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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: And welcome. It is a beautiful Sunday and we are so happy that you're here. A lot of victory takes place during true worship. So this morning, let's lift up all of our cares to Him and let's worship the Lord our victory. Thank you for being here. We love you.

BS: Amen. Let's pray. Father, we thank you so much for all you're doing in our lives. And we're grateful for your Holy Spirit. Thank you, God that you love us and you are for us. And on our side, we trust you, and we thank you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, and all God's people said amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – Jeremiah 31:31-34 - Hannah

Would you open your Bibles with me to Jeremiah 31:31.

The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, declares the Lord. This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbor or say to one another, know the Lord because they will all know me. From the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more. The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

INTERVIEW - Dr. Ryan Rush (RR) with Bobby Schuller (BS)

Dr. Ryan Rush is a pastor and author who is very passionate about family. He currently serves as the pastor of Kingsland Baptist Church in Katy, Texas, and has also served as Adjunct Professor at Liberty University. His new book, *Restore the Table: Discovering the Powerful Connections of Meaningful Mealtimes*, looks at how shared meals can be transformative to families and relationships.

BS: Dr. Ryan Rush, welcome. We're so glad to have you with us today. And I'm excited about your book *Restore the Table*. But before we get to that, for those who don't know you, tell us a little bit about your background; you're a pastor, you've done a lot of things in the church, you're teaching I think at Liberty. Tell us about kind of what brought you to sort of write this book and kind of what you've been doing.

RR: Thank you, Bobby. I get to pastor a church in West Houston, Katy Texas, specifically, amazing people. We live in one of the most international communities in America, and so we're more likely to live next door to somebody from a different culture than anywhere else in the nation, and that really creates a richness of excitement and experience where we live.

My passion, my heartbeat is family. And as I've looked over the last three decades at what can make an impact in families is building healthy families, keep coming back to a Biblical idea that research now is really supporting, and that's the idea of having meaningful mealtimes at homes with the ones you love. That led on this journey the book and not only did I discover that mealtimes can make a huge impact in church families, but also this could be a tool to really build bridges outside of our regular circle with people who might normally not have a conversation. And so it's been a blessing.

BS: Yes, I read somewhere that there is a correlation between the health of a child and how many meals they have with their family. I forget where that was. Are you familiar with that study?

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RR: Absolutely, in fact there are several out right now, so there have been correlations made related to teen promiscuity, drug use, obesity, health, depression, and on and on it goes. Just coming down to this idea of having a meal. Now my PhD hat says correlation doesn't necessarily mean causation, but the point is families who will take this step generally are spending a little more time together, and it's the most natural place to invest in our lives because we have to eat anyway, right? It's something that we used to do a lot more naturally 30 years ago in our culture, and it's not unusual now for people to look up and realize they haven't had a single meal with somebody else over the last week. So it's just something we have to be intentional about.

BS: You know it's funny, I can say this because I did a fast but it wasn't a spiritual fast. I did a water only five day fast a couple of years ago, and one of the surprising things about it was I thought the hard thing was going to be being hungry, obviously, and I was hungry. But that wasn't the worst part. The worst part was not eating with people. And I could, I could have just sat there and watched them eat, but I realized that I felt bored so often. I've heard this, too, from other people who can't eat very often or they have some kind of reason that it's amazing there's something about.. I mean Jesus had an eating ministry, didn't He. I mean you see He's like constantly eating with people.

RR: Absolutely. All through the book of Luke, you look around and Jesus is constantly at the table with other people. People who are down and out, people who are religious, people who are following Him. And it's making such a difference and it's just so natural.

Here's the difference, I think, that people sometimes get mixed up on. They think that in order to have meaningful meals, they have to be really fancy or special. Listen, you can have a meaningful meal with people you love over fast food, you can have it at breakfast or lunch, you can have some cold cuts and a sandwich. It doesn't have to be fancy. That's not the point. The point is you're breaking bread with somebody, and you remove the distractions of technology, and you really have a conversation.

BS: What practical tips do you have in terms of using food as a ministry, for whether it's just your immediate family, or some people don't have a family, or the kids are out of the house. What are some things you'd recommend for believers that are watching now to even participate in the great commission, or to invest in their kid's. Like what's a great way to just do that meal?

RR: That's such a great question, Bobby. When you look at maybe the most famous meal in history – Exodus 12, the Passover, one of the instructions is given to families is that they're not to throw out any of the lamb. If they have more lamb than they can eat as a family, they're supposed to invite a neighbor. And the idea of having too much of the Lord's love for just my house is a wonderful concept to say why not invite my neighbors over. So in our neighborhood, our next door neighbors are from India, their neighbors are from England, their neighbors are from China, and their neighbors are from Louisiana, which is kind of a foreign country. I'm not picking on Louisiana, folks, but it's true. And so we have built a bridge over food. And it's amazing how different it is to say hey, come over, I want to hear your story and share with you. There's a difference in then saying why don't you come by and let's have a meal together. And we've had the privilege of sharing meals with all those people where we get a chance to hear their stories, and they hear ours. And so it's such a natural invitation piece for Christians to use to build bridges.

BS: It's interesting that even as I'm thinking through what you're talking about, how even the communion meal is a meal. I think they called it the love meal. There's a passage in Leviticus that says something like if you have your tithes and you can't get to the temple, like throw a big party and have a bunch of food and invite the Levites or something like that. Are you familiar with that text?

RR: Yes, and when you look at the Hebrew word for "food," is actually the same word for flesh. The idea is in the ancients and a lot of parts of the world, they think of food as survival. We tend to take food for granted, but when you think of it in that way, you understand how intimately and deeply connected we are with food, which helps us understand why the Lord implemented the Passover meal, and then later the Lord's Supper. And also why we innately inherently appreciate coming together and build bridges around food. Like it doesn't matter what somebody's background is, they generally have that understanding.

BS: Man, I love this book. I really, really love the idea that you're putting out to Christians. I think people can make such a huge difference with food. The people think they need to stand out on the corner with a megaphone, and maybe some people are called to do that, but just having a meal, most people are going to say yes. The book is called Restore the Table: Discovering the powerful connections of meaningful mealtime. Dr. Ryan Rush, thank you so much. I encourage people to get this book. It's a great read.

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RR: It's my honor to be with you, Bobby. Thank you.

BS: God bless you. Thank you, my friend.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Well no matter who you are, would you stand with us? We're going to say this creed together as we do every week. Hold your hands like this as a way of receiving from the Lord. 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: "Starting Over: A Guide to Rebuilding Your Life"

When I was a young man, an old man said something to me that transformed my life, and you have to hear what he said. It's had one of the biggest influences on my finances, on my relationships, on my health, and on my walk with God. And if you hear what he said to me today, I promise your life will be changed.

Here's the story. It goes like this. I was a young guy and we had this area across the street from my house. It was kind of a nature preserve. There was a creek going through, there were animals. One time I saw a mountain lion, and he let me live. Thank you, I'm grateful. You ever seen a Presbyterian circumflex? Thank you for that lion, for letting me live. And I was just a young guy, and I used to love going over there all the time.

Now in these days, I was a big fan of Karate Kid, of Jackie Chan movies, the old Bruce Lee movies, and one day on the wild side, a little patch of yellow bamboo began to grow. Now, bamboo is not native to California, and back then in the early 80's, you didn't see it a lot. So when I saw it, I was excited, and of course, like Jackie Chan, I would kick it, and punch it, and like pretend I was in China or Hong Kong, and it just felt very cool.

One day, I'm over on the wild side walking my dog, and I see that a local person from the city, a gardener or some type, has come and cut back all the bamboo and all that was left was the little nubs on the ground. And there was an old man there. I looked at the old man and he said, you seem sad about this. And I said, well, this was my little piece of Hong Kong and it's gone forever. I can't believe they've cut down the bamboo. I love the bamboo! He looked at me and he said, cut down. Cut down. Young man, there is bamboo under us right now, and it's under the ground over there, and over there, and over there. That guy from the city just made the biggest mistake in gardening history. If you want to get rid of bamboo, you don't cut it down. If you've cut down bamboo, all you've done is caused it to grow everywhere. And he said, I'll make you a promise: bamboo will now be everywhere, all over here, in not long, and he was right. It wasn't long, and bamboo was everywhere. That old man, by the way, was my dad. He was old, too. He was pushing, like, 38/39 back then. I can't imagine. He was right.

And what he taught me in that day was something that occurs in nature, it occurs in our body, it occurs in the universe, all around us. It occurs in all of God's creation. And here's the simple principle is that there are certain things in life that when you only cut them back a little bit, you actually help them. He was teaching me in terms of fitness because he was teaching me how to build my muscles, so we would weight lift in the garage. And so he said whenever you lift weights, you can see it under a microscope, you'll see that the muscle is actually being damaged and stretched and the cells are being destroyed. But that's the only way to make a muscle bigger and make it stronger. It didn't make sense to me, but he said it's like bamboo.

And here are the words that transformed my life. Here's the words that are going to change your life, and this is important if you're starting over. This is important if you're starting fresh. Maybe you're just getting out of college and you're looking for a career. Maybe you just lost your job. Maybe you're going through a weird transition and you're starting over. Here are the words that I promise if you hold them in your heart, everything will be different. If you get these in your bones, everything will be different. Here's the words: take care of the roots and everything else will take care of itself.

Take care of the roots, take care of what's under the surface. Take care of what people don't see. Take care of the thoughts. Take care of your heart. Take care of the books. Take care of what you listen to. Take care of the friendships. Take care of what's deep down inside. Take care of who you're becoming and everything else will take care of itself. Everything else will take care of itself. Like bamboo.

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In Hiroshima, after it was bombed at the end of the Second World War, everything was destroyed. Everything that was hit by the atom bomb was killed. Every person, every little child and baby, every plant, every bug, and every animal was eviscerated. And you know what was the first thing to grow back in Hiroshima? The first thing to be green and grow? I bet you can guess what it was. Can anyone say bamboo? It's a fun thing to say, isn't it?

And what's the opposite of bamboo, by the way? Metaphorically, I mean. What's the opposite? How about weeds? A weed springs up, it looks like a flower, looks like a healthy plant, but it's a weed and it's dead.

Or how about this? Indoor plants. Perfect environment. Perfect temperature. Perfect soil. Perfect amount of water, perfect sunlight, and you just get one little thing wrong and dead. Indoor plants.

Not you. I believe that you are built a little more like bamboo and a little less like indoor plants. And so, if you're starting today or if you're starting over, there's going to be four things we're going to talk about that are going to make a huge difference, and that is to plan, to plant, to tend, and to harvest. We'll get there.

But first, before we get into these four things, we have to understand the power of secrecy or the power of things happening in secret. It was interesting, many years ago when I was in seminary, I decided to memorize the Sermon on the Mount, which is sort of considered Jesus' pivotal speech on life. What I thought I was going to get after memorizing the Sermon on the Mount was a monk-like sense of Zen and peace. I really thought this. I thought if I memorize the Sermon on the Mount, I'm just going to like, sort of walk around and be this incredibly calming presence, like a massage, like I can massage people with my words and my vibe.

That's not what happened. When I read the Sermon on the Mount, I was very surprised to find out that the biggest word that pops when you read that sermon is the word "reward." Everyone say reward. (AUDIENCE - reward) Now when you think of Jesus' speeches, you don't think of reward, but the word pops up over and over, and it's often linked to another word: secret.

Here's what I learned, the biggest surprise of all is that Jesus is teaching us principles to get a reward. And the reward wasn't just going to heaven when I die, and it was. In some cases the reward was a financial reward; in some cases the reward was a health reward; in some cases the reward was a relational reward. And I started to understand that there is a reward when we do things the way He teaches us to do them and that it's okay, actually, to do things with a motive for a reward.

Then the second thing I noticed was in the Sermon on the Mount, that when you do things in secret, they have more power. It's not like we have to only do things in secret. But there is something special about doing something in secret. Let me ask you a question. If somebody says something nasty about you in private, but says something really nice to you to your face, which one feels more true to you? I'm going with secret on this one. We don't want to believe it. What happens in secret is what really is the truth.

So there's two reasons why when we do things in secret that they become more powerful. The first is this: God's rewards are bigger than man's rewards. If you want a blessing in life, God can give it to you. And God sees what's done in secret. But here's the second reason: what happens in secret is what changes you. You want to be a new person? You want to be stronger? You want to change? Focus on what you're doing in secret.

See, the greatest artists, the greatest musicians, the greatest athletes, the greatest whatever in life, they're known as the greats because of what we see them do in public. But all of us know that for every one minute we see in public, there's very often thousands of hours of things done in secret to get them to where they are. What you do in secret changes who you are. So focus on the roots. Focus on what you do in secret.

Our world is the opposite of secret, right? Our world wants to show everything, post everything, comment on everything. Everybody's a celebrity, and a model, and the world's greatest parent, and an activist, and a reporter. See, God doesn't care about how many Instagram followers you have. He cares about what you do when nobody's looking. And if you focus on that.. see, God hears prayers that are done in secret. God sees gifts that are given in secret.

So, grow the roots. Grow the roots, grow the heart, grow the mind, grow the personality, grow the character, grow the vision, grow who you are, focus on that, and who cares whose watching.

Jim Rohn, a famous business philosopher, married at the Crystal Cathedral, incidentally. When he died, he was worth five-hundred million dollars. Now, Jim Rohn tells a story that he was working hard, he was doing all this stuff and one day; he didn't have any money and one day a Girl Scout knocks on his door and she wants to sell him Girl Scout cookies and they're two dollars. How much?

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Two dollars, she says. And he didn't have two dollars. But being prideful, he didn't want to admit that. And in a sharp tone, he said, 'I've already got enough Girl Scout cookies.' But the truth was, he was broke as a joke.

Now he couldn't figure out why he was broke. Why if he worked so hard, if he was sophisticated, if he was smart, if he was educated, why was he broke? And he met a guy named Earl Shoaff who taught him this one principle and this is what made him so successful. He said, work harder on yourself than you do on your job. If you work on your job, you'll make a living. But if you work on yourself, you'll make a fortune. Wow.

Now, if you think this sermon is about money, you've missed the point. It's not about money. It's about rewards. Not just financial rewards, but all the rewards of life. This sermon is about life. About how to have the biggest and best life, even if everything's been cut down. And here's the answer: you work on yourself. You focus on the roots.

And maybe you're here today, and you've been cut down. Your life has been messed up. You've just lost a lawsuit, or you've been betrayed, or you've gone through a divorce, or you've lost your job. Maybe your business went bust, or your church collapsed, or you lost someone super important, someone you love, someone you can't imagine living without. It's like your whole life has been burned to the ground, has been cut to ribbons, to nothing, and all you think you have is nothing, nothing. All you have is just a blank field that is your life, just a plot of dirt.

Now here's the good news about forest fires. Forest fires, and fires in general, make the soil fertile, meaning that the soil of your life is ready for something. It's ready for something. Fire makes it fertile. What an opportunity that before you now lies everything if you just do these four things.

Here's the first thing: begin with the end in mind. I think Franklin Covey said that. Begin with the end in mind. Don't start your day until you've finished your day up here or on paper. Don't start your year until you have a plan for what you want to accomplish in the year. Start your life with the end of your life in mind and your life will go better for you.

Charlie Munger, the great investor from Berkshire Hathaway, used to teach this. He would teach young people - write your eulogy. Write what you'd want people to say about you. Write what you'd want them to say it was like being around you, or what you accomplished, or what you did, or what you experienced, and reverse engineer and live that life.

Whatever you do, if you write that eulogy, or if you write that goal, or if you write out the next phrase of your life, here's the biggest advice I can give you today: make it big. Why not? Make it big. Make the dream big. Make it full of big. Make it full of big dreams. Make it full of big buildings. Make it full of big conversations. Make it full of big trips and big adventures. Make it full of big plates of food. Make it full of big celebrations, but make it big.

I remember when I was sitting with my dad once or my grandfather years ago. And he looked at me and he said, 'Bobby, let me ask you a question about your dreams and goals. Do they scare you?' And I sat back for a minute, I said, 'you know what, they don't really scare me. I think I feel good about it.' And he looked at me and he says, 'that's the problem!' You ought to have a dream that scares you. You ought to have a dream that's so big it makes you a little bit nervous. Mario Andretti said something like this. He said, if it feels like everything is under control, you're not going fast enough. Be big dreamers. Big dreamers make the difference.

Here's what I believe. Most dreams are not achieved simply because they are not BIG enough. That's the main reason. Wouldn't you say? Well, shouldn't big dreams be less like.. no! Here's why. Big dreams are more likely to come to pass for a couple of reasons. Number one, small dreams and big dreams require the same amount of work.

I remember when I realized this about ten years ago, it has changed everything for me. A man who runs a pizza restaurant and a man who is starting a software company are working about the same, but both have different rewards at the end of that road. The pizza guy is trying to create a hundred thousand dollar business. The software guy is trying to create a hundred-million-dollar business. And when you have a hundred million dollars, it's a little bit easier to go and go and go when you see the finish line.

My first job I ever had, those of you who have worked in food know that food workers work the hardest. My first job ever was at a restaurant called El Pueblo Viejo. And I was a expediter. Now expediter is the lowest on the totem pole. We're the ones that our dream is to become a bus boy. And I remember being there and I was making six dollars an hour minimum wage, and I knew the guy that owned the restaurant, and boy did he work hard.

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And one day with all of these receipts and all of the stuff and covered in food and finishing up a day and I was still sweeping and it's midnight and he'd gotten there early in the morning and the guy was run ragged. He looks at me and he says, Bobby, you make more money than I do and I own the restaurant. And I thought to myself, I will never own a restaurant.

See big dreams make you more excited. They make you more excited. They don't just make you excited, they make everyone else excited. Big people are not attracted to small dreams and you're going to need big people for your big dream. Big resources are not attracted to small dreams. Big dreams require you to have a bigger heart, more courage. Big dreams require you to have a bigger character. Big dreams require you to have a bigger mind. They require you to have a bigger outlook, to have a bigger everything. In other words, a bigger dream requires a bigger you. And that, in fact, is the point of it all is that in order to attain the dream, the thing that God has given to you, you have to become a bigger person. God likes big churches, but God loves big Christians, and that's what we hope to accomplish here, amen? So, the first thing is, plan it out, plan it out, write it down. Write down the big dream, get excited, get pumped up about it.

The second thing, you look at this burned field. You look at this empty lot. You look at your life, it just feels like a square space of dirt. Here's what you do: sow some seeds. Sow some seeds. I remember when I was a kid.. I said the lady's name in the first service and Hannah said you can't say her name on TV. So, we're going to call her Ms. Crackin Boople. Miss Crackin Boople, in seventh grade, was the meanest teacher ever. We called her the nun. She was Baptist, but she still had this nun, bad, evil nun vibe about her. And she'd go around, especially to the boys, telling us how bad we were, and the thing she would always say is, 'you reap what you sow.' And I remember just thinking about the way she said, you reap what you sow.

Here's what she was referencing, Galatians chapter six, verse seven, it says, "Do not be deceived. God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows, whoever sows to please the flesh from the flesh, they will reap destruction." All right, there's the negative side, right? That's the part she's talking about, right? That's the part. And that's where they always stop. Just the debit side of the ledger.

But the cool thing about the Bible is there's a positive and negative. It always gets both sides of the ledger, right? The debits and the credits. Here's the positive side: "But whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life." Now when you see the word 'eternal life' in the Bible, don't think just heaven, and it is that, but think eternal living. It's something that's available now. It's what you think of when you say, I really want to live. This is what you're asking for. It says, "let us not become weary in doing good for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." In other words, yes, if you sow bad stuff, you're going to get bad results, right? We all know that. If you play stupid games, you're going to win stupid prizes. We know that, right?

But here's the other side. If you plant good things, you're going to reap good things. And by the way, that's not the whole story. If you plant one kernel and wait a little while and take care of it and water it, you're not going to reap one more kernel. You don't just reap what you sow, you reap 30, 60, 100 times what you sow. You see what I'm saying? Wow. So, begin to plant some seeds. Begin to plant some seeds.

When I was at Oral Roberts, Oral Roberts taught us, "if you have a need, plant a seed." Plant a seed. You can't just go up to some dirt and say, I need, I need, I need. What does the dirt say back to you? Plant some seed, plant some seed. You've got to sow. You've got to sow if you want to reap. You can't reap what you don't sow. So, sow. Sow into your relationships. They require a little bit of seed all the time.

A father says, I don't need to sow into my daughter. Here's what I'll do. I'm going to work for 17 years, never talk to her, and on the 17th year, I'm going to quit my job and spend a whole year with her and it'll be fine. Disaster! No, you can't do that.

A man goes to the dentist, has cavities. The dentist says, you got to brush your teeth twice a day, eat a little less sugar. A man says, I don't need to brush twice a day. Here's what I'll do. I just won't brush at all and the last day of each month I'll brush my teeth for two hours. Doesn't work that way. Somebody goes to the doctor, doctor says you need to get healthy, you need to lose some weight, your heart's not looking very good. The person says, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to keep eating the pizza and the burgers and the fries and the cakes. And then the last month of each year, I'm just not going to eat anything, water only for a month. No, no, we all know this is ridiculous. That's not how you do it. You have to sow. Sow into your health. Sow into your relationships.

We know that you've got to sow into your money. So many people today, they don't spend 100 percent of their money, they spend 110%. Right?

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Somebody says, oh, I don't need to worry, I'll just win the lottery, or I'll fall down at Disneyland and win a lawsuit, or something. No, you've got to sow and improve your value to the marketplace. You've got to put a little money aside. You've got to tithe so that God will bless you.

And most of all, many of us, we think, I'll just pray a prayer before I die. I'll be like Constantine. I'll pray a prayer and I'll go to heaven. No! You want a full, rich life? Pray the prayers. Attend the services. Listen to the sermons. Go deeper into worship. Just seek God with all your heart. Sow the seeds.

Okay, so number one, you got to plan. Number two, you got to sow some seeds. Number three, you got to tend to the crops in the summer. You've planted these seeds, they're starting to grow up. Your relationships are starting to get better. Your business is starting to grow. Your church is starting to increase in attendance. You're starting to do better. You're starting to make more. You're starting to achieve more. You're starting to accomplish more, but you're not quite there yet. And this is when the weeds and the pests come around and try to take your crop.

You got to tend to your crop. You got to fight the weeds. You got to defend your sheep from the wolves. They're coming. We all know it. And let me tell you, if you've ever been a gardener, it's very hard. I've never succeeded as a gardener unless I hired some help.

And here's what I'd tell you, you're going to need some help. There's an old African proverb. It goes like this: if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with friends. You're going to need some friends. You're going to need some help. You're going to need a team to achieve what God's put on your heart. And when you do that, you're going to have to delegate some things. But here's what Michael Gerber said. He wrote probably the best business book ever, *The E Myth*. He said, "delegate, don't abdicate." Now this is a temptation when you get some help in your life to just say, it's their problem now, I'm paying them. Or to say, it's their problem now, they volunteered for it. No, no, that's abdication, that's giving up. You have to delegate, you have to cast a vision, you have to hold people accountable. You have to stay connected. Just because you're tired doesn't mean you abandoned ship.

Don't expect your pastor to pray for you, expect him to pray with you. The prayer is yours. Don't expect the government to solve your problems. It's only going to support you, hopefully. Don't expect your school to raise your children. You've got to raise them. Don't expect your doctor to make you healthy. You need to be healthy. You need to take care of yourself. And all these people, and all these institutions, and all of these friends, and all of these teammates, they want to help you. They can help you. They will help you, but you have to be responsible for your life. Don't abdicate the responsibility, delegate it. They will help you, but they cannot drive the ship for you. It's your ship. It's your field. It's your life.

No one cares about your life as much as you do. Nobody cares as much about your kids as you do. You have to tend to what is yours. Tend to what is yours. Nobody cares as much as you do. Bring friends along, but don't abdicate.

And finally, the season will come when you look upon the seeds that you sowed and protected and cared for, and you will see a big field of golden wheat ready to harvest. When that time comes, there isn't much time at all. It's time to go. Go, go, go! When the harvest time comes, go, go for it!

Here's what Jesus said: "the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few." What does that mean? Jesus sees something that the disciples can't see. There's a field of endless opportunity. Now in His case He's talking about preaching the gospel and winning people to heaven. But isn't it true that in general in life there is so much that's available to us that we're so blind to. There is so much in terms of health. So much in terms of experiences and conversations. So much that's available in terms of financial means, and especially terms of eternal reward that's all around us. But so many of us can't see it. Why? Because we're city slickers.

You see, who knows when a field is grass or a field is wheat? And who knows when that wheat is ready to be harvested or needs to be tended to? Who knows? And the answer is the farmer. See, when you get into it, when you begin to plant, when you begin to do the work, you get eyes to see when the time is ready. Farmers can tell when a field is ready. City slickers can't. Remember that old film, "City Slickers?"

Speaking of films, one of the great films of all time, "Schindler's List." There's this beautiful story, if you haven't seen the film, true story about a man named Oskar Schindler, who's a member of the Nazi party, and he was actually a bit of a huckster kind of early on, but he was somehow moved to save the Jews. And he had this factory. And so what he would do is he would use money he had to bribe and pull Jews that were being sent to concentration camps to work in his factory.

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And when they were brought to his factory, he was able to save them from being killed. And over his lifetime, he spent every dollar he had saving people, and I believe the amount was 1600 Jews were saved from concentration camps. Wow.

And at the end of the movie, the character, who's played by Liam Neeson, has this, he should have won an Oscar for it, amazing moment, where there's all of these people who he's saved. The war is over, and they're all standing there, and there are tears in their eyes, and they're thankful for Schindler, and then he notices his car, and he thinks, all the lives that could have been saved. He was given this gift, and it's a ring, and in Hebrew it says, anyone who saves one life, saves the world. And he looks at his car and he says, this car, why did I keep this car? This could have been 10 lives. And he has a pin. He says, this pin, this could have been two lives. It's gold, maybe one, at least one for sure. And he just begins to weep.

And I wonder if when we get to heaven, if we might not have a similar experience. When we get to heaven, there are going to be some people that aren't there that we wish were. Or when we get to heaven, there's going to be people there who we're grateful that they're there, but we hear their story of their suffering, of the times they were starving, or the times they were alone, of the times they weren't invited, the times where they weren't welcomed, the times when they were standing in the rain and nobody was there to help them, and we'll think, all the time I spent on this other stuff that's not important. I couldn't see that the harvest was ripe, that the fields were golden and ready for someone with me. If only I had eyes to see. I ask you, my friend, open your eyes and see what's available. When the harvest time is ready, go for it. Go for what's available to you.

Finally, I'll just say one more thing. Sometimes you do everything right. Sometimes you plan, sometimes you sow. Sometimes the harvest is ready and you get out there to get the harvest and everything gets wiped out. Maybe this is true with your kids or your grandkids. Maybe this is true with your business. I know a guy who had amazing business during COVID. COVID just wiped him out. No way he could have predicted that. What do you do when everything gets wiped out? You have a choice. Will you sow again? Will you plan again? Will you dream again? Will you go for it again? There's no better way to live your life than to become all you can become, to do all you can do, to touch as many lives as you can touch. I want to encourage you to do that.

And finally, I want to encourage you to make a decision to follow Jesus Christ. I ask that every single time because it's the most important thing. What does it matter if you leave here and you're not at peace with God? I want to encourage you, my friend, to trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. He laid His life down on the cross for you that you could be saved.

I want to encourage you to invite Him into your heart and you'll be saved, and if you do that, text me the word HOPE to the number on the screen.

Let's pray. We thank you, Lord that so much is available to all of us. Help us to focus on all that we can become so that we can attract the things into our life as we develop as people. In short, help us to be disciples. Lord, we love you and we thank you. It's in Jesus' name we pray, 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.