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WELCOME – Bobby & Hannah Schuller

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

HS: And hello visitors and church family. We love being with you. You know, a few nights ago, I got the honor of speaking at another amazing local church here in Irvine, and of course I'm going to speak on healing, and at the end of the service, a boy came up for healing, he said he had a bunch of pain in his neck and in his back, and that he had a skin condition on his hands. So we began praying and we rebuked the spirit of pain in the name of Jesus, and I noticed before we were even done praying that streams of tears started going down his face. And when we were done praying, I said okay, how is your pain level? He goes it's gone, its gone, I have no pain. There's no pain there. And he kept feeling his hands and something was going on in his hands. And then he started saying.. he got more tears and started saying, its real, its real, its real. And how precious it was to hear those words from his mouth. You know church friends; we serve the living God. Jesus is alive. And whether you are struggling, yes, yes, and whether you are struggling with your faith today, it doesn't matter. God loves you. He loves you. And thank you for joining us today.

BS: It was so cool, too, because Pirates of the Caribbean. It was so awesome because Hannah and Haven and I and Curtis and others were there, and we saw many miracles that night. God does amazing things through the power of prayer, so we're going to pray even now, and expect that God's going to do a great thing. So Father, we come to you boldly in Jesus' name, and we thank you, God, that you love us. We pray for an outpouring of your spirit. Help us to truly believe your word and walk in it, and give us everything we need today to be more and more like Jesus. We ask for it in His name, amen.

HS: Amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – Matthew 16,24-26 - Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, Matthew 16:24. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? Amen.

INTERVIEW – Dallas Jenkins (DJ) and Bobby Schuller (BS)

Dallas Jenkins is a television and film director and producer who has dedicated his career to creating faith-based programming. He is devoted to showcasing family-friendly entertainment and has worked on a number of feature-length and short films. His current project is the television series The Chosen, which chronicles the life of Jesus through the eyes of those who knew Him.

BS: Dallas, hi. Welcome. Thank you.

DJ: Thank you so much for having me.

BS: ml first have to tell you, it's such a joy to have you because I know so many people who have just loved your show, The Chosen. I first heard about it from my brother, who was like this amazing show that's like helped me so much, but you got to like download an APP to watch it, and I thought I don't really see that really taking off, and boy was I wrong!

Man, what a success and so many people I know here who are watching or watching on television, its meant so much. But for those who maybe don't know your story, tell us a little bit about kind of your faith journey and how it kind of got you to be doing this amazing thing you're doing.

DJ: So my father is Jerry Jenkins, who's the author of the Left Behind books, which 25 years ago came out and similar to The Chosen, got off to a somewhat slow start, and then about a year into it, just exploded around the world. And I think one of the things that I inherited from my father besides my faith, I mean I was raised in a Christian home, I went to church from the time I was born, but his gift of and love for storytelling was something that was just ingrained in me from when I was a kid. And I think also when you look at the Left Behind books, they were an attempt to take the Bible, in that case it was the book of Revelation, and put it into a context that could allow people to experience it more personally, to understand it better, but ultimately to drive them to the Bible. And just like Jesus used parables, just like my dad used Left Behind, I desired to use storytelling as a window in. For a lot of people, it was their first window into a relationship with Jesus. For other people, like you and myself and many people who are watching, maybe who have been believers most of their lives, a lot of times a story or hearing it in a fresh way or from a different perspective can reengage your passion for scripture in your relationship with Christ. And so even though I've been raised in the church, I never had a big falling away from my faith, I think I always had this desire to be re-engaged, re-ignited in my passion for scripture, and I think that's what's coming out in The Chosen, and I think that's what's causing people to have their passion for scripture re-ignited.

BS: That's awesome. I didn't know until this morning that your dad was Jerry Jenkins. I thought up unto that point it was Zeus, so that's a surprise. You are a good-looking man. And I was surprised that, we said this the last service, that you're not an actor, and you went right into film, right? I mean that's kind of how you started, and you really care a lot about family friendly film making and storytelling. One of the things I really loved is, when I grew up watching these Bible films at a Baptist school or something, I remember it would be like a very white guy that wasn't even tan, and he had like a white robe that it looks like he got from the dollar store, with a purple sash. And you really nailed the ethnic piece that Jesus was a first century Jew, the language, I really liked that you captured that. How important was it to culturally get the story right?

DJ: Well, when I was watching those same films you're talking about, a couple things always stood out to me. One, like you said, it felt like a very European version. Jesus was very boring usually, which kind of contradicted what I expected to know about Jesus. And everything felt like a stained-glass window, everything was formal, very distant. And I think for us, and for me when I decided to do this show, is our number one operating principle was authenticity. I want you to feel like you're there. I want you to experience Jesus the way they did. I want you to see Jesus through the eyes of those who actually met Him, and the only way to really do that is to be authentic in every way, whether it's the cultural aspects of this is a very Jewish show, even though I'm a Gentile, Evangelical, I really wanted you to feel the Jewishness of this story, and our, of course, as Gentile's inheritance into this story, and so that's a big part of it. And you see one of the things in this show that's different from previous shows is this is a Jesus who is culturally authentic, and I think your experience then needs to be culturally authentic because if you feel like the show is authentic, then the story feels real and truthful. And I want people who watch this show to believe this actually happened.

BS: I love, too, how you kind of tell the story from the disciple's perspective. I don't know how else to explain it, but you're really kind of, in a large part, telling the story of Simon, etc. Why did you take that angle of the story?

DJ: Well because at what's been lacking in other Jesus' movies is when Jesus is the main character, which is great and of course Jesus is my Savior and I love watching Him on screen when I have the opportunity, but you don't get a chance when you go from miracle to miracle, Bible verse to Bible verse, to actually identify with anyone in the story. It's hard for me to identify with the sinless Son of God and so when I'm seeing the story through His eyes, I'm not really relating to what He's experiencing. I can relate to Simon Peter, to Mary Magdalene, to Nicodemus, to Matthew the tax collector, all of whom are our main characters in the show, along with Jesus, of course, who is one of the main characters. But I believe as I just said when you see Jesus through the eyes of those who actually met Him, you can be changed and impacted in the same way they were. So when you watch The Chosen, we've heard this every single day from thousands of people, they identify with the sin struggles, with the questions, with the concerns of these characters so that when the solution comes, you can then identify with the solution. So I want someone who can identify with the same struggles and sins that these people have, and their solution was Jesus. I want people to go huh, if I can identify with the problem, I can then identify with the solution, and the solution for them can be the same for me.

BS: That's so awesome. I think that's happening. Do you have any like outstanding testimonies or stories of someone who was changed by this show?

DJ: Yes, I mean we hear every day from people all over the world. I think one that stands out from the beginning but even before the show had reached critical mass, was hearing from a woman in China who was watching it with her husband and children, none of whom spoke English. She was the only English speaker. And she said my husband and my kids, even though they don't speak English and my kids are young, they want to watch every episode. They're binge watching this because they want to get to the next episode. And that's when we realized okay, this is something transcendent. This is bigger than I'm capable.. I'm not this good. So clearly God is doing something through this project. He's breaking down those walls, religious walls, cultural walls, age walls. And then on the set, we experience all the time. A lot of our actors and crew members aren't believers, at least not yet, and some of them are becoming them as we speak, but their experience in playing these roles allows me an opportunity to give the gospel in such an organic way. I mean I'm explaining what their characters went through, and we're going through the Bible in this. And on the set, there have been many times when the scene that you watch when you see this final episode of the show, the final version of the show, and you're seeing the emotion, you're seeing them radically transformed, that is happening on the set many times. When they're saying the words, when they're experiencing Jesus calling them, I know they're just actors, but they are experiencing profound emotional and spiritual experiences that they'll say boy I don't know what happened. I just couldn't stop crying. And I'm like I know exactly what happened, and that's been happening over and over.

BS: The Holy Spirit's working through the story. And we'd said this before, but throughout most of the history of church, especially the first millennia, people either didn't have access to a Bible; only the wealthy or it was in a library, or people couldn't read, and so most the time, the Bible was communicated by an orator, or a priest, or a storyteller in the village, and you're bringing us back to that. I think there's so many people today that struggle to read the Bible just because everybody's so kind of ADD now, it's really hard for people to really meditate on ancient texts and I think you're helping people, and you even said this, you're bridging people into reading the Bible more by showing them the story in the story, and I think that's so awesome.

DJ: Yes, and I think that's really important because if this show was the end game, meaning this was how people were experiencing God or His Son, that would be a problem. That's not enough. The Bible is the end game. I want you to be more engaged with the Bible. I want you to love and know Jesus more as a result of watching the show. And fortunately, that's what we hear every day. No one is saying oh good, now this is the replacement for the Bible.

Its drawing them to the Bible and the Bible is coming to life for them more than ever before, and I think it's because in many ways, some of the things you do. I mean when you preach, you are giving historical and cultural and storytelling context to something that if read in a vacuum wouldn't always be easily understood. And as you said, some people can't even read. So for many people, this is a tool to get them more engaged and their passion for scripture even more ignited, and that really is the end goal.

BS: That's awesome. Dallas Jenkins, thank you so much. You can tell you really have a heart for God and that you're really walking in the yoke that God's given you, the calling, and I know you're going to be blessed because of it. For now, many people I know have been touched deeply by the show. If you want to watch it, check out The Chosen. You can download the APP, or you can go to I believe it's TheChosen.TV and you can watch the whole series with your family or whoever.

Dallas, thank you so much. We appreciate..

DJ: Totally free. Totally free.

BS: ..yes, it's totally free, exactly. We thank you so much for this commitment and really, you're making a big difference, and we're so grateful to hear your story.

DJ: Thank you for having me. Appreciate it.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

When we say this today, I really want you to say it. This is the gospel. So open your heart and your mind and make this an important prayer that we say together. Let's go: 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. Thanks, you can be seated.

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "Enduring the Crucible"

I want to begin by talking about epicureanism. In the ancient world, as people began to criticize a view that said there's a god of the sun, and another god of the flowers, or a goddess of love, or a god of money, and very often they're competing against each other, there was a cynicism and criticism, a good one, that began to develop, especially in places like Greece and Ionian Greece and other places like that, where philosophers were merging and saying this doesn't seem right. In the vacuum of that criticism came many of the philosophies, good philosophies that still exist today. We don't have time to get into all of those, but one of the ones that emerged was a philosophy called epicureanism, which is a very simple idea. Epicureanism says in life we ought to minimize pain and maximize pleasure. Now the epicurean didn't look at this the way a hedonist would. For them, pleasure didn't mean the way like sinful pleasure, we would say. It was more like being a philosopher, going on a windy walk with a friend, enjoying a meal slowly. But still, the goal was basically a type of personal existential comfort. You minimize suffering, maximize pain. And of course, there's nothing wrong with that, if it's done in a healthy way. But it wasn't enough. It wasn't enough because what happens when maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain becomes the core of your worldview, you actually get diminished returns. Those pleasures don't stay pleasurable. You always need a little bit more. And in the end, a philosophy of epicureanism almost always becomes hedonism, which is the outright pursuit of pleasure at all costs. This is a human condition. It's true of the consumeristic life, right? Diminished returns? You buy that nice car, and it brings you pleasure but it kind of wears off. And it's true with addictions like sexual addiction or drugs. You get these diminished returns. There's a number of ways that this happens in our lives, but most of the solutions that we naturally come to that seem obvious oftentimes lead to a real emptiness. Dostoyevsky says, and I love this quote, it's so wise and it sounds so harsh but its great: "to live is to suffer." Whoa. That doesn't sound very positive. That doesn't sound like possibility thinking.

Dostoyevsky, though, who was a committed Christian, said one of the wisest things, especially in the modern world, one of the wisest things we can hear. When he says to live is to suffer, what we hear is oh, life is a drag, it's always hard, it's always snowing, it's always winter, it's always difficult, and then you die. Right? That's not what he's saying. He's saying if you want to live, if you want to be fully alive, if you want to be oozing with purpose, meaning, joy, happiness, love, you have to be brave enough to suffer. He's saying what stands between where you are now and the person you want to become is the willingness to endure the crucible. A willingness to walk through the fire. A willingness to suffer the pain for a long time because you believe that in the end, boy is it worth it. I think in our world today, you often hear do what you love. Man, do what you love. Do what you love. Follow your passion. And I think this advice, especially when it's given to young people is some of the worst advice you can give someone. You know what I would be doing if I did what I loved from the very beginning? I would be sitting on my couch eating cinnamon rolls and drinking milk and playing Sky Rim. That's what I would be doing. I would be doing what I love. And my life would be miserable. But you know what I love more than Sky Rim? I love being a pastor. But going from there to here took quite a bit of sacrifice. It meant politics and board meetings. It meant going to school for eight years. It meant sitting in a stairwell and crying because I couldn't figure out Hebrew. It meant struggle, suffering, challenges, inviting, embarrassment, failing over and over, speaking and losing my nerve and still getting up again. There was, between that man sitting on a couch and this man preaching the word of God, years of suffering, and boy am I glad that the words to live is to suffer rang true for me. That to become the person you want to be, you have to do what you hate. You have to do what you hate before you do what you love. That's what the world doesn't tell you. If you want to be really good at something and really thrive at something, you have to get through the hardship of practice, of regiment, of habit, of discipline. The thing that stands between who you are now and who you want to become is a willingness to suffer, and a willingness to press through. That sounds so discouraging and so negative to so many people, but it's actually positive. Here's why it's positive: it's because it's a great reward at the end. That's the question. Jesus says two things, doesn't He. "Take up your cross and follow me." Remember, cross is a torture device, right? The Roman era is disgusting and horrible. Take up your cross AND follow me. But He also says "come to me all you who are heavy laden and weary. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Is the burden light and the yoke easy? Or is it a cross? Which one is it? It's both, huh? It's both. See preaching is easy for me now but it wasn't. Playing piano is easy for me now, but it wasn't when I was a kid and I had to do recitals and I had to do drills. I told the choir to say easy, but I really am curious. Singing was hard. How many of you, by a show of hands have sung professionally at some point in your life, or you sing professionally now. Like almost everybody. That's amazing, right? I mean they're so good at singing, people will pay them to sing. That's great. You have to be pretty good at singing, right? I mean to get there. But you had to do work, right? You had to take lessons. Many of you went to school. Some of you have PhD's in music. I mean there are things you had to do and my argument would be that now you do things most people just couldn't even do if they tried, even if they were pretty good at singing. Like any discipline, a discipline requires discipline, huh? A discipline requires discipline. To be really good at something, you have to be really willing to suffer the road that leads there. Again, don't let this be a negative thing, but a positive thing. That you can't just do what you love. You can't just follow your passion. That's bad advice all by itself. If you want to do what you love. If you want to follow your passion, first be willing to do what you hate for a long time. And then you will get to that place. What do you think Jesus means when He says, "narrow is the way and difficult is the path that leads to life and only a few find it." What's that mean? Only a few? How many is a few, by the way? First of all, how many Christians are there in the world?

Are there a few Christians or a lot of Christians? I would say there's a lot, like two billion maybe. That's just a guess out of my hat. Two billion does not sound like a few to me. I believe that what He's really talking about is the path of discipleship – when a Christian decides that a ticket to heaven is not enough for me. That in this life now, I want to be alive and be alive in the spirit. And of all the things we can pursue, of all the traits, whether its music or acting or math or building, there's no greater thing to attain than to know Christ and to know Him fully. There is no thing in life that fills you to the fullest than knowing Him and it is worth the cost. You know how much it costs to be a disciple of Jesus? You know how much it costs? The cost is great. The cost is great to follow Christ. You know how much it costs? The cost is everything! Everything! Your body, your mind, your time, every minute, every dollar, every person, its everything, but it's worth it. I know the day Bobby Schuller died – July 4th, 1996. Bobby Schuller was crucified on the cross of Christ, and he was raised into new life. And I can tell you that it was worth it. I don't want any other kind of life than the eternal life God has given me. It's the best place to be and its available to you. See there is a cost of discipleship. We all know what Dietrich Bonhoeffer told us. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who opposed the Nazis and was killed in a concentration camp, out of his place of discipleship, he wrote that there is a cost of discipleship, but friend can I tell you, that there is a cost to non-discipleship. There is a cost to non-discipleship. The cost of non-discipleship is the kind of life that feels empty and over time becomes more brittle, and more confused, more angry, more unloving. But the reward of discipleship is one that is a brand-new heart, that it doesn't matter how bad things get, I have the kind of walk on water faith that I need. The kind of faith that shouts down walls. The kind of life that restores families. The kind of life that can love my enemies naturally. The kind of life that walks effortlessly in the unhurried awareness of God's presence. A life that is so full and so rich that even when this mortal coil ends, my life continues because it is just so bright. That's what God gave me all those years ago when I died on the cross of Christ, and that's what He wants to give you, too. It means taking it seriously. That I really want to do what the word of God teaches. Not in an outward way, but on the inside. I want to have a brand-new heart that is unhurried, that loves people, that hears the voice of God, that prays with real power. I want that kind of life. Its available to you, my friend. You know the suffering I'm talking about today is the kind of suffering that basketball players have when they're training for a national championship. The kind of suffering I talk about today is the kind of suffering when your hands hurt because you're carrying so many delicious groceries into your house. The kind of suffering I'm talking about today is when you're carrying a basket full of bread to give it to hungry people. You could call it suffering, but it's not. There is a suffering to all of those things that God calls you to do, but the reward is so worth it. So worth it. It's so worth it. So, so we get to this. Is it an easy yoke of Jesus, or is it Christ crucified in me? Well, it's both. When I'm crucified with Christ, I'm also raised to life with Him, and that life starts now. Amen. Okay. When Jesus says take up your cross and follow me, now I preached on this about two years ago, and you may remember it; this is graphic, but I have to do this so that you can see what Jesus is showing to His disciples and what needs to be experienced by these people. So in the Bible, they talk about when Jesus takes His disciples up to a very famous place, Bania, Caesarea Philippi. It's about a days walk north of Galilee where the Jews are. Now Caesarea Philippi is really just a little area, it's not even a village, it's a cult. It's a temple and there are priests and priestesses who live around there, and it's a cult to Pan. So we'll start here. If you go to Caesarea Philippi today, it looks like a beautiful garden, very peaceful, but if you saw what was happening back in the day, you'd be kind of grossed out and you'd want to take a shower after you were done. So here is the gates of hell, or the gates of Hades. Now remember hell and Hades aren't the same thing in the first century. Hades is a scientific worldview, okay? It's not scientific, but it would have been the way that everybody sort of viewed the world. They thought in the first century that when you died, you went to a place called Hades.

The Jews believed this too, they called it Sheol, and Hades was not a fiery place. It's not fire and brimstone, it was a wet, damp place. The place of the dead. It's a spooky place, like think of a haunted house with water, okay? That is in there. That's Hades, and they believed, the ancient world, that this one spot just in the northern part of Israel, really in Syria, that there was this tunnel, this cave that would go back forever, full of water, and that if you followed it enough, you could enter into Hades. So they called this the gates of Hades. From Hades was a god named Pan. Now Pan was the god of fertility. And we think of like Peter Pan, or we think of like Pan from Disney's Hercules, a really cute Pan. So every single one, if you were to google images this like on your phone or something, you would see twenty-five-hundred-year-old statues that all looked like some teenager put it together, and you'd be like this is gross. What is this? The belief was that Pan would come out of Hades, he would go into the sky, it would rain. So the reason I'm showing you this is because this is obviously in direct opposition to the purity that Jews experienced in their day. You can see like the disciples that are following Jesus, they are so straitlaced and pure. It's a family-oriented religion, they don't eat unclean food, they don't do anything that's unclean, even when an animal is slaughtered its meant to be in a clean way. All the blood from the animal is meant to be drawn out with salt. They don't even mix threads. Like you would never mix wool and cotton. There are so many rules about how to be clean and how to be godly and how to be straitlaced. So these teenagers who are following Jesus, are following Him to this place, the rock of the gods. Okay? Now this is right next to the gate of Hades. The rock of the gods, you would have had a statue to Caesar, a statue of Pan, and the nymphs, and goats. They would parade around. Everybody's drinking and sometimes doing a type of drug back then, cheering them on. And then everybody would jump in and there would be this massive thing going on. Drug, alcohol induced with music and shouting. And this was actually the original term for "pandemonium." Pan – the god. Pandemonium. Or panic, that they would rise to this heightened crescendo of bizarre, really disgusting worship. So Jesus brings His disciples there, they're in front of all of it, all this is happening, and you can imagine these kids, 15 to 22 year old straitlaced, very religious, they're following their rabbi because they want to be closer to God, they want to hopefully be a rabbi someday themselves, and they're thinking that like these Jewish kids are thinking to themselves like very uncomfortable, and like you can see them going 'Oy gevalt, if my mother knew I was here, I'd be in huge trouble! Please, let's not tell each other,' because it's a conflict. Like you're never supposed to go to a place like this. And yet you're supposed to follow your rabbi everywhere He goes. So picture at night this disgusting display happening. Not just the debauchery, but just the sadness of it. Picture the fire and the sounds, the smells and the awkwardness of even being even being near it as a religious Jew. And the first thing Jesus says to His disciples "who do people say that I am?" They kind of look at each other, they're not really sure what to say, feeling awkward. They kind of mumble some answers. "Oh, some people say you're Elijah. Some people say you're John the Baptist." "Who do YOU say I am?" And Simon looks at Him and he says, "you're the Christ, the son of the living God." Jesus says to him, "Blessed are you Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man but by my Father in heaven." And He says something like "from this day you will be known as Peter" which means rock, "and on this rock I will build my church." Now Catholics say that that's the Pope. He's making a Pope. A lot of Reformed Christians will say it's the claim of Christ as Messiah that He's saying. I'm pretty sure both those answers are wrong, actually, understandably. Let's go back, okay? This is the rock of the gods, okay? This is the rock of the gods. This is where that thing is happening that I told you about. Okay? This is where pandemonium is happening. And Jesus says on this rock. What rock? Peter the rock will build the church on this rock. I believe this is a precursor to the great commission. Jesus is saying you religious people, you want to stay clean, you always want to be in your little villages, you want to be safe in your community. But look at these people! They need you. They're so lost. Look at them. Look. Look what's happening.

These are God's kids! These are God's beloved sons and daughters. And they think if they do this, that it will rain. Save them! Save them! See? On this rock, Peter, this is where you go. Build it here! Build it here. That's why when Christianity hits, that's why when the gospel is preached, it spreads like wildfire. Its finally the answer that we were looking for. Life. And so He finally, He then said on this rock, and you know that's when He says, "take up your cross." So He tells Peter I'm going to have to be crucified, but I'm going to be raised on the third day, and this is the answer. And Peter says never, Lord. And then Peter says get behind me Satan. Get behind me is a phrase that means follow me. He's not putting him down; he's saying no follow me. Don't be Satan, be my disciple. Don't be in my way, follow me to the cross where we're going. And then Mark says, "in a loud cry" so it's like he turns to this whole thing that's going on, after this whole play, and he says, "whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me!" You think of the incarnate God in flesh. I immediately think everybody pauses, like wait, what? "For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world and forfeit his whole soul, or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul." The soul is not just that part of you that goes to heaven when you die, the soul is your true self. It's your will, your mind, your body, its everything that you are. Why would you give up who you are? Why would you lose yourself in order to gain rain? And then you kind of feel like His disciples are embarrassed. It doesn't say He turns to them, but I kind of think that's what happens, and He looks at His disciples and says, like they're like oh man this is really embarrassing, why is He shouting at a bunch of pagans? They're just trying to have their pagan festival. He looks at His disciples and He says, "If anyone's ashamed of me, or of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation," like if you're embarrassed of me and you're not embarrassed by that, huh? "The Son of Man will be ashamed of them when He comes in His Father's glory, and with His holy angels." Its powerful. In a world where we're so worried about what people think about us. Suffering people need the Lord. I need the Lord. I need Him right now. This kind of thing is the end road of the temptations that the world offers us constantly. Every time we sin or fall short of what God's best, is we believed a lie that that thing would make us happy or whole because maybe for a minute it did. But you get diminished returns. I want to promise you something. God has amazing life in store for you. The kind of life that once you attain it, you think what on earth was I worried about? Suffering. What on earth was I worried about? He loves you. He wants to do a work in your life. He wants to fill you with His spirit. He wants you to become the person you were called to be, no matter how young or old you are, no matter how poor or rich you are, God sees not just who you are, but He sees who you could become. And all that you have to do is be willing to take up your cross and follow Him so that you can wear like a crown on your head the easy yoke of Jesus. That live life in an unhurried, unhurried awareness of God's presence. I have one challenge for two different types of people. Okay? There's a lot of ways that we can suffer, but you're going to be surprised. The first is, I think that there are two types of people. You're either stuck in a rut or you're the opposite of stuck in a rut. You can't stop going. If you feel stuck in a rut, okay? Maybe that's you today. You just feel stuck in life. My challenge to you is do something that forces you to get out of your rut. In other words, burn the ships. Burn the ships. You know what I mean by that? When explorers would get to an island and they're at a place that they needed to, whatever, and they were tempted to go home, a captain would burn the ships. There's no going home. We got to stay here. We can't go back. Burn the ships. Or as Elijah did, he burned his farming equipment so it would never turn back from following Elijah. That can mean taking on a responsibility you can't get out of. For some of you, that's getting that job. I mean there's never been a better time to find a job than right now. Trust me, I'm an employer, I know. That could be something like foster care. Committing a year, a year and a half of your life to helping a kid that nobody wants. It's going to be really hard. Foster care is really hard.

Or there are ways in which if you're stuck in a rut, you know there's something in your life that allows you to stay in the mediocre sad place that you're in that you don't want to be in anymore. Burn that ship. Burn it to the ground, my friend. You'll be so glad you did. It'll be so worth it. Maybe you're not stuck in a rut at all. You're the opposite. You're overworked, you're stressed out, you're hurrying everywhere, you're pulled in a million directions, and in the few moments that you get a break, you feel insatiable. You can't get enough, you're super bored and so you immediately need something to distract you from your boredom. If that's you, I have the opposite challenge. I want to encourage you to seek out the unhurried awareness of God's presence. And what that's going to mean for you is just choosing all the time not to allow a spirit of hurry to exist in your body. To first start to notice that feeling, and just choose, like unless there's an emergency like a lion is chasing me or a kid is drowning, I'm just not going to live that way. I'm not going to do it. It's not worth getting my ticket to James Bond, or whatever it is. I'm just not going to do that. I won't. And next, this is the ten for ten challenge. I do this a lot. I'm going to challenge you. The next ten meetings, events, whatever, ten things that you have to get to, I want you to arrive ten minutes early and watch how it changes the way you drive, the way you dress, the way you feel when you get there. If something bad happens, you still get there on time. If you get there early, you're just kind of like huh, and you can like listen to your podcast or pray. Just watch. You will say at the end of that if you do it, I will never go back. You will go back because I do all the time. You'll go back because the world is always drawing you back, but you'll always have in your head that feeling of like oh yes, I don't have to live this way. It's an old discipline called stah-shee-oh. It's an old Benedictine practice that really helps you not always be one step ahead of God. You know what I mean by that? One step ahead of God? If you want to walk with God, you have to do it at a walking pace. Well my friends, there is such a great treasure in store for you. Don't be afraid of paying the price of discipleship to get there. Yes, there's a cost of discipleship, but there's also a cost of non-discipleship. There's such awesome life awaiting you, and I want to ask you to commit your life to that, everything, and you'll be so stoked and excited about what God does with that sacrifice. So Lord we ask for it in Jesus' name. We pray for an outpouring of your spirit. Many of us here, Lord, in our hearts are saying to you right now, we're willing to do whatever you want. We really want to experience your real life now. So Lord, we ask for it, we pray for it in Jesus' name, and we thank you for it that its already done, it's in Christ' name we pray, amen.

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