heavily on its rights and statutes, and not enough on the Holy Spirit, and was not ready for the great things of God.

That's why I have a soft spot in my heart for Pentecostalism, by the way. And it got real quiet, didn't it. The Pentecostals, they live by the spirit and they have their own vices for sure, but they never make the mistake of not having enough joy. They never make the mistake of not hearing what God's saying or doing, or when God is on the move.

The mainline protestant church is in a rapid decline, but if you take Pentecostalism as its own tradition, it's the fastest growing religion in the world. Why? It's people full of the spirit, full of fire.

I was at a mainline church in our denomination in New York and the topic was on diversity, and having ethnic and racial diversity within the church. And I thought this is great what this pastor is saying, but then I looked around and it was a church full of only white people. I'm like they say they like diversity, but where is it? You know where diversity is? It's in the Pentecostal church. See I have the joy of preaching at lots of different types of churches. I've preached in every Baptist, Methodist, liberal, conservative, everybody invites me to preach. They all think I'm like them. I'm like the rock, you know? Everybody thinks I'm either liberal or conservative, or this or that. And the one thing I notice is that the Pentecostal church doesn't talk about diversity, they practice it. Because they're people with the spirit, they naturally transcend those things, and they all love one another.

See we all have things we can learn. They have things they can learn from us, we have things we can learn from them, amen? So I'm not telling you to be Pentecostal, I'm telling you to be a person full of the Holy Spirit, and a person who looks for and is ready for the things of God, because the things of God come in waves, and when they come, you must be ready for it. I think that this is one of those things, right here. This church. This is a move of God. God is doing something in this church right now. This wasn't my idea. It just came out of nowhere. And I think we're yet to see more happen even here, which is good news.

Wow, that was a digression, wasn't it; Pentecostalism and racism and all that. All right.

If we're to be people of the spirit, before we talk about what we need to do, and I don't even know if we need to do that. We need to talk about what's in the way. And I'm going to look to Ronald Rolheiser for this. Rolheiser says that there are three things. I'm going to give you three things in three minutes before I finish. Are you ready?

Be Ready for the Invite

The first thing that gets in the way of a life of the spirit is egotism. Now he says narcissism, and I think that's too extreme of a word. I think egotism is a little bit better because it describes what all of us struggle with. It's all about me. And it takes many forms, doesn't it. It's like egotism can look like reputation management. If I act that way, or if I do that thing, or if I tell people I heard from God, or if I take this big risk, what are people going to think of me? What's going to happen to my reputation? And so it creates fear in our hearts and we miss out on the big things of God, the opportunities, the moves of the Spirit, or the big opportunities in life.

The second one, I want to be careful about this, but the second thing that gets in the way is pragmatism. Now I'm a pragmatic person. I really am. And I think it's good to be pragmatic. But when pragmatism becomes your highest value, it destroys your soul. It gets in the way of the best things in life. And what I mean here when I say pragmatism is that everything must be practical, and many of us are that way, especially in a modern world. But what's practical about surfing? What's practical about kissing or singing or Disneyland? What's practical about those things?

And the pragmatic person will say well there's a very practical thing about those. Surfing is exercise and singing, it bonds a community in a common value, but even saying those things it sort of kills the thing, doesn't it. It like takes the joy of out the thing that it's supposed to be. And even like anybody who describes kissing is like oh it increases serotonin and creates love chemicals in the brain. It's like you know that person is bad at kissing, right? You just know. And I guess that's my point is that the pragmatism, the lens of pragmatism can ruin our spiritual life. Be pragmatic but not at everything. Sometimes God will ask you to do something that makes no sense. Sometimes it's good to follow your heart.

And finally, the number three thing, pragmatism leads to this, and that's unbridled restlessness. We just never stop. We're always going. Always going. Going. Going. Going. Doing. Doing. Doing. More work, more driving, more traffic, more errands. More this, more that, more TV, more internet, more emails. Sleep, wake up, eat, go, go, go, go. You don't have to live that way. The greatest successes in your life are going to be the result of grabbing on to these moments, these moments, and if you're busy, too busy doing all this stuff, busy all the time, and restless, you won't have the eyes or the ears to jump on board what God has in store for you.

In order to live by the spirit, you have to breathe. The word for the Holy Spirit in the Bible, in Hebrew, it's the Ruach Elohim. It's the Ruach, it means breath. Spirit. Breath and spirit, the same thing in Greek: Pneuma is this idea of breath and spirit. It's the same thing. So many of us, we exhale all the time, right? We're exhaling, doing, doing, but we never inhale. Right? So living the life of the Spirit is about inhaling and exhaling spiritually; that we have these moments where we stop and we think and we don't do anything. And we reflect, and we listen for what the Spirit is doing. We look for where the Spirit is going and we jump and get on board with that.

Let's be ready, friends. Full of joy, full of oil, full of the Spirit, ready to move. Amen? Amen. That's what we need. We're nothing without, we're everything with it.

Lord, we thank you, and we love you, and we ask in Jesus' name, Lord, even just now, we take a moment and open up our soul to heaven, and we ask Lord, in Jesus' name, that you would pour out so much of your life and your spirit that you'd create a revival and fire and life and listening and joy, especially, within this community and with everyone under the sound of my voice. Lord, we love you and it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

BENEDICTION – BOBBY SCHULLER

And now for the benediction: may the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord cause His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. May the Lord turn His countenance upon you and grant you His peace, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.