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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. Hello.

HS: Hello from Caesarea Philippi. Thank you for joining us. Let this place be a reminder that God, through us, can free people even from the deepest of darkest places. Every Christian has a calling. You are loved.

BS: Amen. Today we're in Caesarea Philippi. I'm so excited to take you to one of my favorite places in the Holy Land. This is where Jesus challenges His disciples to really reach out to people for the gospel, and to build their life and build His church on the rock. We're going to talk about what I think that means. There's lots of opinions, but I trust that the Lord's going to use this to have a big impact on your life today, but it's just an amazing place. I've talked about it before, but it's so great to be here in person, so come with us today to Caesarea Philippi. Let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, we thank you so much that your Holy Spirit is here with us and we're asking, Lord, that you would fill us with courage. Courage means to live with a full heart. We ask, God, that we would have that today, and I pray it over everyone under the sound of my voice, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – Matthew 16,13-20 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, Matthew 16:13-20. When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples who do people say the son of man is? They replied some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. But what about you, he asked? Who do you say I am? Simon Peter answered you are the Messiah, the son of the living God. Jesus replied blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven, and I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth, will be loosed in heaven. Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah. Amen.

INTERVIEW – Ron Winter (RW) – Bobby Schuller (BS)

BS: Ronnie, we're so excited to be here with you in Caesarea Philippi. I know this is a special place for you. You've probably been here over a thousand times, I'm sure, over your long career as a tour guide. Tell us where are we and why is this place important?

RW: First of all, we're in a place we call it in Hebrew Banias which is remaining or preserving the name Paneas. That was the Hellenistic City that was over here. When Herod the great died, then his three sons are demanding for some land. One son, Herod Antipas, received the Sea of Galilee area, and Herod Philip received that area, which is north of the Golan and north of the Galilee, and he wanted to establish a capital so he took the city of Paneas, and he turned into Caesarea Philippi, which means dedicate to the Caesar and because there was already one Caesarea, he added his name to that.

BS: Got it. So the city was actually originally built by Alexander the Great or his ilk, and it was dedicated to Pan. In Jesus' day, the city.. how big was it? Was it a big city?

RW: It was quite a big city. It was a capital of the north; we believe maybe 20,000 people live in the city. And it was far away from the Sea of Galilee, and it was a very interesting city. It was a very pagan city.

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BS: We googled it this morning, its 28 miles, which is a long way if you're walking. And so, the city would have been down there, and this would be the end of the city, and kind of the only way to really get here would be to probably go through the middle of the city, I'm sure, right?

RW: Absolutely.

BS: What is this behind us? This is a pretty strange looking thing. You have these notches and there's this big cave. What's all this about?

RW: This is the center of paganism. This is the center of holiness or holy place for the pagan. And matter of fact, this is the center of paganism in the whole north of Israel. Over here, we have about six, seven temples, one of them is dedicated to Augustus. It was built by Herod the Great. And one of them is dedicated to this name Pan, the god Pan, the city Paneas is named after him. And one of them is going to be for Zeus. Of course, he's the head of the gods. They had Pantheon. And of course, we have Nemesis and the holy goats and some sacred goats. I mean six, seven temples are going to be right over here elevated above the city. So, from anywhere in the city, you can look up and see the holy place of the paganism.

BS: Of course this is a special place for Christians because Jesus brought His disciples here. We're going to talk about it in just a minute and think through that scripture. But this is where Peter proclaims that Jesus is the Messiah. Why is that important? Why would that happen here? What's your thought on that? I know there's a lot of teaching.

RW: What my thought is that Jesus could have come to the disciples and tell them hey, psst, I want you in five minutes right here by Capernaum. I have to ask you a question. And no, He took them on a journey of 28 miles, all the way climbing up the hills and coming here to the center of paganism where the god Pan and Zeus and all the fake gods are going to be here. And He was standing most likely on one of the hills, looking at the fake god, and here He said the reason why I really brought you over here is to show you who is the real God. You can pick up the paganism or you can have the real God.

BS: And you said you think maybe it could have been even like maybe up on that hill somewhere, maybe over there, kind of up high, looking down upon all of the craziness that was happening here. I mean pagan worship was crazy, right? I mean it was like..

RW: Absolutely. I mean first of all, Jesus wouldn't come right to the center of paganism. I mean He's going to keep some distance because He's like a sort of on the wanted list. But He's going to sit on the hill on like some opening area that they can really about..

BS: They can see, though, right?

RW: ..30 yards from here.

BS: Yep, yes.

RW: He can sit up there, and He can see the whole level of paganism, and this is where He's going to ask the disciples the main questions.

BS: Yes, that's awesome. And that's there that Peter says.. and then also what.. in Greek, I don't know if you know, but there is this double word play that He uses with Peter, right? Because Peter's.. before this name, his name is Simon, right? And He says blessed are you, Simon. Tell me about that. Do you know..

RW: First all, his name is Shimon Keifa, okay? The keifa means rock. So that's why the name Petros come from the word rock, and the word.. by the way, the reason why we call him Simon is because the Greek couldn't say the word "S-H".

BS: Shimon.

RW: Shimon.

BS: Yes.

RW: The "shh" didn't come out, so they turned to Simon for Simon, but most likely the word Keifa. Somebody says they influence on the word Petros or Peter.

BS: So, he would see Shimon Keifa..

RW: Shimon Keifa.

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BS: ..and so his name changed to Peter. But isn't it like He was.. you're a small rock but now you're a big rock. Right? It's kind of like that.

RW: Absolutely. It depends on how you look at it from the Greek translation. From the Greek it could be a little pebble or a rock.

BS: And then right after that, Peter says no, surely Lord, you.. don't. Now He says you're a stumbling rock, right? So it's just this constant play on rocks.

RW: Absolutely. That's the game here.

BS: This is such an awesome place. Thank you so much. And tell us also about this grotto. What's this grotto called?

RW: The grotto is a cave that during the time of Christ there was a spring and it used to flow out. And most likely just because the reason that water is coming out of a cave, it turns into a holy place, and the whole city of Paneas is dedicated to the god Pan was built over here, and there was a tradition that in those days they used to sacrifice a firstborn son. In Jerusalem it was for the god Molech. Over here it was just sacrificing. They used to take the little baby and throw him into the little pool inside. If the baby hit the rock, the offer was accepted. And this was terrible and there was a belief that there was a shaft from here down to hell.

BS: To hell.

RW: I'm sure that you're going to talk about that in your message.

BS: This is called the Gates of Hell, right?

RW: The Gates of Hell.

BS: Or the Gates of Hades.

RW: That's right.

BS: Yes, wonderful. Thank you so much.

RW: Pleasure.

BS: We appreciate you. Thank you, Ronnie.

RW: You're welcome.

BS: God bless you.

RW: You too. Bye.

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "Peter Stands Upon the Rock of the Gods!"

Welcome to Caesarea Philippi. It is such a joy to be here with you. This is a beautiful place in Israel. It's now a national state park. This way or so is the Golan Heights, and on the other side you can see Syria and Lebanon. You might hear a fuzzy sound beneath me. That's a big river that's flowing from this grotto cave that's behind me, which in its day was called the Gates of Hell. We're going to talk about that in just a little bit. But this is where Jesus brought His disciples, maybe over several days, to come here to teach them a lesson that they would all account in their gospels and talk about. It seemed like something that had a huge impact on them. And it was not long after this place that the amazing transfiguration happened. Today I want to talk about the lesson that I think, and everybody has a different opinion on this, but it's what I think Jesus was trying to teach His disciples in this place. And it was that as believers, we are called for a purpose, and we're called to be a blessing to others. Now yesterday, we were in the Dead Sea, and I remember reading from some ancient sage that there was this comparison between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. The Sea of Galilee is fresh and full of life, and that's because water flows in and water flows out. Water flows in and it flows out. It's a symbol of the soul that we receive teaching, we receive from the spirit, we receive good gifts, but we're also called to give, to share and to teach, to mentor. And when we're sort of in that nice balance, we live the vibrant kind of spiritual life His disciples of Jesus has for us. The Dead Sea, however, water only flows in, nothing flows out and you see there's no life there. And in fact, when we went in, it was fun to swim there, but my face was burning because I had shaved, and the salt water was so high. Not a living thing is in there. That's what happens sometimes in religion. So often, and this maybe what was happening with the pharisees, lots of religion, lots of classes, lots of study, lots of posturing, but were they giving? Was anything going out? Were they loving their neighbor? Were they leaning into this call to be a blessing to the nations? Of course, that is the call for God's people. It always was for Abraham; it is for us as Abraham's children. And this is the balance that people of faith still today, and even I struggle with this, they struggle to strike.

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That there is this balance between loving your neighbor, reaching people that are lost, helping people that are suffering, reaching out to a pagan world, but also still being a good person; being holy. And so, for the Jews, this idea is this promise of you will be a blessing, but also be kadosh. Be holy. Be separate – separated from the world. Be different. In Jesus' day, the idea of kadosh or holiness, had become so important to them. And there's lots of reasons, right? They had just come back five hundred years before from a Babylonian exile, and their understanding was we were conquered by Babylon, we went into exile because we were no longer holy. We bowed down to other idols. We became like the people who lived around us. We married into other religions. And most of all, we turned our back on the poor, and we engaged in these pagan practices. As people were coming back and the rabbinic Judaism was developing, they said never more. We're going to be kadosh. And actually, the Mishnah says that when the great assembly was gathered together, and this is at the beginning of Avot, they said that there would be three things that they should do. The first was to administer justice patiently. That's good. The second thing was to create many disciples. We've talked a lot about what a disciple means and what it means to have disciples. But third, and this is where I think the pickle was – build a fence around the torah. To build a fence around the torah means that you obey the thing so much that you never violate it. Like I remember when I was in high school, we followed this rule and we should have and we did, don't have sex before marriage. But there were fences that you would like there's other things you don't do, also, so that you don't get close to breaking the law. And you can take that to a total extreme, right? You see that in religion today, and in Jesus' day that was also true. You know, here in the elevators, for example, on Shabbat, on Sabbath, you're not supposed to.. the Bible doesn't say don't press elevator buttons, but somewhere in the tradition to build a hedge around not working on the sabbath, somehow pressing an elevator button counted as work. So now on Shabbat, a Shabbat elevator stops on every floor. I don't think there's anything wrong with that, but it's just an example of going as far as we can so that if we even violate this one, we won't violate the real one. Does that make sense? In Jesus' day, I think there was this huge separation between God's people and the people they were supposed to reach. And don't forget that that calling to reach the world didn't start with Jesus. It started with the covenant with Abraham. Do you remember the covenant of Abraham? God says to Abraham, I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. Remember that you will be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you, and the final line, and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. I really think that this is God's purpose for the Jewish people that He called them not just to bless them, but like the Sea of Galilee, that He would give them the water of life, but then they would give the water out to the world, and that to be a healthy person in God's kingdom and life meant not only to receive the blessing, but to be a blessing to others. We see that, right? As people of faith, we need to have a sense of purpose and calling. We see that in many of the prophets and the great men and women of the Bible did this. We see even Abraham himself who received the blessing was such a hospitable person. One of my favorite stories, I was just meditating on it this morning is when Abraham meets the three men who are God, or angels or something like this. And he's sitting in a tent, and I often thought that they came to the tent, but they didn't. They were sort of walking by away off. And Abraham, seeing these three travelers, runs out to them and invites them to come to his tent. And then he realizes who they are, and it's probably two angels and God, or maybe its three angels, or maybe it's the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we don't know. But it's of God, it's of heaven. He invites these three men to his tent, and what does he do. Well, he washes their feet, and he gives them something to drink, and then he and his family prepare a feast for them. They kill a young calf, and he talks to them and welcomes them and cares for them. And you see this is so much of.. we think this is in the New Testament, it is, but it's in the Old Testament, too. It's from Leviticus that God tells the Jewish people to love your neighbor as yourself, and to welcome the alien, and to reach out to the hurting, and to care for the poor, and to leave portions of your field unharvested so that the poor can gather. And so many commands to be merciful, to be kind, to be just, to be loving. This is the ultimate aim of God is not just that we're kadosh, but that in our holiness or in our desire to be good people, we also have an outward way of reaching people who are lost and who are not in God's family. I think that this sort of thing maybe had been a little bit lost in the first century for many Jewish people; that it was all kadosh and no blessing to others. It was like all like rules and regulations and legalism. And so much of the heart to reach people had been lost because they were afraid to fall out of God's favor again. This is, even for me and for so many believers, this is a constant struggle.

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How do I be kadosh; how do I be a holy person, but how do I also be in the world and reaching and helping people who are struggling that may not think the way I think, or believe the way I believe, or know God. And this is what I think Jesus was teaching, is as Jesus, He's walking around, and it's just like everybody's way more concerned about building a hedge around the Torah than they are about helping hurting people. Jesus is talking with His disciples, and He just kind of says spontaneously beware the yeast of the pharisees. The pharisees, we think of that as a bad thing. In their day, it was a good thing. That would be like your favorite pastor, your favorite preacher, teacher, priest, whatever. And imagine that, imagine someone you're following, like beware the yeast of Bobby Schuller, or something like that. Maybe you like one of my sermons. Beware the yeast of your favorite religious preacher. They didn't understand what He was saying. In fact, the Bible says that they thought maybe He was mad because they didn't bring bread with them or something. And they explained, well.. He was trying to explain to them the hypocrisy of the pharisees. The fact that on the outside they looked perfect, but on the inside they were dead. And He's saying be aware that if all you are is rules, you have no life within you, you're not in the kingdom of God. Don't be a whitewashed tombstone. Be full of the spirit! Be full of life! Think about the people out there who are hurting and reach them for me. So right after that, when He says beware the yeast of the pharisees, and they kind of scratch their head and they don't know what, then it seems like instantly He just.. I like to think, and I don't know, that He just begins this long walk north. Where are we going? What's in north? They're already the farthest north in Galilee that you can be in the Jewish world. There's really few Jews as you go north. And a 28-mile journey they began. We don't know how long that took. Could be as short as a couple days, could be as long as three days. They traveled all the way from the south of Galilee all the way up to this northern part where the Golan heights are, and they have no idea where they're going, and they finally arrive here in Caesarea Philippi. My hope is that Jesus didn't tell them where they were going. That it was just like a surprise, like where are we going? Just come along with me. And remember, they weren't kids, but they weren't fully grown men, I think. It looks like most of the disciples were in their late teens or early twenties. So, think of a high school student that's tenth, eleventh, twelfth grade, or a college student that's their first or second year of college. They're young-ish, but more than that, they're very strait laced. Again, kadosh, they're really worried about not mixing two seeds in a field. They're really worried about not mixing two types of cloth in their clothing. They're worried about no bugs getting into their wine. They never in a million years would think about doing anything that they're about to see here. And in fact, if they went up on that hill and they looked down here, all of those young men probably would have scratched their head and said 'Oy gevalt, if my dad knew I was here. I should not be at a place like this. I'm going to be in so much trouble. My mom is going to beat me up with a sandal if she knew my rabbi took me here. What are we doing here?' And no place on earth would a Jew who cares about their faith and their community and their God ever come to a place like this. Although we got a small taste from Ronnie, let me explain to you how evil and weird this place is. And I just want to warn you, that some of this is a little rated R, but we mentioned all of the pagan gods that were here, but the centerpiece of the gods here was Pan. It was named after Pan. Paneas. And just behind me there, you can see this space that's a part of this area called the Rock of the Gods. It's called that because of all of these idols are here, its etched into the rock, simple. And there in that big notch, you'll see that there was a giant statue of Pan that had a six-foot-long metal.. what do I say, Hannah? Phallus. Thank you. And it was this image of fertility. And sometimes that phallus would be removed and paraded around in worship. And they believed that that grotto that you see behind us, it's since fallen in; it had a big temple in front of it dedicated to Caesar, and then behind it was a deep cave that went on and on like a river going in. They believe that that was the Gates of Hades. Now in those days, Sheol or Hades was a damp, watery, shadowy place in the underworld, and so a place like this, maybe it was a place where you could go in and out of Hades like a portal. And they believed that what would happen is Pan, who was also a god of like shepherds and things, he would go back to Hades during the winter, and that's why maybe it was a little bit more dry. And then when spring would come, they would perform these rituals to try and arouse Pan to come back out of the cave and copulate with the nymphs, which were all those little, smaller things, and that when that happened, that arousal created rain. And so, they thought that if they did these ceremonies, that it would cause rain to come, and just like many Pagans, they had all sorts of other weird rituals. But when the disciples were there, they would look down and they would see this mob of priests and sometimes pilgrims who are visiting in the center that sort of capital of Pan worship, the Vatican for Pan worship, and they would just see this utter chaos.

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In fact, that word panic and pandemonium, they come from what's happening here. When people get to such a height of arousal through alcohol, narcotics, in these festivities that are going on, in these orgies, that when it was all happening, there would be music and shouting and it would be utter chaos, and it would be the opposite of what a young Jewish man would experience in his life if he was a faithful Jew. Imagine that all of this is going on, and your first, as a Jew in those days, your first feeling is going to be revulsion, disgust, right? Maybe fear. I need to get the heck out of here. I cannot be even seen in a place like this. And my reputation would be tarnished if my neighbors knew that I even came close to.. I've got to get out of here. But it doesn't seem to be that that's Jesus' opinion of this place. Rather, it seems that Jesus has pity. Pity. That He sees a people that are completely empty. That He sees what we know to be true that every human being is born with a God-shaped hole. And that many human beings will do anything they can to fill that hole. And that these people had not found yet what could fill that void that was within them. I think Jesus is telling His disciples, I have given you the keys to this great question. And of course, in a rabbinic dramatic way; Jesus was passionate. Rabbis were so passionate, and He is one of the most passionate of all. He says to them in Matthew chapter 16, "who do people say that I am?" So just picture this: if He's there, and who knows if He is. I think He was. He's up there and all this crazy stuff is happening, and it seems like a question out of nowhere – who do people say that I am? Who am I. And you might even say who am I to these people. And they're all kind of like sitting around, scratching their head. "Some people say you're John the Baptist, some people say you're Elijah or Jeremiah." And those are all high compliments. But it's not quite what He's getting at. He looks right at them and says, "who do YOU say that I am?" And Simon Peter, he's the sort of leader of the group, he probably feels compelled to answer for the group. There's just 12 of them. And he says, "you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Notice the Living God versus the dead gods, right? You're the Son of the Living God, the only God. The God that we worship. You're His Son. Jesus, of course, "says blessed are you Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church and the Gates of Hades will not overcome it." There have been many discussions about what Jesus means "on this rock I will build my church." Some of you might believe, and maybe it's true, that on this rock means Peter himself, that Peter is meant to be the leader of the church, and that Jesus is establishing a universal priesthood. I don't believe that, but maybe it's true. In our tradition, we say that it's the profession; that Jesus was saying because you profess Jesus as Messiah, it's on that declaration, or on that knowledge I will build my rock. I think both are kind of true, but I also don't think that's it. I like to think, because I'm standing here, I can see it. Imagine Him standing here, on THIS rock. What if that's what He's saying? It's called the Rock of the Gods. What if He's saying on THIS rock, I will build my church? Well, what's a church, first of all. In Greek, a church is an ecclesia. It's a gathering of God's people. It's like a synagogue. It's God's community, its God's living family. And what if He's giving a hint that it's here that I want you to go. That I don't want you to cloister and protect yourself and build three hedges, four hedges, five hedges, six hedges, keeping everyone and everything out. What if I want you to come to places like this and help people that are hurting? Well, that's Bobby Schuller. Maybe I'm right and maybe I'm wrong. But it totally supports the heart of Jesus who says in the great commission, "go into all the world making disciples." So, what if He says on this rock, I will build my church. And then Jesus begins to explain to them that very soon He will need to return to Jerusalem, and there in Jerusalem He's going to be crucified, and He's going to be raised from the dead. Now remember in this last passage, He changes Peter's name from a little rock to a big rock, right? So, this is like a rock theme. And then, Peter says no Lord, let it never be. Jesus says to him, get behind me Satan, for you have become now.. that's a third rock.. a stumbling rock. Right? And so, He rebukes Peter after giving him this huge compliment, and He's facing them, just like I'm facing you. Imagine you're a disciple, and I'm Jesus, and He's facing them, giving this teaching about how He wants to build the rock here, and all of this stuff is going on, maybe those people down there can't even see them, can't even see the disciples, can't even see Jesus. He turns around and the gospel of Mark says that He says this in a loud voice. He turns and says "who am I? What's to be? My disciple must deny themselves and 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 if someone gives up their life and loses the world, and forfeits their soul, or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul!" That's pretty cool. That's right. That's right. See its different, isn't it. He didn't just say it to them, He turns.. when they say don't be crucified, don't be crucified, He turns His back on them and faces the crowd. What crowd? That's the only crowd there could be.

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He turns and faces the crowd and tells them anyone who would take up their cross and follow me will save their life, but anybody who tries to save their life will lose it. This is where God wants to build His church. He wants to build it where people are hurting, and people are suffering, people are struggling. I don't think I said it right totally because they were cheering me on, but that was pretty cool. That was nice of them to do that. The world needs the Lord. The world needs the Lord. And when you look about how the Torah and how the Bible is written; all of the prophets, the big ones that we know of, are considered great, except for two: Noah and Jonah are considered prophets, but the Sages didn't consider them great prophets, you know why? Because when God told Noah that He was going to destroy the earth, Noah just said okay. And when God told Jonah to prophesy against Nineveh, he said okay, and in fact even in his heart, really wanted Nineveh to die. But the other prophets, like Moses especially, stood in the gap. Father, no, don't take them. What if I find a hundred? What if I find ten? What if I find just one good man, won't you spare them? You see that is God's heart. God's heart is mercy, and grace, and people of faith ought to advocate for the people that are in places like this. People of faith ought to fight for people that are stuck here. I was stuck here. Maybe you were stuck here, and someone fought for you. We also need to fight for people who are lost and don't know what that empty chasm is within them but needs someone to fill it. I know you can do it. I know you can do it. The question is how do we strike the balance. How do we know when we've gone either too far in terms of always trying to be perfect about everything, or not far enough in trying to help somebody. And our youth pastor, Blaine Bartell taught us this long time ago, I never forgot it. It really asked the question are you a thermometer or a thermostat? A thermometer is changed based on its environment, but a thermostat changes the environment. And you can tell when you're in an environment if you're around people maybe that you would say are struggling or lost, if you find yourself becoming more like them, maybe it is good to be a little more kadosh and dial back. But if you find that when you're with people and you can make a difference, you can be a thermometer, I encourage you to do that. I remember when I was a kid, and I'd just come to faith, I was like 15 years old, I'd just moved to Oklahoma, I was feeling really lonely, but I was trying to make good friends and be a good person. This girl I'd met on the first day of school invited me to a party that night. I was so excited, and when I went to this party, I thought it was going to be just a normal party. I didn't think it was going to be Christian, but I didn't think it was going to be crazy. And when I got there, the first guy that I saw, who was really nice, offered me some drugs. And so total disappointment, because I was trying to get away from that, I shrugged my shoulders and oh, it's time for me to go home. I felt the spirit kind of impress on me, no, no, no, don't go home. I want you here. So, I went into the party, and I walked around, and it was one of those kinds of parties, a lot of drugs and a lot of weird stuff going on. And I felt really uncomfortable, probably like a lot of those disciples felt when they were here in Caesarea Philippi. Until I met a girl who had been engaged in the occult in like Satanic worship and some other stuff, and she was really just a kid, it wasn't real, or serious for her, and yet she had done some cutting and you could just tell she was in a depressive place. And I talked to her for a long time about my faith, and I prayed for her. And she said I want to come to church with you. And after I did that, I felt the freedom to leave, and I did. And she started coming to our church, and by the way, today.. well, I haven't seen her in 20 years, but she eventually became a youth pastor at her Baptist church. Isn't that great? Think about these encounters that we can have with people where we can make a huge difference in their life. My friend, live a purposeful life. Recently I saw Mike Tyson, one of the greatest athletes of all time, and he was being interviewed and he had all of these medals and these belts that he had won, and the interviewer, he was saying, this is amazing. What did it feel like to this? And he took the stuff and he lifted it up and tossed it on the table and says, its garbage. It's all garbage. He said I killed myself. I bled for garbage. This is all garbage. Let's not be like that. Let's not live the kind of life that the world hails as great, but God thinks is garbage. That we will think is garbage. That we'll get to the end of our life and say man, I neglected my children for this garbage. I neglected my grandkids, or I neglected hurting people, or I lived such a selfish life that all I have left is gold and garbage. Let's not live for gold and garbage. Let's live for what God has in store for you. And maybe just in closing, I'm going to pray, and I'm going to ask that you think of someone, maybe it's someone close to you. Maybe it's your spouse. Maybe it's one of your kids. Maybe it's your next-door neighbor who just yelled at you. Maybe it's one of your colleagues. Maybe it's your boss and you know that its someone that needs the Lord. Let's begin to pray for them and ask that God would do something great in their life, and let's just pray for them now.

Peter Stands Upon the Rock of the Gods

Father, we come to you in Jesus' name, and we ask in your spirit that you would help us know how to reach people who are hurting, and who feel empty and who feel lonely. And not in a religious way, not in a way that's condescending, or any of these things, but in a way, that's truly loving in your spirit, Jesus. Help us to reach people who need you and maybe need us. Help us to have eyes to see, and ears to hear, and we pray it all in the strong name of Jesus, amen.