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GOOD MORNING/INVOCATION – Bobby & Hannah

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

HS: It is a good morning. Thank you so much for being here. The Bible says that God is seeking people who don't just worship with their mouth, but worship with their heart and in truth. Let's be what God is seeking this morning. Thank you so much for being here. You are loved.

BS: Yes, we're really so glad you're here and we believe God has a good word for you today. We're just going to open up our hearts this morning, prepare ourselves for this Holy Spirit to do good work in our lives, and let's just begin by framing our minds towards Him. Father, we thank you in Jesus' name for the cross and the resurrection. Thank you for the power of your Spirit to overcome anything. Lord, there is such immense hope in you, hope that is like an expectation that you're going to do something great. Lord, we come here standing, not on what we see, but on your word. We thank you that your word is true, it's always true, that you're always faithful, and that we can count on you. And Lord, it's in Jesus' name we pray, all God's people said, amen.

HS: Amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – Numbers 21:4-9 - Hannah

Would you open your Bibles with me to Numbers 21:4-9. They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!" Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people. The Lord said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived. The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

INTERVIEW - Joel Muddamalle (JM) with Bobby Schuller (BS)

Dr. Joel Muddamalle is an author, podcast host, and Director of Theology and Research for Proverbs 31 Ministries. He loves studying and teaching the truths found in Scripture. His new book, *The Hidden Peace: Finding True Security, Strength, and Confidence Through Humility*, shows readers that humility can be beneficial in the life we lead. BS: Sara, hi. What a privilege to be with you this morning. And welcome, we're so glad you're here.

BS: Joel, welcome, we're so glad to have you. Thank you for joining us today. I'm really excited about your book *Hidden Peace*. It focuses a lot on humility and this kind of peace that sometimes gets lost in the church, and I want to talk about that, but first, maybe you can tell us a little bit about your faith journey. Maybe how you got involved in.. I think you're at Proverbs 31 Ministries now, and kind of what's been going on in your life, and welcome!

JM: Thank you. Thank you. I'm so excited to be here. So amazing kind of part of my story is that my grandparents were missionaries in India. They're actually from India, and I have a very unique story as an Indian that the longest that I could ever remember is of the story of Jesus being all I've ever heard. Of like most people had rebellion, ran away, but the thing that always captivated me was the story of Jesus, like who is this person that comes into human history and changes everything, to the point where now you don't have to be a Christian.

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You can be a Christian, but you say the name "Jesus Christ" and they're like oh, there's already a context around who that person is. And that led me deep into my passion for theology, and so I've studied academically undergrad, Biblical studies, M-Div, ThM, I'm a PhD, and then I met this gal named Lysa TerKeurst. She writes a few books every now and then, and she gave me this vision. One day we're sitting in an event, and she described her vision to end Biblical poverty, and what she meant by that is that there has never been a time in human history that we've had more accessibility to God's word. And yet, the ability that we have to understand it can at times be seriously lacking. And when she said that, it was kind of like Jesus on the road to Emmaus, Luke 24, my heart kind of came alive. I'm like oh my gosh, I could give my life to this. And so that's how I ended up at Proverbs 31 Ministries. I'm one of five guys, and so yes, it's quite a journey.

BS: It's mostly geared towards women, right? Of course Proverbs 31 is about the ideal woman, the Biblical woman. Is that interesting for you being a guy at a women's ministry?

JM: Absolutely. Absolutely. I say this often, I've learned so much in my journey in scripture and through scripture and this season the last eight years of Proverbs has been so incredibly formative for my understanding of God and His word. I sit around regularly with women that love Jesus and love His word, and I think God has uniquely wired each of us to think about the text in specific ways, and I mean for me, going through seminary, I really never had women who were professors.

And here I am, the PhD, the doctor of theology trying to teach and to explain the text, and I find myself in a posture of humility just in gratefulness and gratitude for the way that I was able to engage the scriptures in a way like I would have never asked those questions, but now that those questions are presented, I can engage with it in a powerful, new way. And so it's been incredibly formative for me.

BS: That's awesome. Okay, you've got a great book that's out, it's called Hidden Peace. And it really focuses on humility. What inspired you to really get into this idea of hidden peace and showing the importance of humility.

JM: Let's start with narcissism. So Lisa and a co-worker of ours, Jim Cress, he's a licensed therapist. We have a podcast here, it's called Therapy and Theology. We're on like season six now of it. And one of the most significant episodes we ever did was an episode on narcissism. So that word narcissism, of course, comes from the Greek myth of narcissist, and it is rooted in a Greek word narke. Fascinating thing. Narke actually means to grow numb. It means to grow numb. And so a person who is a narcissist is actually numb to the reality of other people's emotions, other people's desires, and what they care about is I call it the un-holy trinity: me, myself and I. And so as a direct kind of connection point to humility, I've seen that, Matthew 11:29, this call that Jesus has for us to participate in an exchange of yolks. And when we exchange yolks, Jesus calls us to take on His gentle and humble, the Greek word is tapeinoo, the humble life of Christ. And this in the Greco-Roman world would have been almost offensive, like you would never be described as a humble person. It was almost exclusively negative and yet Jesus is like hey, if you want peace, if you want rest, if you want relief from the exhaustion that you're dealing with on a consistent basis, take on my gentle and humble life. And so Bobby, I see a society in front of us that is exhausted, there's more fear than ever before, there's more of a desire to gain more power and control through our own strength, and at the end of it, people are just exhausted. And yet humility is the unexpected thing that can actually give us the peace that we're all longing for; the rest that Jesus presents for us.

BS: That's a great reflection about the Greco-Roman world. I remember hearing Julius Caesar, someone like him, who grew up in an aristocratic family, they had these death masks of the heroes of their lineage, and they would have like a room where all these faces, wax faces of their great grandparents were on the wall, and Julius Caesar's father would take him in and be like what are you going to do? What kind of glory are you going to.. are you going to have your face on the wall? And it does feel like there's a parallel sometimes. Like I think there is something powerful about having big dreams and achieving great things. We all want to do that, but that easily gets muddled with self-glory and ego and I want people to see me and say my name, and that is the antithesis of our faith, right? We're trying to get energy from that or life from that.

JM: In the book I talk about how you and I were never intended to be absorbers of God's glory. And yet that's what pride invites us to. Pride is an invitation to think too much of ourselves, and to try to absorb glory, and yet, what we're always intended to be, not to absorb glory, but to be reflectors of God's glory. To take the glory of God and to image it out and into the world.

And so while pride, it like disillusions us, and it promises clarity but only provides chaos, the power of humility, it actually gives us self-awareness without the entrapment of self-obsession. It helps us

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to be aware of God's glory, and to love Him for who He is, and then pour out that love onto His creation in a way that doesn't compromise who we were always intended to be.

BS: If you want to go deep in the scriptures and understand this part of life better, I want to encourage all of you at home to get a copy of the book *The Hidden Peace: Finding true security, strength and confidence through humility* by Dr. Joel Muddamalle. Joel, thank you so much, my friend. We appreciate you and congratulations on the book. Can't wait to read it.

JM: Thank you so much. Appreciate you.

MESSAGE/PRAYER – Bobby Schuller "Courage's Cure: Healing Through Facing Your Fears"

There is a book that is begging to be written. There is a business that is dying to grow. There is a script that is waiting to be compiled and created and presented, and there's a message and a sermon that is waiting to be preached from the rooftops to people who need to hear it. And my belief, as your pastor, is to remind you I know exactly where it is – it's inside of you. It's inside of you, dying to get out. And you know it and I know it.

And I believe that there is a spirit, the Bible calls it a spirit of fear. That means it's a person. There's a spiritual person called fear that stands in the way between you and what God has called you to do. This morning I believe that you were called to hear this message; that God is going to break that evil spirit in two, that today you're going to get a freedom to release from inside of you the dream or the calling that God has placed inside of you, and you will put to death that spirit of fear. Fear is a spirit.

The ancient world knew this, by the way. It's interesting when you see the writings of ancient generals from places like Greece and Rome, they would stand and watch their armies fight, and these two lines would come against each other. If you've seen like *Braveheart* and things like that, that's not really how it probably happened in history. In the movies, two lines go towards each other and they sort of mix up in a mish/mash. That's not how it happened in the ancient world of melee battle. What would really happen is they would bump up and then there'd be this zone. And very few people between two lines of infantry fighting, very few people would die in that fight.

Here's where people die – they die when one of those lines breaks. And the generals would see that. They would watch the two lines fighting, and from the sort of sidelines of the field, they would pray and beg and ask their ancestors 'keep phobos away. Keep phobos away.' That was his name. The name of the spirit. The name of the spirit that caused their men to flee. It's a spirit of death. And the reason they believe it was a spirit is because you'd see a line break, and it was like it hit them all at the same time, and they'd begin to flee. And very few of those men that fled would live. Very few soldiers die in fighting. They die in fleeing. What a lesson to learn. Not you. You know why? That spirit of fear was not given to you by God. The Bible says God has not given you a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, a spirit of love, and a spirit of a sound mind. Can I get an amen from the saints?

Steven Pressfield, a great writer, wrote this wonderful thing. He calls it a person. He calls it resistance. That's a good way of saying it. That the spirit of fear that keeps us from starting, he calls it resistance, and that it's always pressing against us. You see resistance doesn't say never do it, resistance says do it, just not today. Anybody feel that way? I can't tell you how many times I have said to myself, and maybe you've said to yourself about the dream or the achievement or the thing God's put on your heart. You say something like oh I'm going to do it alright. I'm going to do it. I'm for sure going to do this. But first, I'm going to watch some TV with my coffee to get my brain warmed up. Oh I'm for sure going to do this, but first I need to take a quick nap so that I'm sharp. I'm for sure going to do this, man, but I got to have a drink. Either drink a coffee or a drink of something else.

I'm going to write this thing, but I feel like this location isn't right. I am for sure going to do this thing, but I've got to take out the trash. A man can't just let his trash overflow. And I got to do the laundry. I can't just let the clothes sit in the laundry. Laundry has to be done. Okay. This is a little dark, isn't it? I'm a positive guy. My cup is half full, and the other half was delicious. But I want to encourage you today that the life that you want stands between you and starting. It stands between you and resistance, it stands you and this cloudy, invisible thing that pervades all of our lives named phobos – fear. Fear. And the fear doesn't keep us altogether from saying I'll never do it, it keeps us from starting today.

Interesting story. Pharaoh is confronted by Moses, the prophet. His land has been plagued by frogs. It's only the second curse. It hasn't gotten that bad yet. And he meets with Moses and they get together, and Pharaoh says, Moses, I give up. Here's the deal – you go tell your God to remove the frogs and I will release your people and we'll all be done and we'll all go away right as rain.

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And Moses says praise the Lord. I'll go tell Him now. You'll let my people go and they'll be no more curses. And Pharaoh says wait, wait, wait, wait – this is what the Bible says – he goes, not right now. Do it tomorrow. Now think about that. That one little decision, he made the decision, he knew the right thing, but he said ahhhhhhh tell God to remove the curses tomorrow, not today. And think about how that decision led to death.

That is the curse of our generation is the spirit of not yet. The spirit of tomorrow. The spirit of I'll get around to it. The spirit of let me look at my Instagram first. There is this thing that will always seem like I'll start, just not yet. And that is a will to death. Oh, how harsh to say it. That when we decide to not be in God's will, especially in the big things of life, we are caught up in a will to death. Just as Pharaoh died, so will putting it off tomorrow kill your soul. Don't let it. Don't let it kill your soul.

Hey, you want to be rid of fear? You want to get fear out of your life? You want to stop worrying all the time, you want to stop tossing and turning at night, here's the answer. There's only one way to overcome fear, and that is to face it. We must face our fears. We must look at it in the eyes.

And that brings us to the story from the scriptures that Hannah read this morning. Interesting story. Israelites are in the desert and they sin, they offend God, they complain, they curse God, and they're punished with snakes. These snakes come, they start biting people, and people start dying. And they repent. They come before the prophet Moses and they say oh great Moses, go pray to the Lord and ask that He would remove these snakes from us. But God does not take the snakes away.

Here's a tough thing to learn about life. You don't have to like it, but you got to learn it. In life, God doesn't take snakes away. In life, God does not take snakes away. Here's what He does – He provides a way. He provides healing, He provides power, but He does not get rid of the snakes.

When I was a young man, I didn't know this about life, and I didn't know this about the world. When I was a young man, I would cry a loud – there shouldn't be snakes. That's not fair. And you know what? There shouldn't be mosquitoes either. Why did God create mosquitoes? I still battle them every day. And there are so many things about life that are not fair, that are not right, that are not good. It shouldn't be this way, it shouldn't be this way, it shouldn't be this way. But now that I'm no longer such a young man, I realize that that's not how the world is.

God doesn't take my snakes away, and He doesn't take your snakes away. He gives you boots to trample. And this is what we learn. God does not take away the snakes. He gives us boots to trample their head. He gives us swords to cut their heads off. We will continue to be bitten, but it will not kill us, and that is the point of scripture, that something special happens inside of us when we come under God's will, that we're no longer afraid of snakes because snakes are dinner for people like you and me. God does not want you to be a mouse that's hiding from snakes. God wants you to be like the hedgehog, like the hawk, and like the mongoose. What are snakes? They look delicious. That's what God wants for you.

Here we are, a generation that says make it fair, make it easy and make it quick, and God says no, no, no. I will not make it easy. I will make you stronger. Don't ask God to make it easy, ask Him to make you stronger. Don't ask God to make the world perfect, ask Him to perfect you in the gospel. Ask Him to build inside of you the wisdom, the moral character, the skills, the friendships, ask Him to perfect you in that, to perfect your skills, to perfect your craft, to perfect who you are, and watch how the whole world will change for you. Life gets better when you get better. The world gets better when you get better, and you can get better by following Christ and by becoming a disciple; by working on you every day. God will not take the snakes away.

Where was I? Oh yes. So in the story, there's a bronze snake and very strange, right, when you think about it, they just received a commandment to not make a graven image of anything, and here now is a graven image of the worst, most evil animal, a snake. And they make this graven image, and they make it out of bronze, and they hold it up on a pole, and if you're bit by a snake, the commandment is look into the eyes of this bronze snake, and you will be healed and you will not die. What an awesome image.

And what happens is the snake doesn't remove snakes from the land, it heals you. And that brings us to a second scripture, John chapter 3. Jesus is witnessing to Nicodemus and sharing with him the gospel of rebirth. And He gives this homage. No doubt Nicodemus, an expert in the law, would be familiar with it. He says just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the son of Man must be lifted up that everyone who believes in Him might have eternal life. Amen. Can you say amen? The first thing we understand as believers about this important passage in John 3, is understanding the atonement. The first thing that happens on the cross, and there's two things that we should see there. Here's the first one, the one that we all know: Christ died for us.

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There's no more sheep, there's no more goats in temples, there's no more ritual, it happened once. Christ paid the price, He took our place, and our sins are forgiven forever. Amen! Good news. That is great news.

But there's a second lesson we learn in Christ crucified, especially when we compare it to the bronze serpent that heals, and it is this: The cross heals. It doesn't just deliver us and forgive us of our sins, it heals us from our sins. Who knows here that some of us are still carrying some scars from the sins of our past? From the things we said, the things that we did, things that were done to us, we carry those scars with us, but the cross can heal us in this way.

Here is what we see with the son of God crucified. We see all the horrible things that can happen to a person who wants to change the world for God. We see in the son of God, the son of man crucified all the horrible things that can happen to me if I decide to obey God. I see within that man dying on that cross all the things that can and will happen to me if I decide to live every day in God's will. What do I see? I see a young man, 33, dying before His prime. I see a man that was betrayed by His friends. I see a man that is humiliated. Not only did He die, He was hung there naked. Naked. And people stood around and they mocked Him and they laughed and threw things at Him and put vinegar in His mouth. And I see a man who was tortured and suffering more pain than probably any human being ever has. And beyond that, I see His mother, Mary, who has to watch her son go through this. The fear of every parent to see your sweet child be crucified, only for doing what is good and right. Whoa.

And then we see the resurrection, and here's what we learn from Christ crucified. Here's how the second part of the cross heals us is that if we're in God's will, some of the things that we're scared of will happen to us, but they're nothing to be afraid of. Why? Because even though it was a Friday, there's also a Sunday. Even though there's a Good Friday, there's an Easter, that healing's coming, resurrections coming, and that there is no permanent death if you're in God's kingdom. God is faithful to overcome, He's faithful to bring the victory, and that gives us the faith to act, to trust. That that life, a life crucified is better than a life on the couch. Amen!

Crucify me with Christ that I might live! Amen! The only way to beat fear in your life is to face it. This is the only way. The only way. The only way. The only way is to face it. You can't think your way out of fear, you can't therapy your way out of fear, you can't drink your way out of fear, you can't sleep your way out of fear, you can't wait your way out of fear, and you can't navigate around it. All you can do is lean into the knife. All you can do is go in the direction of the thing that scares you, because it is that thing that stands in the way of you and your destiny. Woo.

There's a kind of healing through facing your fears that happens to every man and woman when they finally do it. Courage is the cure. Courage is the cure to your weariness, ironically. Courage is the cure to your sadness. Courage is the cure to your weakness.

Dan Sullivan, funnily I heard him in an interview say – what's the difference between courage and confidence? What do you think he said? Confidence feels good. Courage doesn't feel good. Nobody wants to be brave. We're brave because we have to be brave. We're brave because we made a decision to do what's required of us.

Again, I'm getting a little dark, aren't I? Okay, let's be positive. Here's a positive thing, you ready? Here's a positive thing. Man, if you hear anything I hear today, you got to hear this. Here's some really good news about phobos, about fear, about the spirit, about this person, about resistance who's always in the way, this cloudy, mysterious figure that lives in your heart and mind. Here's the good news about that guy: he's pointing the way. He's pointing the way. I said he's pointing the way. If someone's, or something's keeping you up all night, if you're tossing and turning about a thing you're afraid of, that is a clue about where you're supposed to go. Lord, what is my calling, you ask. Lord, where should I go next, you pray. And God will put something in your heart. He will never do it in the day, He will do it about two in the morning and you will toss and turn. That's when He lands and you will toss and turn, and you'll say oooo, that is too big, that is too scary, someone like me can't do that. I don't know enough. I don't know enough people. I don't have enough money. I don't have any experience. I'm not that educated.

And so the clue is that if you're terrified of it, that's probably what you're supposed to do. And then there's a different part. There is this other thing called the will within you. It's the spirit, it's the.. scripture calls it the inner man or the inner woman that is reborn of God. And it is the will to live, the will to achieve, the will to win, the will to succeed, and the will to overcome. And can I tell you, it is your greatest friend in the fight. What a friend that spirit is, that inner part of you that refuses to die, that refuses to give up, and just do what you've always done.

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Let me put this in real perspective for you. I am not up all night trying to cure M.S. But maybe there's a woman somewhere right now who thinks she might have the cure to M.S. but her business won't allow her to do it, or big pharmaceutical is in the way, or she might lose her credentials at her college if she tries to study it, and yet she knows in her heart she might just have the cure, and that keeps her up all night. What should she do? Well the great irony is fear has already paved the way.

I'm not up all night worried about climbing El Capitan, but there's some young man out there who's been excelling at climbing and now he feels it's time to go, and it's terrifying him to think about climbing El Capitan and Yosemite. And you know what? I am not up all night obsessing about colonizing Mars. That seems dumb to me, but there's a guy named Elon Musk who cannot go to sleep and is working every day because he just.. it's terrified of colonizing Mars. And the list goes on and on.

Here's what I can tell you – there are many times at night where I tossed and turned and I didn't obey, I didn't follow the thing that was keeping me up. I let it die on the vine. Never again. Don't let it happen to you. And there are many times that I tossed and turned. I tossed and turned when I realized I had to get married at 21 to Hannah Schuller. A lot of people think you shouldn't married young. That's hogwash. Get married young, why not? I'm so glad. I've been married for 20 years. If you want to get married, and you want to get married young, do it. If you don't want to get married, don't get married. Just do what you want to do.

I tossed and turned when we decided we wanted to have children. Then I tossed and turned when I got a book in my heart. Took me a long time to write that first page. It's hard to stare at a blank Word document with nothing on it and start typing. It's terrifying. And I couldn't sleep when I was called, Hannah and I both, to plant the church; to leave our safe job, our salary, I'd just had a newborn baby girl, I had a house payment, and leave that place and plant a church and make no money. It terrified me and I'm glad I did it.

Terrified me the first time I had to ask for money for a project. And the list goes on and on. I've got things now that keep me up at night. And I'm so grateful that they do. And when they come up, this is what I do, I get up and I take out my little legal pad, and I write down what I'm going to do, and I say, in the morning, I begin. One day, or day one? It's up to you.

We always negotiate with ourselves, don't you? We always negotiate. We say, you know, well, you know, what if I start later, like what if instead of asking I don't like ask directly, I kind of like subtly throw it out there and hope they get it? Or what if I get a little advice first? Or what if I find a way around this difficult thing? Or what if I, especially, just do it later.

Here's the sad thing – evil will continue to destroy us if we hide from it. Think of all the things you thought were a big deal ten years ago. They probably seem like not a big deal anymore. Isn't that interesting? Someday, today's problems will seem easy! Someday, if you keep growing, if you keep getting stronger, if you keep getting smarter, if you stay in the word, someday all of this stuff is going to be a piece of cake for someone like you because of who you've become. This is most true with money problems, by the way. How many remember when you were a kid, the feeling of a five dollar bill. Well like think about when you were like eight or nine. I remember having a couple ones and that felt nice, but boy, a five that was great. And now, five is not going to get you a Big Mac. That's saying something. It might get you a Double-Double, though.

And I remember when I went to Nepal 20 years ago and they had some, I forget.. I felt so poor when I went to Nepal. I was making \$23,000 a year, and I believe when we went there, the income was something like \$17 a year. That was one of the poorest countries in the world. It's much better now. But I remember being out there thinking I was broke, and then I got there and \$23,000 a year, I was like the Grand Mufti coming to Nepal. Prince Ali, welcome. I still remember Hannah and I, we went to like a little nice hotel on the hill, and we ordered lasagna and it was their version of \$3, and I remember just thinking this \$3 lasagna and like four people brought it out and they treated me like a prince.

On the flip side, John, who was our international director years ago, was telling me when the Crystal Cathedral sold, he was telling me that he was in Hong Kong with a large real estate developer. If you've never been to Hong Kong, beautiful, wonderful city. Real estate is some of the most expensive in the world, if not the most. Part of the reason is as an economic center, and being on a little island, there's not a lot of room to grow except up.

And so prices get crazy in Hong Kong. In fact, recently there was a parking spot that sold for one million dollars. Now I don't know if you heard what I just said, I didn't say a parking structure, it wasn't even a parking lot, it was one spot. And it didn't even include a car. It was just a spot.

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So John is talking to this guy, this very wealthy guy, a real estate developer, and the man says to John, how much did the building go for? Now the Crystal Cathedral, if you don't know, is one of the most famous churches in the world, probably the most important building in America, or church building in America. Won a gold medal, world famous ten thousand windows, everybody knows it. How much did that go for? And John tells him, \$57 million dollars. That's a lot of money. But not to this guy. He nearly falls out of his chair and he says \$57 million dollars? You mean I could have bought the Crystal Cathedral? That's only 57 parking spots! I could have bought the Crystal Cathedral instead of my summer home on the other side of the island.

Okay, all of this to say many of life's problems are just like money problems, in that they're very relative. There is a future version of you that isn't bothered by what you're facing now. Become that future version. Here's how you become that future version – you continue to face what you're facing. Like all the things we've faced in our life, very often when we first encounter them, they're very, very hard, but after we encounter them a hundred times, they just become easy. God's going to give you the victory. God's going to pave the way. God's going to give you all that you need. So just go for it. Why not? Why not go for it? What's so scary?

Many people are scared of humiliation. Oh, my friends say, and my colleagues say. Yesterday we had a piano recital here, actually, for my daughter. There was a bunch of kids and it was really great. There were like 25/30 kids, and every single kid messed up. They were so cute. It was everything from like Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star to Fur Elise, or whatever. And so all those kids I know, because this is Irvine, all of those kids had those songs nailed before they got here. But they learned something. Here's what hopefully they learned – playing in front of people is different than playing by yourself.

And I remember when I was a kid, when I used to go to piano recitals, and it was just crazy. You could just feel like you nailed the song, you had it memorized, you could play it blindfolded, and then a bunch of people are there, and your hands get clammy, and they get sweaty, and then you mess up and that happened to me, and I remember, I mess up and then I think everybody noticed me mess up, everybody's laughing at me, everybody's thinking about how I messed up, and the truth is, nobody cared. If you play golf, you know this experience. Four guys out golfing, and you mess up, you think everybody's noticing, but nobody is noticing.

In psychology, it's called the spotlight effect. You think when you mess up, everybody notices that you messed up, but it's not the truth. It's apocryphally accredited to Winston Churchill this saying: "When you're 20, you care what everyone thinks about you. When you're 40, you stop caring about what everyone thinks. When you're 60, you realize no one was ever thinking about you in the first place."

Okay. Maybe you're worried about hurting somebody's feelings. This was a struggle for me when I started planting a church and we had a small church, I'm trying to make everybody happy and I'm a pastor. I don't want to be mean. And I had to come up with a rule – how do I do what's good and right, even though it's going to hurt someone's feelings. And here's the answer: as long as it's wise, and as long as it's not immoral – do it.

Necessary endings are a part of every organization, every life, every relationship, everything you do, it will come to an end. Sometimes you have to be the bearer of bad news. What about your past? Maybe the past is dragging you down. Don't let the past be some parachute or weight that's always holding you down. Here's how you get over your past – you don't make the same mistake twice. You can face the same monster, just overcome it.

And here's the biggest one of all. Why not? Why not go for it? Why not take the leap? Why not lean into what scares you, what you're afraid of? And it's because of loss. You just don't want to lose the money. You don't want to lose the time. You don't want to mess up.

But here is the tough thing – little clue. We're all going to die. That was rough. That's going to be the one thing people pull from this sermon. We're all going to die. We're all going to lose everything. We're not going to take anything out of here. Nobody's getting out alive. We're not taking anything with us. When we go to heaven, here's what we learn: the only thing you take with you is the person you become. That's what we focus on. The only thing you take with you is the person you become.

John Ortberg tells this story about Monopoly, one of my favorite games growing up. Said he was playing Monopoly with his grandma, and she cleaned him out. She took all his property and all of his money, and all of his stuff, and she said son, someday you'll learn that the way you win Monopoly is you got to buy every single property you land on. You got to get ahold of everything.

Courage's Cure: Healing Through Facing Your Fears

That summer he went crazy. He started playing Monopoly with his friends every day, and at the end of the summer, grandma came back and they played and he was ready. And he took it all. He took every property, every utility and every railroad. He took her little car, and he took all of her money. That sweet, sweet money. And then she said son, here's the second lesson you got to learn about Monopoly – it all goes back in the box. All goes back in the box. All that money, all that title, all those cars, all those clothes, all that stuff, it goes back in the box, anyway. Don't let your life be held up by being afraid of losing it now rather than later. It all goes back in the box eventually. Don't let that keep you from the life God's called you to live.

Your eyes are on the front of your skull. That means you're a predator. When you look in biology, God is called a lion of Judah. The lion of Judah. Lions have their eyes in the front, and the prey have their eyes on the side, in most cases. A gazelle, a deer, a fish, their eyes are on the side. They got to look all around them because they got to run. But a lion, a predator has the eyes in the front. The eyes are in the front because the lion is focused on his prey. They don't run away. They chase, they pursue. The spiritual armor of God, in the book of Ephesians, is all in the front. It's all in the front. There is no armor on the back protecting your backside. It is all in the front! It is not designed for retreat. And the gates of hell, by the way, what are gates? The walls of hell, the gates of hell will not prevail against it. They're defensive gates. They're defensive gates to keep hell in? No, to keep you out. Do you understand what Jesus is saying? That the gates of hell will not prevail against it? Against you? What does that mean? That means hell is defending and you are attacking. And like the walls of Jericho, the gates of hell will fall, because you're a lion, not a gazelle. Can I get an amen from the saints? This is the truth. This is the truth. God has not given you a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Final thought – the reason that most people don't have your dream and they want your dream, is they won't look the serpent in the eye. They're planning on it, they're thinking about it, I'm telling you, they've already created a committee to get it done. And they're going to get it done soon. But they just won't go. Not you, my friend. I believe it. God's put the spirit in you. You're meant to hear what I just said for a reason. May God's word take root in your heart and may it bear fruit 30, 60 and a hundred fold.

Some of you are here this morning and you are not at peace with God. Some of you don't understand what I'm talking about when I'm talking about this inner will or spirit. Some of you know that something is wrong between you and the Lord. Today, make a decision to follow the Lord. When Joshua entered the Promised Land, he said some of you want to worship both gods, the idols, and you want to worship Yahweh God. No longer, you need to choose. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord

Make a decision today to not ride the fence, to be at peace with God. Jesus Christ laid His life on the cross for you that you could be forgiven of your sins, and He was raised from the dead that you could have your home in heaven, and be full of His spirit. And I want to encourage you, my friend, to receive that spirit right now. You can receive it right where you are, just sitting in your seat. You can invite Jesus Christ in your heart and you'll never be the same. Wherever you are, will you do that right now? And will you text me the word HOPE to the number on the screen so our church can pray for you and send you some materials to help you in your new walk. I believe God will transform your life if you do that.

Would you stand with me, church? Father in heaven, we thank you that you are alive and at work in us. The spirit of depression, of sadness, of fear, and of weakness dies now. In our weakness, our natural weakness, we are made strong in you. In our emptiness, we are full of your spirit. In our confession, we are full of holiness. Lord, renew us in our bones, we pray, in our flesh and in our spirit we pray, God that we would be full of your glory, of your power, and of your life, and we ask that you would do it now. I'm praying for the person now who has received a new idea from you, even in this moment, that they would start today. They would start now. They would not wait. And we ask you in Jesus' name, all God's people said, 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 His peace in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, amen.