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Hour of Power - 12.12.2021

### GOOD MORNING – Bobby Schuller

BS: This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. Hello. We're so glad that you're here. My wife isn't here this morning because Haven had a sleepover that ended yesterday, but Hannah, because she was watching them only slept two hours. I said it's the Sabbath, you can watch from home. No problem. Hannah's not with us today, but you're with us and we're so glad that you're here, and I just believe that when you make a discipline out of participating in church, when you make sure that your family is here, or you bring your friends, or that even just you make a point to be here, I just think that it's just such a good thing for your life. I think it really blesses God's heart. It blesses my heart and I'm so grateful that you participate whatever way it is, whether you're here in the sanctuary or out on the courtyard, or at your house or wherever it is that you watch and participate in our program, we're just really grateful that you're here. I just pray that you leave feeling encouraged. I always think that people come to church already feeling guilty enough. I don't need to make people feel more guilty. I don't need to beat up on people. I want you to know that I think that God thinks you're doing better than you think you are, and my biggest prayer for today is that all of us leave with our hearts full of joy. Let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, we thank you so much for all that you've done and all that you're doing. A lot of us have gotten some bad news lately, and I pray, God, that you'd teach us what it means to have joy in the midst of all of that news. And Father, we just love you so much with all of our hearts, and I pray in Jesus' name that this would be a great day from you, and that this would be an amazing Christmas season for so many who can't see family members because of flights and things like this. I just pray God your blessing. And we ask all these things in Jesus' name, amen. Turn around to the person next to you and say God loves you and so do I.

### ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING (Joy) – Jonathan & Veronica Thonglom

JT: During the first two weeks of this Advent season, we lit the candles of hope and peace. Today we light the candle of Joy. It is the only pink candle because it reminds us of the joy Mary felt as the angel Gabriel described for her how a special child would be born to her; One who would save and deliver His people. It also reminds us of the great joy that was experienced by the shepherds and sung about by the choir of angels in the fields outside Jerusalem that holy night. As we light this candle, we welcome Christ's light of joy into every place of care and sorrow. Our joy builds with anticipation of His birth and we yearn to experience His love and presence in our lives. And now let us join together in prayer: We joyfully praise you, O Lord, for the promised fulfillment of your gift of salvation through the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ. As we wait, let us be open to your glory and your gracious and loving presence. In the name of Jesus, your Son and our Lord we pray, amen.

### SCRIPTURE – Matthew 2:1-6 – Chad Blake

In preparation for Bobby's message, hear the words of our Lord found in Matthew chapter 2: After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written." But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel. This is the word of the Lord.

## Let the Weak Say I Am Strong

### DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Would you stand with us? Hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving from the Lord, let's say this creed 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. Its 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. Amen!

### MESSAGE/PRAYER – Bobby Schuller "Let the Weak Say I Am Strong"

This is a good time to have a creed like that, isn't it. I'm not what I do or what I have, or what people say about me. Today is the Sunday of joy! And it's an interesting time to talk about joy. You'd think that would be actually a very hard time to talk about joy with all that's going wrong in the world. But believe it or not, it's the best time to talk about joy. I thought a lot about this years ago when I wrote my first book *Imagine Happiness* that I think a lot of pastors get this one part about joy correct, that joy is not circumstantial. It's something that you can have all the time. That it's something that's within you. That God gives you and births in you, and that you sort of always have. But what they seem to get wrong sometimes, I don't know if this is just the kind of churches maybe I went to, but it felt almost like joy was a stoic content. You know what I mean? Like it was like I'm at peace with things. But that's not joy. Joy smiles. Joy laughs at funny jokes. Joy gathers with friends. Joy sings. And it's more like what we see when the apostles are in prison and they're worshipping the Lord, I believe even with smiles on their face, and their worship is so great that the heavens shake. That's joy. Joy is real happiness that is not circumstantial. And joy, by the way, is very, very happy. When we're in a time like this, many of us, and maybe you, have gone through some very difficult times. Maybe you lost your job or got furloughed. Maybe you lost your business. Maybe you had that family restaurant that's been in your family for generations. I have a couple of friends who lost their churches. They had to close the doors. They couldn't pay the mortgage. And many people have experienced loss of loved ones. A lot of us are experiencing a season of loss. Some of you are going to go through your first Christmas without that loved one, and that can be very difficult. I want to make you a promise that rabbi Jesus teaches us a way to live and to be joyful in all seasons. And even though we're obviously not going to be joyful when we're mourning someone's death, or joyful in the midst of tragedy, the default is joy. The default is joy. I love ministry. I love doing ministry things. I can tell you if I won a hundred million dollars in the lottery or something; I don't play the lottery, I actually hate the lottery. But if I won the lottery, nothing would change in my life. I'd get like probably a bigger house, that'd be it. Many of you, maybe you feel that same way. You just love your job or you loved the job you just lost. It's interesting when I think about America, I think about an industrious people. It can be said historically that I think most people, maybe you disagree, that have come to America from another country in the last hundred and fifty years, did so with a dream in their heart. Even the ones who broke the law. The people who come here are looking for a better life. I often will tell people when I'm traveling who are asking questions they don't understand some of the quirky things about Americans: why are Americans this way or that way, and one thing I love to say is that America is not a race or a language, it's an idea and that idea is freedom in meritocracy. The idea that if you take enough risk, if you work hard enough, if you are smart enough, if you network enough, if you get enough knowledge and you don't quit, well you can make whatever kind of life you want. Although that's not always true in America, it is true a lot of the time. And Americans are so full of this ideal and it's a good ideal, by the way. I remember my favorite quote from Steinbeck, he said "socialism never took root in America because the poor see themselves not as an exploited proletariat, but as temporarily embarrassed millionaires." I know a lot of people feel that way. In the second world war, when Hitler's generals were worried that America might join the allies in the fight, they brought the industrial numbers to Hitler and he read them and he said there is no way any country could put these kind of numbers out. And you know what's funny? He thought it was fake. They were actually conservative – they were even higher than what he saw. America has always been made up of people who are doers and builders, and they're made up mostly of immigrants who came here to work or build or do something. Most of us who are Americans are descended from somebody who did something like that. And there's something to say for that. In a culture that when everything shuts down, when there's a lot of government overreach that is definitely in a grey zone in terms of the constitutionality and stuff, lawyers are fighting over, it is so easy to be embittered, not just over the fact that you feel controlled, but be embittered because you can't do anything. Some people love chilling out in the house all day. I am not one of those people, and maybe you aren't either.

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And when that happens, when you can't get out and see your friends and you can't go to work and you can't go to school or you can't go to your church, you can't do a lot of things you're used to doing, the question how can I be joyful today is definitely one that lingers. That's one that lingers. And yet we feel like we should be joyful people, shouldn't we? Man, I would tell you, this is a joyful church and I'm grateful for that, and we are a joyful people. And I would say that attaining joy, being a joyful person, that means having a sense of hope and happiness in all times despite circumstance is a great thing to have. And furthermore I would say don't trust.. I've said this a lot – never trust a political leader or a religious leader that's not joyful. I overplay this hand sometimes, I recognize. Sometimes I can be a bit of a clown. And that's in large part because I very much do not trust religious people, especially religious leaders who are not joyful. They take themselves too seriously. What we're talking about is serious, what we're doing is serious, we're all in, and yet we should be joyful. Joyful people. God has that for us. Joy the way Paul was joyful. I want to promise you first, this could be the most joyful Christmas you've ever had because joy does not come from circumstances, joy comes from what the Lord is doing within. What do you think makes a person, in general, a joyful person? I think if we're not trying to approach this Biblically or religiously, we just wanted to just answer the question: what makes people joyful, I think very often its good food. I think its good friends. I think it's having meaning and purpose. I think a big part of that is not so much complexity, a simpleness about life. A clarity about what matters. A clarity of purpose: this is what I'm supposed to do. A clarity of why: this is why I'm doing it. A clarity of who: who am I supposed to be with and where am I supposed to be. And when these stars align, I think we become very joyful people, especially when there's BBQ sauce involved. Okay. So in industrious America, can we be joyful? We can be one of the most joyful.. this can be one of the most joyful Christmas' you've ever had. It's really up to you. Let's get to the Bible, shall we, rather than just your pastor being anecdotal, let's really talk about what the word of God. The New Testament, to understand the New Testament, you not only need to understand Judaism, you need to understand ancient Rome. We've been talking a lot about Rome and Greece. This really is an actual series. Most of my series are kind of like, kind of series. This is sequential. Last week we talked about the Hasmonean Dynasty, how they sort of became like the people they kicked out; wanted to be emperors, wanted to be rulers, huge egos. And one of the things that happened during that time was they conquered a region called Edom. You might remember Edom from the Bible. Edom was Jacob's brother Esau, becomes Edom, which means red because they're the red people, so they're Semitic peoples south of Jerusalem who are not Jewish at all, but are Semitic, kind of believe in God, but it's a mix of things. And the Hasmoneans, just before the Romans take over Israel, Hasmoneans conquer that region and force all of those people to convert to Judaism by the sword. One of those people who converted was a guy named Herod, and we're going to talk about him today. To understand Herod and understand the New Testament, you have to understand Rome. Rome was a meritocracy like the United States, meaning that ideally the system rewards merit. Meritocracy means it rewards merit. That if you take risks, if you have a good plan, if you got a little luck on your side and you work hard, things are going to go well for you. It's not based ideally on your race or your background or your family, or any of this, it's based on how good you are. How good are you. And Rome loved to reward people like this, especially in the aristocracy. But even not.. in.. I mean in the aristocracy. But not just in the aristocracy, really there were freed slaves. People.. galls and celts who were captured in war, for example, that moved to freed cities like Corinth that built these incredible businesses and industries. It's a really interesting time to examine historically. But the aristocracy, in particular, loved to reward merit. Now unlike many societies, Rome didn't reward power.. so like the greatest thing in Roman ideal was not necessarily power, and it wasn't necessarily wealth, the Roman aristocracy was all about glory. Being famous for monumental achievements. Think Olympics, that type of thing. That there was this idea in Roman sort of stoicism that the highest achievement you could reach was to do something so great you'd never be forgotten. There was a Roman saying that a man dies twice. The first time when his heart stops beating, and the second time is when the last person ever mentions their name. You see the idea was that if nobody stopped talking about you ever through history in a roundabout way, you would live forever. I guess in that sense, Julius Caesar accomplished what he was out to get, wasn't he. I've told this story before, but it's a good one. You can tell great stories again, can't you Chad? Okay. An example of this was in these aristocratic families, picture these giant palaces. They would always have a special room from their family lineage, some of these families are ancient, hundreds of years old. And they would go into this room and what you would see in the room was faces made out of wax or bronze.

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When someone was truly great in the Roman Empire, the moment that they died, there would be like a heated wax tablet and they would place the tablet over this dead person's face, and it would create like a mold, and they would use that then to create a new wax or bronze mask so that they could see generations later what this person looked like. And then they would take that mask, and put it on the wall like you would a family tree, and then ancestors of those famous people would be brought into that room to remember their story. This happened to Julius Caesar. When he was a little boy, his dad would have walked him into a scary room, with people's dead faces everywhere, and Julius Caesar would have to recite to his father what this guy did, and what this guy achieved, then what he achieved, only the most famous ones. And then the father would look at Julius Caesar and he would say now what will you do? There are a lot of historians that say Rome's republic was destined to fail because its leaders were made up of kids that were raised in this way. The most important thing is not Rome, the most important thing is your glory. You need to do something amazing with your life. I say that all the time. It almost sounds weird. I'm like hearing myself. This is actually what I tell people to do. Yes, you should do something amazing with your life. And yet every hand can be overplayed, can't it? We all know the history of Julius Caesar, probably, I don't need to get into it, but Rome becomes this kind of thing where it rewards conquest and glory. Into this world was a guy named Antipater the Idumaean, and during this famous war in Alexandria where Julius Caesar is fighting as a general, he almost dies and he's saved by this guy, Antipater. They become fast friends, actually, drinking buddies, in fact. And Julius Caesar rewards Antipater by giving him control of this new Roman region in Judea, and he makes him sort of the governor of this whole area. And so what this guy Antipater does is he breaks up the region amongst his four sons, and he gives Jerusalem to his son, Herod. Ever heard of this guy? Herod, who's the governor of Jerusalem, excels in his role, becomes the heir, basically kills all of his family members and competitors, and becomes the mega governor of this region. And Herod is such an interesting cat because on one hand, he's this like Jewish convert who wants to be Jewish, but on the other hand, he wants to be like a Caesar. He wants to be remembered.. he wants to achieve glory. He's truly a Roman. He's got the Roman ideal in his heart and you see that this sort of split mind really is the ruin of Herod. There is this time where Herod almost loses everything through a hostile takeover. He runs to Rome and in Rome he meets with the senate, and the senate convenes and says to him we are sending you back with a legion and we are dubbing you, and you can't miss this, this is super important, with the title, a Hasmonean title, in fact, king of the Jews. You need to remember this. This is important for the story. Who is the king of the Jews? It's Herod, okay? Herod puts this on his family crest, it's on his business card, right? It's on everything he's got. When he goes to a party, trumpets sound, a bop ba ba ba! The king of the Jews, Herod the great, right? This is his title. He becomes most famously known for building stuff, obviously we know the temple, but the three I want to talk about today very briefly in a row, I want you to play a game with me. Let's bring the first one up. This is one of my favorite archaeological sites in Israel. I went to it before it was a state park, like you could just walk randomly onto it. It was just lying out there back in the 90's. But anyway, this was a city built by Herod. And if you can see part of a hippodrome on the left. A hippodrome is like three times the size of a coliseum. Its where they would race horses. And this area, this is actually Herod's palace. So this was the house here, of course it's in the best part, and what do you think this rectangular thing is right here? Anybody want to take a guess? It's a swimming pool. Greg got it. That's right. This is a swimming pool. People like to swim even.. that's a sweet place, guys. I would take that. That's a thirty-million-dollar home in Orange County. Okay. So this city is called.. everybody repeat after me. Say this is the ruins of Caesarea Maritime. (AUDIENCE – this is the ruins of Caesarea Maritime) Good. I'm actually hearing some joy, which is really good, because in a joy sermon we can't be gloomy, right? Got to be happy. Okay. The next one: probably super famous site. This is the ruins of Masada. I have a whole other sermon I need to preach on this that's been sitting in my filing cabinet for a while, but Masada is very, very famous for all sorts of reasons, but it was a glorious place, too. It's known as a tragic place, but you can see this area in the front here, it was also a palace, so you can see that its three tiers to Herod's palace there, and really a wonderful site. A monumental achievement, when you think of getting all the supplies and things in the ancient world on top of this cliff that's suspended way up in the air, overlooks the Dead Sea, this is just an incredible, incredible achievement. The whole world would have talked about it. Can you guys repeat after me? This is the ruins of Masada. (AUDIENCE – this is the ruins of Masada) Thank you, oh, you guys are sports. I appreciate this.

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And if you could see all of these live, you wouldn't think this because of how gnarly it is now, but probably the greatest architectural achievement was this next one. Most people haven't heard of this. This is called the Herodian. This was Herod's main house where he spent most of his time as king of the Jews. It would have looked akin to like a medieval castle, actually. Beautiful, romantic. But if you were to take like a medieval English castle and marry it with Greek ideals, so lots of Mediterranean plants and there would have been waterfalls and gardens running through it everywhere. I mean absolutely a fairy tale castle; beautiful. I mean anybody who would have come to visit Herod the great would have had their minds blown by the Herodian, named it after himself. Do we have another slide? You can see it kind of from a top angle there. You can kind of get a feel. All sorts of rooms, there's a court and ballrooms and it's a defensive tower, as well. Just a wonderful, wonderful place. Gorgeous. And actually the Herodian, since we're talking about Christmas, next picture real quick, is on a tel, a giant hill like that, and what you're seeing in the foreground is the edges of the modern city of Bethlehem. So the Herodian, where Herod spends most of his time, he can look out from his porch and see a little village of Bethlehem. You can overlook the city of Bethlehem. Okay, and that's the Herodian. Everybody say after me the ruins of the Herodian. (AUDIENCE – the ruins of the Herodian) ..of the Herodian. The ruins of Caesarea Maritime, the ruins of Masada, the ruins of the Herodian. What do they all have in common? They're all ruined. All that work, all that money, all that investment, all the murders, everything for one man's glory and ego. Its ruined. It doesn't mean anything today. It doesn't matter, no one cares. The only reason we care is because this man's story interacts with another man's story, his birth, and his name is Jesus Christ. And if there was no poor little baby born of a virgin three kilometers from that building, no one would give a hoot about Herod. And this is a big deal, because he was a big deal. I guess there's the temple. People do care about that. Anyway. The Magi come, and this is my point, okay? So the Magi, who are often referred to as the three kings, we have actually found.. I've been saying this for years suspecting that it's often said that the Magi were kind of like pagan fortune tellers, or wizards and isn't this cool how God reaches pagan people, and I might have even said something like that years ago, but I had this idea about ten years ago that I'd read some stuff that really seemed like they were actually Jewish, and two years ago I found out that I was right, and I love to marinate when I'm right about something. If I'm wrong, I won't let you know. We'll just hope you forget. You probably will. But if I'm right about something, you're definitely going to know, and so I was really stoked about this that at least they found that in Babylon, where we believe the Magi probably came from, that there was a group of sages, Jewish rabbis and sages who probably did have a little bit of like that Zoroastrian influence where they're looking at the stars and they're doing this type of thing. But they were looking for the coming of the Messiah, and the Bible verse from the Torah was in Numbers. It goes like this: Numbers chapter 24 said "I see him but not now, I behold him, but not near, a star shall come out of Jacob and a scepter shall come out of Israel." This idea that there would be a star or something like that that would foretell the coming of the Messiah. They were looking for this. Remember in Jesus' day, when He was born, even though the Babylonian exile had ended almost five centuries before that, there were still more Jews living in Babylon than there were in Israel, and they were still trickling in to Israel over the years. Isn't that interesting? And many of those would go to Galilee, actually. This Magi, they see something and we don't know what it is, but they see something that whatever it is, it's a star, sometimes we say it's a star or a comet or maybe it was a flash of light. Seems like it comes and goes, because it seems to disappear and then it comes back again, and it appears over there. They travel a long way, a very dangerous road. Don't picture three guys, picture a group of guys. We always think there's three because they had three gifts, but the Magi, it could have been twenty, it could have been a hundred, and with them, they would have had a whole entourage. They would have for sure had soldiers that would have been there to protect them, they would have had servants, they would have had lots of animals, they would have had carts with supplies, they would have been dressed ornately in all sorts of silken purple, all sorts of interesting things, silly hats with feathers on them and stones and all sorts of things that you would imagine. When they arrived, it wouldn't have been three dudes on camels, it would have been a full like parade. There would have been like hundreds probably of people, and where do they go first when they see this star? They don't go to Bethlehem, they go to Jerusalem, the capital. And Jerusalem is a pretty sleepy town if it's not a holiday, and so when they come in, imagine this, there's no announcement that they're coming, the gates open and this parade of beautiful strange things from a thousand miles away or whatever, comes down through Jerusalem and all you have to picture is Aladdin's prince Ali something is he ali ababwah, you know the scene?

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Any Aladdin fans in the house? With dancing and camels and people throwing things? It would have been.. everybody, the whole town would have been like what is going.. who are these guys? What is going on? And it would have been the Magi, people seem to know who they were, which also supports the idea they were Jewish. They would have come into Jerusalem, and finally the potentate, whoever he or she is, comes and they ask this person one simple question that puts the whole city, the Bible says was stirred up, and they said where is the king of Jews? Who's the king of the Jews? Herod! Where is the king of the Jews, and then here's the part of the question that messes with everybody: who has been born? The king of the Jews is Herod. What do you mean where is the king of the Jews who has been born? Remember, there's all this Messianic language in the air, and Herod's not really Jewish, he's Edomic, he's an Edom, but he's also really ruthless and dangerous and they ask like where.. and then they've got all this influence and where is the king of the Jews who has been born this day? Herod calls them. They go to the Herodian, just next to Bethlehem, they ascend around the winding thing of the hill. Herod for sure would have welcomed them and it would have said king of the Jews on everything. And they ask Herod, where is the king of the Jews who has been born this day. And Herod, who only cares about glory and power and being remembered, he's like (GROWLING). Very sneaky. He looks at them and he gathers the priests and they say where is the Messiah supposed to be born? And they say well its right down there. Everybody knows that. Its right down there in Bethlehem. And Herod says to them, Magi, when you find this child, let me know so that I too may worship Him. Yes, worship Him with a knife. They leave and of course they never tell Herod, but they find and they go down to Bethlehem, and I think about this juxtaposition that when the Magi got to Mary and Joseph's home, and when they saw the baby, think about this little blue-collar family in a little two-bedroom, one bedroom maybe pueblo style house, or wherever it was that they were, and they welcome this giant entourage of people, and you know they had food with them, they presented gold, frankincense and myrrh, we all know that. What I always like to think is like how much gold. Like do you think they gave Him a coin.. this whole thing, they came all this way, you think they gave Him like a little pouch? I picture it being like GOOSH a chest of coins set for life kind of gold. And this is just a humble carpenter's family. So they gave Him this gold, frankincense and myrrh, which are also very valuable, and then there was a time of worship, where they actually worshipped the child Jesus. You know that there was music, and there was wine, and there was some kosher BBQ and there was food and singing and rejoicing. There had to be so much joy in that house, and so much celebrating. I mean think about traveling all those weeks and months, or however long it took for them to even get there, that they finally found this child. They all got to see the star. They got to have this amazing experience. Meanwhile, do you think Herod could hear it? I wonder. Is it close enough? Probably not. Maybe he could see it. Bethlehem was a very small town, a few hundred people. And so there was Herod with all of his money and his power and his glory, all alone in the Herodian, up high where its cold, looking down at everybody while they were celebrating together. Being joyful is one of the most important things we can be. And the Lord promises us that if we put the Lord first and we seek after Him with all of our heart, there are for sure going to be moments of grief and mourning and you should feel those moments, don't try and shy away from them, but in general in life, we still carry this thing that when the storm is over, we're still joyful. And even sometimes in the storm we're joyful and peaceful. And the Lord, I think wants you to have, and I'm going to hope and pray that you have one of the most joyful Christmas seasons you've ever had. By the way, come join us on Christmas Eve. It's going to be amazing. I want to finish with the last story, it's probably one of my all-time favorite stories, and then I promise I'll get you out of here. It goes like this. There was a very wealthy guy who was on vacation in Mexico. And while he was there, he was finally happy for once. Staring out at the ocean, probably reading a book, enjoying a good cup of Mexican coffee. And while he was there, a fisherman came, it was maybe ten or eleven o'clock in the morning, and the fisherman pulls up with a boat full of yellow fin tuna. And he starts to unload his fish, and the older wealthy man comes up to him, he says "wow, that is quite the catch there." He says "well thank you, sir." And he says "what are you going to do.." he says to him "why are you done fishing? I mean it's still pretty early." And he says "this is plenty of fish for me, sir." And he says "well but wouldn't you catch more if you went out and did some more fishing?" He said "well yes, but this is enough for me, sir." And so he says to the fisherman, he goes "what's your day like normally here in this town?" He goes "well I get up early in the morning, I catch my fish, then later in the morning I come in and take my fish to the market. I'll grab some lunch, then I'll go home and take a siesta with my wife Maria.

## Let the Weak Say I Am Strong

When we wake up, we'll play with the kids in the afternoon, and then as the evening comes, I'll walk to town with my wife Maria and I'll play some guitar. We'll have dinner and I'll play cards with my friends." He says "oh, that sounds nice." And he says "but you know if you worked more, you really could do something with this fish business you got here." He says "well what do you mean? Explain it to me." He says "well, well, you see instead of quitting at ten or eleven, you decided to go until three or four or even five, you would catch two or three times as much fish as these other fishermen out here." And he says "well then what would I do, sir?" He says "well you'd have two or three times as much money." He goes "well what would I do with money?" "Well, glad you asked. I have an MBA from Harvard, after all. I can tell you, you can buy a bunch of boats and have a fleet and hire these guys to fish for you, then you'll really have a lot of money." "Well then what, sir?" "Well then you can create a firm, you could establish it in Mexico, maybe have a number of canneries around Mexico and begin to can and ship and get into exports." He says "well then what I would do?" "Well then you really, you could move your firm to Los Angeles or maybe even New York and you'd have just an incredible thing, and if you really succeeded, you could sell this company and it would be amazing." He goes "well how long would that take?" He goes "well if you do it right, probably twenty/twenty-five years." And he says "well then what would I do, sir?" He says "well listen, you could just sell the company, take all the money, buy a bunch of stocks and just live off of the dividends the rest of your life." And then he says "well then what would I do, sir?" He says "well then you can do anything you want! You can go down to buy a house in a little village by the beach and you can go fishing, you can play guitar, you can play cards with your friends, and hang out with your grandkids, do anything you want." No, nothing, nobody caught it? Well, because I've already told this story, right? It's a good one. It's a reminder really that very often.. yes, I think very often we give up joyful lives in order to get lives of glory. I don't know. Well anyway. I want to promise you that if during this time you seek out the things that really matter in life: God first, and your family, and then finally third good BBQ or whatever it is, that you make it so important that you align your life with the Lord's will. It doesn't mean, like business is important, money is important, this ministry, this is super important to me. Whatever it is that you're working on, I'm sure it's very, very important to you, but don't allow it to be the source of your joy. Let joy come from the things that no one can take from you, and then you'll always have it. Father, we thank you and we pray in Jesus' name that you would build in our hearts a joyful spirit, and that you would bring into our lives joyful people. And I pray today that I would be a joyful person in the company of my friends and my family and even my enemies, that I would always be joyful with people. And then Lord, we're all asking that you would put that spark of joy in our hearts, that we would help people feel warm and loved and cared for during a time where it's easy to feel so alone. Father, we love you and we thank you, and it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.