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CH1609000000610183596

Hour of Power 10.03.2024

### 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. Good morning.

HS: And shalom friends. Thank you for joining us in Masada. If you don't know what Masada is or what took place here, you are in luck. You are about to find out. Thank you for joining us. We love you.

BS: We're so excited today that if you're just in church, we're on a tour in Israel now, and we're wanting you to join us over this week and next week. We started last week in the Holy Land, the land of the Bible, and we're going to be celebrating and worshipping together back and forth between wherever you are and wherever we are. So we're so glad you're joining us.

HAVEN: Join me in prayer. Dear God, I pray for everyone watching now and for everyone here that they will feel abundant peace and joy, and that through this message today, you can really just communicate with them what you want them to know, and that you can just reach them and reach their hearts well, and that this will just be something that they can take and apply throughout their life. And thank you that they get to be here today and hear this message specifically. We love you, Lord, amen.

HS: Amen.

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

### SCRIPTURE – Romans 12,14-21 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, Romans 12:14-21. Bless those who persecute you. Bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice. Mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath for it is written it is mine to avenge. I will repay, says the Lord. On the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Wow. And I remember the first time I realized that it was not my job as a Christian, that we're not called to judge, that it's not our responsibility to avenge, that Jesus just called us to love, to love, and how wonderful that is that we get the good role. And sometimes loving is willing good for someone, so sometimes a loving thing to do might be having a hard conversation with someone who is going down a bad path; doing it in love, or sometimes we do need boundaries, but how wonderful that we get the good role – to love. To love God and to love each other. So thank you for joining us today at Masada. Shalom.

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

Well wow, Ronny, it's so great to actually be here again in Masada. A lot of people here on the mountaintop. There are people everywhere from every country in the world, and what a wonderful place this is. We're on the very southern end of the Dead Sea. I'm sure you've been here a million times. Tell us a little bit about this fortress and what it's like.

RW: Well, I like to be here, too. I can be here a hundred times, and each time I get up here, I feel amazing, I feel very emotional because it's a talking fortress. Herod, King Herod the Great that we've given the title "The Great," he was a little concerned about maybe a revolt from the Jews and maybe the non-Jews, so he built in this region three fortresses, which are almost identical.

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The fourth one is a little up north, just in case he might face an uprising, and he might have a place to run away and wait and escape until help is going to come from Rome. And this is one of them. This is the one that has a beautiful story attached to the fortress itself.

BS: I wish you could be here, those of you who are watching on TV or at the church. We're way up in the air. What is it two hundred feet, at least, and it feels like a plateau in the air, and a wall completely around. It's like God made a castle in the sky. It's like an incredible part of natural history. And then of course the wall that Herod built just around it. It seems like a fortress that would be impossible to take, but it wasn't.

RW: Well it is impossible, because if you look around, it's not connected to the other hills. It's about fourteen hundred and fifty feet above the sea level down there. It's not connected to anything, and it's surrounded by dry river beds, and it has a cliff. It has a cliff. Nobody can really go up there and through the cliff because nobody can really attack the place, so when you come and you hold the fortress like that, you're sitting on top of everything. Nobody can really attack you.

BS: So lots of Biblical sites, as well, all around here. This is the Judean wilderness that comes down into this area, the Negev. And where does the Judean wilderness and the Negev kind of meet each other?

RW: Well Negev is little bit west from here if we go behind the hills, we're going to hit the Negev. The rest of the desert is going to be where you see all the way to the last hill, and the green spot that you see about nine miles away from here, this is En Gedi. This is En Gedi that is mentioned in the Bible as the desert of En Gedi.

BS: That's where David was hiding from Saul when he was chasing him, so many of the psalms were written down here as David was running away and hiding. And there's one passage I'll talk about today where David's hiding in a cave. That was one of these caves. It talks about wilderness fortresses. Would this be consider.. I mean it wasn't here as a fortress when David was here. What did that mean, the wilderness fortresses?

RW: Well the Bible talks about those fortresses along the way because we always talk about King Solomon is a very smart king. And one thing that we don't know about King Solomon, that he developed international trade going all the way from Mesopotamia down to Egypt, but in order for a convoy to go downhill all the way down to Egypt, they had to have safety, and safety you achieve by having a fortress along the way that gives you the feeling that you are safe. Nobody is going to attack you. You have a place to change horses. You have a place to sleep at nighttime. And by building those fortresses in the desert, he developed international trade that made him wealthy. He could build the temple. He could really build the kingdom, almost from nothing to a huge, huge area that he'd control, all of it because of the safety.

BS: And then another famous spot we drove by coming down here was the Qumran community, and the various caves where they found the Dead Sea scrolls. Another amazing spot not far from here, interesting things. A lot of people know that the Dead Sea scrolls were important, but why were they so important? Everybody made such a huge deal about them. What was the big deal about them?

RW: First of all it connects the people here to the past. And secondly, we found over there the oldest versions of the Bible. The oldest version that you had until we found the Dead Sea scrolls with a version that was found in Cairo that was about 800 years old.

BS: So some people may not know what the Dead Sea scrolls are. Maybe we should just start there. What are they?

RW: Well, these are scrolls that are going to be.. some of them are Bible scrolls, some of them are going to be commentary, some of them are going to do interpretations to the Bible, some of them is going to be discussion between scholars. All of them are written, put in writing, most of them in Hebrew, and eventually it gives us a very clear picture how things were here 2,000 years ago.

BS: And they were written probably by the Qumran community, right?

RW: That's right.

BS: And then placed in jars in the caves?

RW: Well that's the seventh.. the first seventh one that we found that were in cave, we call it cave number four sometime, now number one, and they were in a cave with a lid and they were covered with a towel, and these are the first one. And these are the people that lived in Qumran that we're still debating in Israel between scholars if these are the Essenes or a different kind of sect.

BS: And so the Essenes.. that's an interesting thing, too. I think a lot about how it's weird to me how the Essenes are not mentioned in the New Testament, because they were such an important part of the religious life in Jesus' day.

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Obviously we hear about the Pharisees and the Sadducees and we meet different religious leaders, but the Essenian community and the Essenes as a group were like a monastic.. like almost like monks, right?

RW: Absolutely. A big part of them took advantage of being so close to Jerusalem and having a desert next to Jerusalem. So they went to the desert and some of them were like the rest, but I think that they didn't have any encounter with Jesus as a movement. And they didn't go through any argument with Him, any debates, any disputes, and that's why they're not so mentioned.

BS: Well back to here. Masada. This is built by Herod, and as we said interesting guy, paranoid guy, worried about Cleopatra to the south, worried about the Jews, wanted to be a Jew desperately, was religiously a Jewish but was ethnically Idumaeon, which is actually this region right around here, isn't it?

RW: Petron, more to the south.

BS: More towards Petron. And wanted to be king of the Jews, was put in place by the Roman senate, but the Jews hated him and Cleopatra hated him, and he killed like a lot of his family members. He married a princess and killed her. Just horrible stuff.

RW: Well he was appointed by the Romans, and the Jewish people don't like the fact that he's going to stop the dynasty of the Maccabees of the Hasmonite dynasty, and he's going to take over. In order to get legit, he married Mariamne, she was a princess, as you said, but he got rid of her, as well. He killed everybody. He killed his sons, his family, he was paranoid. He was afraid some people are going to take over, and we call him Herod the Great, not because he was such a loving, great man, and when he was completely lunatic he killed everybody, but look what he built. And we're talking about here, Jews in Caesarea, Samaria, I mean Herodian, I mean Jericho. He's building and building and building. He's a great builder. And he got title Herod the Great because he's a great builder, not because he was such a sweet, loving man.

BS: Yes that's right. Well years after he died, almost seventy years later, this place became the final sort of last stand for the Jewish rebellion that happens in Caesarea, moves to Jerusalem. Jerusalem gets conquered, they destroy the temple, the Romans, and then they assault this fortress, and we can see, you can't see it from here, you can still see the Roman encampment there. There was a wall put around, I believe, right, and of course you would look at this and say how could they take it, but the Romans, they were just genius engineers and they took it, right?

RW: Absolutely. Well, and when the Jews found out that the Jews then collapsed and the temple was set on fire, they had two option – either to give up and stay, or to leave and stay free, and 960 men, women and children, decided they were going to come here to Masada. It was a good fortress. They were sure they can stay here forever. I mean from a topographic point of view, nobody can harm them, and they felt comfortable. They felt comfortable, but they didn't realize the Romans have their own ways of putting a siege by putting the camps, by putting sort of a wall as a patrol wall and eventually the Romans were able to end the siege by penetrating into Masada and find out that most of the people committed suicide.

BS: It's a sad story, a tragedy, and I look at it often, I think it's just terrible. It didn't have to be. And it's amazing when you think about how much in those days Israel was just a powder keg. Just ready to blow all of the time, and even Jesus, they wanted Jesus to do that. They wanted Him to be a revolt, but He said love your enemies. Give unto Cesar what belongs to Cesar. Live at peace, and there's a lot of wisdom in that, isn't there.

RW: Absolutely. Absolutely. He was like against the movement. Most of the people wanted to get rid of the Romans, believing if the Romans are out, there's going to be salvation, and many people believed by the only way to get rid of them is by having another revolt and another revolt, eventually the Roman made sure that they are the strongest neighbor here, and they destroyed the temple and the country came to an end.

BS: Well, it is such a beautiful thing to be up here with you, Ronny. Thank you. And I wish people at home could be here with us. It's a beautiful day, even though.. it's just wonderful. And I hope to come up here again with you sometime.

RW: Thank you so much.

BS: Thank you, Ronny.

RW: I will. Bye, bye.

## Holy Land – Masada: Trust God by Loving Your Enemies

### DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Let's say this together: I'm not what I do. I'm not what I have. I'm not what people say about me. I am the beloved of God. It's who I am. No one can take it from me. I don't have to worry, I don't have to hurry, I can trust my friend Jesus and share His love with my neighbor. Thanks you can be seated.

### MESSAGE / PRAYER – Bobby Schuller – "Holy Land – Masada: Trust God by Loving Your Enemies"

Well, welcome to Masada again. What a joy it is to be here. And it's such an amazing feeling being in Israel. I wish you could be here with me. What an interesting thing that the weather.. it's usually so hot up here. It's very pleasant today. We've just driven from the farthest, northeast point, almost, in Israel, Capernaum which is in the northern point of the Sea of Galilee, and come all the way down in the same direction of the Jordan River, to come here just up from the Dead Sea, the very southern tip of the Dead Sea here in Masada. Famous, famous place. It's been here for 2,000 years, and it's just amazing. I'm standing right now on a watch tower and you can see the whole area here, you can see the whole region below, and it's so hard not to just think of all of the history from King David to Herod to the Essenes and all of the amazing things that have happened here. Coming from the Sea of Galilee down to the Dead Sea, I often think of a reflection I heard once, a rabbinic reflection that the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee compared to each other, that one is alive and one is dead. And whereas like the Sea of Galilee has water running in, and water running out. It receives life because what comes in also goes out. But the Dead Sea only receives. And I think the old teachers used to say that if all you do is consume knowledge, if all you do is study the scripture, if all you do is train and learn and grow, but nothing comes out of you, you become dead inside. If all you do is take, take, take but never give, give, give, you become dead on the inside. And I think about that a lot every time I see the Dead Sea. It's beautiful, it's gorgeous, it's fun to go in and put mud on yourself and wash it off or you like this baby skin, but in reality there's not a living thing in the Dead Sea. And even sadly now, the Dead Sea is shrinking. The Dead Sea is actually dying. It's a wonderful thing to be here, and to just think about all the history that was here; to see these walls and now there's people here visiting, but you can see how it would have been, a little community here and how it would have been completely alive. This fortress, as we said in our interview with Ronny, was built by Herod the Great. And Herod the Great is not a good name for him, the great. He's called 'great' because he was a great builder. He built this, of course the temple is the thing he's most famous for. And he's also famous for building this beautiful place called Caesarea Maritima, where there's this palace and the sea, great trading place.

There's another area called the Herodian, which is a beautiful hill and it has this castle on top. And oftentimes in Christmas I talk about how Herod, after Jesus was born, invited the Magi into his palace and said, hey, let me know where the king of Jews is going to be born because I want to meet Him. And of course, even though on the outside he was smiling, on inside of his heart he was angry and venomous and wanted to kill this child because he still felt threatened by a kid.

And that's the thing that we see from Herod is that on the outside, even though he's building all of these things, and he claims to be the king of the Jews, Herod only cares about himself. He's a taker. The only thing he cares about is surviving. The only thing he cares about is his ego. And so the man is poisoned with bitterness and pride, and ultimately it's that pride that leads Herod to really live a life that's opposite of what God wants for us.

Yes, he had a lot of glory, he achieved a lot, but at the end of it all, it really didn't matter for the kingdom of God. When you look at Herod's life happening at the same time as Jesus' life, it's really Jesus, this poor itinerant preacher that didn't really leave much, and didn't really own much, and didn't have any children, and didn't really build anything, who was the most important person in human history. You think about how all of the literature and songs and buildings that have been made in His name, and Herod pales in comparison.

It's a good lesson for us who want to lead great lives. So remember what the world teaches us in comparison to what God teaches us, that God wants us to lead a great life, too, but He wants us to do it His way. And one of these themes that we see so often in scripture is that God will lay down the proud and the arrogant, and that He'll lift up the humble.

Maybe you've seen people in your life that are proud and arrogant or taking advantage of you. Or maybe you know that that's like a growing edge for you. That sometimes you power up and you try to be proud, or you try to take over, you try to have power. And we just learn from Jesus, just not the best way to live life.

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Ultimately this place becomes the final fight for the zealot riot. It started in Caesarea Maritima as a tax revolt, and worked its way down into Jerusalem, and of course we know that the Romans in 70 A.D., we know that the Romans took Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, and the leftovers came here to this place to have one final battle. Seemed impregnable, impossible to take. They had probably enough water and food; there's just under a thousand people to last about maybe two years. And of course, to try and take this fortress, if you're Rome, there's nothing around here. There's no food, there's no water. And so, it's dangerous to camp out here and try and take it.

And so, they just thought they were safe. And the Romans.. it's kind of like the next generation of Julius Cesar's tenth legion. They were some of the most elite soldiers, there are about 10,000 of them, and you can actually still see the camp where they were there. They built a wall first around Masada. Most of the time when you see a castle wall, it's to keep people out, but the Romans built it so nobody could escape; to keep everybody in.

And when they looked at this place and said how do we take this castle, there's a little serpentine trail, but of course that's incredibly dangerous. They didn't know what to do. They actually used slaves and built this ramp, an earthen ramp. Amazing, you can still see it here. It looks like they moved a mountain and just placed it against this wall. It took them a long time. And then they moved a tower up this ramp so that they could shoot down and defend the guys that would come, and they eventually breached the wall.

And that night, as they were fighting and they finally take and breach the wall, and they set the wooden wall on fire, they decide to come up the next morning and you see all of these legionaries with their shields wanting to protect themselves from arrows and projectiles, and they come up this ramp to take Masada, and when they get here, all they see, there's no fighters, there's no soldiers, there's no resistance, they walk through the breach in the wall and all they see on this hill here is dead people. Dead soldiers, but also dead women and dead children. You see they all decided the night before, they knew that they were going to lose, they knew that they were going to fall. They didn't want their women to be enslaved and violated. And so they all decided that they would.. they went through this process of committing suicide, where they had the greatest soldiers kill their families, then they had these ten men that killed them, and then one guy that killed them and he turned the sword and killed himself. It's a very, very sad story.

And oftentimes, actually until about 20 years ago, the Israeli military would come here when they were sworn in and they would say 'Masada will never fall again.' And that's a powerful claim. And of course, Israel is a nation that is often feeling attacked on every side.

But I don't think that's the lesson we learn from Masada. I think the lesson we learn from Masada is that our belligerence, our anger, our resentment always leads to innocent people being hurt. I mean there are times, of course, in war or war is, I guess necessary, just war. I think of World War II and things like that, but so often the bitterness and the anger that we have towards each other, towards our family members, towards our colleagues at work, towards our parents. And very often we think, oh when I'm just angry at this person, it's only going to affect that person.

But so often the anger, the unforgiveness, and the resentment that we hold towards somebody always hurts a third party. When parents fight each other, it hurts the kids. When leaders at a company fight and get angry at each other and gossip about each other, it hurts the employees. When pastors in a church argue and fight against each other, it hurts the congregation. And the problem is when you're angry and unforgiving and fighting and powering up against another person, it's almost like you're drunk. It's almost like drunkenness. All you can think about is this resentment. You grind your teeth, you feel angry, and you don't think about the fact that it's harming your team, its harming your kids, its harming your country.

Peter goes to Jesus once and he famously asks the question: rabbi, how many times should I forgive someone when they've offended me or hurt me. And then he suggests, Peter to Jesus, he says seven times? This is Peter bragging. This is Peter saying I'm getting your message, Jesus, about how I need to forgive people. I get it. I get it. And I'll even tell you what. A lot of people say you should forgive three times. How about seven times. I'll forgive seven times because that's like a holy number. And Jesus says, don't forgive seven times, forgive seven times seventy. A brilliant. Classic genius of Jesus.

In the Old Testament, there's this famous passage, and Peter would have known it because as a child, he would have studied and probably memorized large portions of the Torah. And Cain cries out to God and he says I can't go out there. If I go out there they're going to kill me. And God declares to the whole world, anyone who harms Cain will be avenged sevenfold. Well, Lamech, who's a

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descendant, later says, if Cain is avenged seven times, Lamech will be avenged seventy times seven. In other words, Lamech says if anyone harms me, I'm going to harm you back seventy times seven.

So when Peter says Lord, how many times should I forgive? Seven times? Jesus says no, you forgive seventy times seven. With the same passion that Lamech wanted to hurt and harm and conquer his enemies, Jesus says with that same passion, you forgive and you love your enemies. Like do it to the degree that it seems incredible. Do it to the degree that you just are insanely passionate about forgiving people who have offended you. And boy is offense the word.

People still get offended today. Jesus tells another parable. He says there was once a king who had all of these debts that were owed to him, and there was a servant who owed him ten thousand talents. And it's an incredible sum of money. A talent was the largest sum of money you could have, and ten thousand is the largest number, in those days, that you could write in Greek. So literally they wrote down the biggest number you could have for the biggest denomination. It would be like saying.. and it's supposed to be silly, right? Like the servant owed the President of the United States a trillion dollars. A hundred billion dollars. And the king said I forgive the debt.

And then it says that the servant, he was owed by a colleague a hundred denarius, which is about a hundred days work, so it's a lot of money. It's not a small amount of money. You could say ten pieces of silver, or a hundred pieces of silver, rather. And so it was a large amount of money. Maybe you could say twenty thousand dollars; ten thousand dollars. And after he's forgiven by the king, this friend of his that owes him money, he goes and he strangles him and he says you give me back that money. You owe me!

And Jesus says this is what it's like when you don't forgive people. See when we don't forgive our neighbor, what we're really telling God is we don't think your forgiveness of us was a big deal. Or I forgot that you forgave me. Or it doesn't matter to me anymore. Think about what an insult that is to God.

That's why I've noticed that so often in churches, very often the people that were the most sinful in life that came to faith in Jesus Christ are some of the most loving, forgiving and passionate Jesus followers because even though they sinned just as much as the rest of us, in their mind, they know it. They feel it. They know they were forgiven and that causes them to be patient, merciful, longsuffering, friendly and to love their enemies.

We need to remember that when we hated God, when we offended God, when we were lost, He forgave us and loves us and keeps forgiving us. You know why Jesus tells us to forgive seventy times seven? Because that's how much God forgives you. You think God can never forgive me after messing up a millionth time, He does. He loves you. And that's just it, isn't it. That we're so precious to God. You are God's treasure, but the sad thing is, so is that guy that cut you off on the freeway. So was that guy that stole your credit. So was your family member that betrayed you. So was your colleague that's kind of annoying, and messes with your stuff, and doesn't put the covers on their TPS reports.

It's a part of life is that we are precious to God but so is our neighbor. And God wants us to get the kind of heart where people become precious to us, too. For sure there are toxic people, there are people that no matter how much you forgive them or love them, they're still going to be evil and horrible. God doesn't tell us that we have to let go of our boundaries. He doesn't tell us that we have to invite people in all the time with their evil. Forgiveness does not mean that you're pretending that what they did to you didn't bother you or harm you. Forgiving someone is not saying it's okay, it doesn't matter. Forgiving people does not always mean letting people back in, but what it does mean is you forgive the debt. You're giving up your desire for that person to be harmed. You're giving up your desire to get back, and you're letting go.

Amazing. We study forgiveness and mercy and love towards our enemies. I can actually see from where I'm standing in front of me, behind the camera, there's a spot in En Gedi, around there, where this exact thing happened. King David, amazing, God raised up Saul. Tall, handsome, good-looking guy, but he started going crazy and he sinned against God and he disqualified himself. And so God began to raise up David, but David was employed as a general for Saul, and started winning all of these wars and battles and Saul says to himself, I'm jealous of this guy. I hate this guy. And begins to chase after him and chases him into the wilderness. And right here in this Judean wilderness, in these caves and different places, as he's running away from Saul, he's writing down these psalms, which are saying Lord, have you forgotten me? Lord, have you abandoned me? But still, I trust in you, and these kinds of things.

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And one amazing story, Saul when he's chasing David, David and his men are hiding in a cave, and Saul leaves his soldiers outside and he goes inside a cave to relieve himself; to use the restroom. And there's David, right there, and all of his men, and they could have killed Saul. And so what David does is he goes and he cuts off just a little corner of Saul's cloak or coat. And as Saul leaves, David comes out and he goes see, I could have killed you but I didn't! I'm faithful to you! And then he even apologizes to him. I'm sorry I even cut your coat. And Saul says to him surely you will be the king of Israel. He knows. And he makes him swear that he won't harm his family.

But think about that. David - the forgiveness of the enemy. He had every right in the world to kill Saul and take the throne. He had already been anointed. He'd already been called by God to be Israel's king, and even then, he forgives the man who's coming after him. And I think God honored David for that. David for sure was not a perfect man, but this is one of those wonderful stories that we see in the Bible of the good fruit that comes from having mercy, from forgiving, from loving.

You can forgive your parents. You can forgive your spouse or your ex. You can forgive your kids and your grandkids. You can forgive your colleagues. You can forgive that old boss who fired you and it wasn't fair. And you can even forgive the people who have really hurt you. I know it's really hard, it doesn't happen overnight. Forgiveness is not something we do instantly. Forgiveness is a process that we work on. Sometimes it takes years. But will you begin that process today? I know you may not feel like you can do it right now, but will you at least begin the journey of saying I'm going to do my best to forgive the people that really hurt me. I promise if you do that, you're going to feel better, you're going to feel happier, you're going to be more forgiving to other people, and you're going to have a better life. It's a great way to live.

That's why in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us forgive us our offences as we forgive those who have offended us. Sometimes we say trespasses or debts, but actually scholars believe offences is the right word. Isn't it interesting that He bakes into the Lord's Prayer forgive those who are offensive. And I feel like so many people today almost are giving each other offensive trophies. And it's not just in one political side. It seems like both political sides can be this way. Seems like people find pride in feeling offended. They clap for people when you get back and you say 'that was offensive.'

I just think that it's so important that even though we call out; it's probably good to call out evil and bad things. At the end of the day, we should pursue the heart of Jesus, which is to forgive people who offended us. Forgive people who have offended you. Don't hold onto it. Don't hold onto it like a grudge. Don't dwell on it, but let it go.

People have always been offended. And I remember, too, even all the ways that people in my own life have forgiven me. Think about even as a Christian, the stupid things that I've said and done and I'm so grateful that God has put merciful people in my life. People who have not gotten totally upset when I did the kind of things that Bobby Schuller always does.

Interesting when I first started in seminary, I didn't want to go to seminary. I sort of went kicking and screaming. I've told this joke before, but I used to call it cemetery. Don't go to cemetery, there's where you go for your faith to die. I remember there was a systematic theology professor named Ray Anderson. I took his last class. He was a legend at Fuller. He had been published and won all sorts of awards. And I didn't know this at the time, but the way he would teach is whatever you believed, he was the opposite. So this is how he taught. This is how he taught seminary. So if you believed in the charismatic gifts, he didn't. If you didn't believe in the charismatic gifts, he did. If you were a Calvinist, he was the opposite of that. If you were against Catholics, he was Catholic. He just became the opposite of whatever you were. And he wouldn't let down and he never even told you that this is what he was doing. And in almost all the cases, he was just simply asking questions. So this is one of the first courses I ever took.

And I remember getting in an argument back and forth with him in front of the class, to the point where I eventually stood up in a class, I was pointing at him, yelling at him, telling him all the things.. and quoting the Bible and this and that, and he just sat there calmly on his stool. And afterwards, I even had a couple of the students come up to me and pat me on the back and say so glad you said that. We got to stand up for the gospel. He believed everything I was yelling at him. He was just playing a role to prod me to see if I could really defend, and I really didn't make a good defense. I just, like so many people do today, I stupidly got angry and started yelling.

And later, he invited me, later that day, to go to Coco's. And I said.. what? And so he doesn't debate me, he just keeps asking me questions, and then we go to Coco's and have coffee and have pie. And he just became my friend, and by the end of that course, I looked back and even now, I can't tell you I get this shriveling.. it's like shriveling, horrible feeling, one that I got played like a fiddle, and

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two that I got so upset in a course where the whole purpose is to challenge and make sure that you know what you're doing and that you know what you believe.

I'm so glad that he had the intelligence to be able to totally dismantle me and embarrass me in front of everybody. But he didn't. He did what Dallas Willard has taught us to do, which is practice the discipline of not having the last word. Practice the discipline of not having the last word. That's hard to do in marriages and friendships and work when you have an argument, when you have a setback to not have to have the last word, but to really try and listen and hear a person's heart. That's a loving thing to do.

Our pride gets in the way, doesn't it. Our ego gets in the way, especially when you don't feel like we've been heard. We want to be heard first. I'm so grateful that throughout my life when I've been stupid or angry or passionate and blundered, that I had merciful people in my life to forgive me and walk with me. You can be that person to someone. You can be that person today.

Loving your enemies is the best way, one of the best ways to prove to God that you trust Him with your life. If you don't love offensive people, if you don't love your enemies, you're saying that God is not really in control of your life. That God does not really have the power, only I have the power. I want to encourage you, my friend, to test and see that when you love offensive people, that in the end it's better for you. You're more relaxed, you're more friendly, hey you might even get a better night's sleep instead of tossing and turning and thinking about all the things you could have said; all the comebacks you could have had.

Loving our enemies is a great way to live. Jesus tells us to turn the cheek. You know what that means? It doesn't mean to just pretend like it's not a big deal. He said when someone strikes you on the right cheek, that's referring to someone who backhands you, who offends you. He says turn the other, also, meaning force them to punch you. So He's not saying just take a beating, He's saying force them to bring the idea to the fore. He says when someone wants to sue you and take your coat, give him your cloak, as well. In other words, in those days you would have an undergarment, basically like long underwear like a dress that would go down to your feet. And then you wear a coat over that. So if someone wants to take your coat, they're that horrible of a person you have to give them your coat, and you go to the court, take your tunic off, as well, and give that to them so that you're standing naked in the court.

And He says when someone forces you to go with them a mile; He's referring to Roman soldiers would do this. When they would see Jews on the road, they would take their stuff, hand it to the Jew and make it carry them for a mile. He says carry it two miles. And in all of these cases, what He's doing is saying don't just resent the person or fight the person, but rather try to go the extra mile. What is He saying here? He is calling us to be salt and light! He's calling us to be more than just standing up for our rights, or getting what we deserve, He's calling us to be like Him. In the same way Ray went after me, in the same way the prodigal son is chased after by the father out in the field, He's calling us to be salt and light, and to be an agent of change in people. To not make it all about you, but to actually see that here's a person who can be touched by the gospel. Who can be transformed forever by a simple act of forgiveness, love and mercy. We're called to be salt and light. Abraham Lincoln famously said, you know how I destroy my enemies? I destroy my enemies by making them my friends. There's a lot of wisdom in that. There's a lot of wisdom. So we become agents of peace. If you want peace in the world, you got to have peace in people.

So standing up here, another monument to Herod. Think about two men at the same time: Herod and Jesus. And just nobody really cares about Herod in the way that they care about Jesus. I just think wow, if we can be more like Christ, we can build and do so much more, and this is one of the best ways you can be like Jesus is to love people, even when they offend you, even when they offend your religion, when they offend your country, when they offend your family, let it go. Learn to love people. You'll be a happier person, and you'll be doing what God called you to do – to be salt and light in a very dark world.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this time and this beautiful place, and I pray for my friends who have been hurt, who have been harmed, who have been tricked, who have been double crossed. Lord, help us to forgive. Help us to give it to you. Help us to forgive in the way that you forgave us so that we can be the kind of people you've called us to be. We love our neighbor and we love you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Benediction – Bobby Schuller



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And now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift His countenance upon you and give you His peace, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, amen.