

Hour of Power Deutschland
Steinerne Furt 78
86167 Augsburg

Telefon: 08 21 / 420 96 96
Telefax: 08 21 / 420 96 97

E-Mail: info@hourofpower.de
www.hourofpower.de

Baden-Württembergische Bank
BLZ: 600 501 01
Konto: 28 94 829

IBAN:
DE43600501010002894829

BIC:
SOLADEST600

Büro Schweiz:

Hour of Power Schweiz
Seestr. 11
8594 Güttingen
Tel.: 071 690 07 81
info@hourofpower-schweiz.ch
www.hourofpower-schweiz.ch

Spendenkonto:

PostFinance AG, 3030 Bern
Konto: 61-18359-6
IBAN:
CH1609000000610183596

Hour of Power - 15.12.2024

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 happy advent season, friends. Today may you grasp how wide and long and high and deep is Christ' love for you, and may you personally experience that love. Thank you for being here. We love you.

BS: Amen, let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, we thank you so much that your presence is here. We love you, God. We're grateful for Jesus and we're grateful for our lives. It's in Christ' name we pray, amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – Matthäus 2,10-11 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, Matthew 2:10. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

The word of the Lord.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING (Joy) – Tim & Ruth McCalmont

During the first two weeks of this Advent season, we lit the candles of hope and peace. On this third Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of Joy. The prophet Isaiah speaks, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: A virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel, God-with-us." This candle is pink, the only one. It expresses the joy Mary felt following the visit of the angel Gabriel, who announced that she would be giving birth to a special child who would bring salvation and deliver God's people. This candle also remembers the joy of the shepherds in the fields and the joy of the choir of angels who appeared singing to them in the evening sky. As we light this candle, we welcome Christ's light of joy into every circumstance of concern and sorrow. Our joy builds with the anticipation of His birth and as we yearn to experience His love and presence in our lives. Would you join me as we say together our unison prayer: We joyfully praise you, O Lord, for keeping your promise of salvation in the birth of your Son Jesus Christ. As we anticipate his holy day, Immanuel, we promise to open ourselves to the wonder and glory of your nurturing presence. In the name of Jesus, your Son and our Lord we pray. Amen.

God is the Most Joyful Person in the Universe

INTERVIEW – Bobby Schuller (BS) with Zach Southall (ZS)

Zach Southall is the founder of Charity on Wheels, a non-profit organization based here in Orange County which aims to help the homeless in our community. Inspired by his faith, Zach wanted to help others, so he delivered resources to those in need. From there, Charity on Wheels was born in 2012. Now they help people get off the streets and restore their lives.

BS: Hey Zach, how are you?

ZS: Morning, how are you?

BS: Good, thank you so much. I want to talk to you today about.. there's a crisis, especially here in Southern California. It's not just in Orange County, it's in Los Angeles and many places, and you have a heart for our homeless neighbors. But first, tell us a little bit about your faith, and sort of how that got you into what you're doing.

ZS: Well, I began about ten years ago God's prompting. I got in my truck one Saturday morning and went to Walmart. I didn't know what I was doing. I knew I wanted to help and I had it in my mind that it was the homeless I wanted to help, God's children; they were suffering on the street. I bought some bicycles, I bought some food, and I drove around and I was frankly scaring the heck out of homeless people because nobody was really ministering at that point, so I was driving up next to people – hey, I'm Zach. How you doing? I'd like to help you. But I really didn't know what I was doing. And then after a year or so doing that, and I realized that just giving people stuff wasn't really helping them, and I really wanted to make an impact, so I set out to learn what it really took and what it really meant to rescue someone and lift them up out of poverty; make them self-reliant again.

BS: I love.. you had said at one time that you don't just want to give a hand-out, you want to give a hand-up. You want to help people get jobs. You want to help people get training, learn life skills, develop as people so they can get back on their own two feet. Tell me more about that. How important is that in what you do?

ZS: Absolutely. I think a lot of times, the homeless they've been robbed of their dignity oftentimes; they're ignored, they're stepped over. The context of relationship is really everything when it comes down to changing a life so taking the time to stop and talk to someone and find out who they are, what brought them to this point, and then intervene. That's the big.. everyone can be an instrument for God, for change, can make a difference, but you have to look around. That's why I go around now and encourage churches to pick up the mantle and try to make a difference where they're at. And there's a lot of churches, mine included. We send money to Africa and India, and I'm trying to encourage folks to hey there's a guy right across the street who needs you, who needs your help and needs the church and you're really good at this work, you really good at loving people, and so you're halfway there. The rest of its easy.

BS: It's interesting how a lot of times our definition of homeless is pretty narrow, too. Like when we think of a homeless person, we think of the person on the street, and there are a lot of people like that. But a lot of homeless, I would say probably a majority of homeless are living in cars, a lot of times you wouldn't know; they dressed nice, or they're in a motel. Like a lot of people are in these situations and they just don't know how to get out of it, and they're just completely overwhelmed. I mean financial, money, food, you're alone. What can we do as a church if we have friends in our community or our schools or our business places, or if we meet people, what can we do to help or make a difference?

ZS: I think it's all.. I think it all starts with intervening where you make the conscious effort to do something, even if it's small. You don't have to have all the answers but if you just start somewhere. We encourage churches to put together our health and hygiene bags, which also include a resource table, basically, for people that might.. let's say they're having trouble with addiction, they have a place to call mental health, they have a place to call or get to. We're just beggars pointing other beggars to water, really, is all it is. But I think you can do that and it's a tangible help, and great things can come from just stopping, having a conversation with somebody. Praying for them is huge, obviously. Giving them one of our help bags and again, you get to point that person to water.

BS: I think conversation's big, too. If you notice, most Starbucks have at least one homeless person there, and if you're waiting for your coffee, if you see someone that looks a little down on their luck, you can just ask them how their day is going. Ask if you can pray for them, right? I mean that's a big part. That's something I didn't realize.

ZS: Huge, huge part. Yes, again, a lot of folks are just used to having their blinders on.

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You're on your way into Target or Starbucks, like you said, and you're trying to avoid eye contact at all expense, but again changing your mode of thinking to where you go right to that person and you greet them and you introduce yourself. It's disarming, and it changes things.

BS: One thing I've done, too, because I know a lot of people are uneasy about handing money out to people flying signs, but I keep Starbucks gift cards. You can get a pack of five dollar or ten-dollar cards from Amazon I have a huge stack, and you can get bus passes, and those I know are a huge deal.

ZS: Huge! That's a monumental blessing. I always encourage people, like if you're going to go and buy a coffee for yourself, like I said, and we're using Starbucks as an example, but there are many, and you come in and you introduce yourself to this person, you go I'm going into to grab a latte, would you like anything? And then you come back out and just that little bit of interaction and then who knows, maybe you see them next time, and then next time, and then maybe you have a deeper conversation that leads somewhere.

BS: The Bible says that anyone who gives to the poor lends to God. I love that Bible verse. And what a great message. What does that mean to you?

ZS: I think there's a power in doing what our Lord commands, I think, and He's commanded us to take care of widows and orphans, and oftentimes that's what we see on the streets – single moms. And you would think that it would tire you but in this instance, it's like you can run and not grow weary. It's a super charge. I mean if you want to feel the spirit moving in your life, I would encourage you to serve the poor. There's nothing else like it.

BS: Amen. We take that encouragement. Zach Southall, thank you so much for all you do. We love and appreciate you. God bless you.

ZS: Thank you for having me. Thank you. God bless you all.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

No matter who you are, we're glad everyone's here. This is a party, right? And a celebration of the Lord, and the more people, the better. So, would you stand with me? 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 Holy Spirit. 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: God is the Most Joyful Person in the Universe

Today I want to talk about success, and the way in which the world defines success, the way in which God defines success and the way in which we define success. If you go to someone today and you say he's successful, here's one definition, what does that mean? It means cheddar, right? It means they're kind of wealthy, right? Success means he's got some money, but that could be a problem as a measurement of real success in life. We all know the Ebenezer Scrooges of the world, right. The people who have the money but no joy. They have the car, but they're not going anywhere. Yes, we all know what that looks like. And yet at the same time, we believe that we live in God's kingdom, a kingdom of abundance, of achievement, of dreams, of creativity, of overflowing. So which is it? Here's another way, status, at the highest status would be what? Fame, glory. Some people desperately want to be famous. Matthew Perry prayed, actually said in an interview, he prayed to God – God, please give me fame. And God gave it to him. And he says that destroyed my life. Poor guy.

How many celebrities do we have to see, how many stories do we have to hear of people that say fame is a little bit like drugs. Once you've got it, you know it's killing you, but you can't live without it. Don't get it. Don't catch it. But, we also believe God doesn't want us to be a wallflower, God wants us to make an impact in this world. God certainly doesn't want you to be a doormat. He wants you to be a world-changer. He wants you to have a major impact on your family and on your community. We all believe that. But that certainly would be a status thing, right. So what is it? Which is it?

In fact Jesus tells us, He asked His disciples who here wants to be the greatest. I have an answer for you. If you really want to be the greatest ever, the greatest ever, you must serve everyone. Well that's a clue, isn't it. Herein lies the clue – good things become wonderful things when they're in second place. Second place. Not first. Second place means you'll miss it, but you can get along without it, without the status, without the money.

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Second place means you want the Lord more than any other treasure in this world. Second place means you want Jesus to be famous, and you want His way to be famous in the world more than you to be famous.

And that leads us to the title of, sort of, of today's thinking. I want to compare, I want to call this a tale of five kings. A tale of five kings. It's a picture of two versions of success.

Here's king number one. Famous guy from the Roman Empire – Herod, King of the Jews. Only one problem with Herod King of the Jews – he's not Jewish. Isn't that interesting? Yes, he marries a Jewish princess, a Maccabean princess; later strangles her to death. He is insecure, he kills three of his sons, murders them. Kills his brother-in-law. One of the reasons why the Sadducees in Jesus' time seem so awful and so pro-Roman is in Herod's day they didn't like Herod, and so Herod rounded up all of the powerful and very faithful Sadducees that were serving in the temple and he had them all killed and replaced with pro-Roman Sadducees. And he just was completely insecure, hungry for power. He came to power because his dad, Antipater saved Julius Caesar in Egypt at the siege of Alexandria, and so Julius Caesar gave his dad, Antipater, a bunch of land and title. Herod inherits the land and title and Rome says Herod is the king of the Jews. And somebody else – he's not Jewish. He says 'he's Edomean, its close enough. They won't care.'

He's really famous for being a great builder. If you go to Israel, you'll see all of these buildings. The first is the famous, most famous thing he built was the temple. Incredible. Built that whole thing. The second was a famous fortress he was using to keep Cleopatra, another famous ruler of the time, from invading the southern part of Israel. It's called Masada. We were there last year, you might remember. He built this beautiful city in honor of his friend Caesar called Caesarea Maritime. Beautiful ocean community. And most importantly, in this story, he built what's called the Herodian, after his own name. A palace on a hill. Gorgeous fortress palace. It's not so beautiful anymore, but it was back in this day, trust me.

And this place, the Herodian was only three miles from Bethlehem, and in fact Bethlehem, which a very small little village in that day, you could see Bethlehem. On a dark and moonless night, you can see it right there and look right down on it. Herod the king of the Jews. It's said that when Herod died, he was so reviled that he was on his deathbed and he rounded up the most popular nobles of the land and had them imprisoned, and the order was to be given that when he died, they would all be executed so that people would weep and not celebrate. And then he died and they let all the rulers free, and everybody celebrated Herod's dead! King number one.

Here's king number two, three and four. We call them the magi. Now before you Bible nerds send me an email and say there weren't actually three kings, that's just tradition, I know, but it helps my sermon title. And it's important. We think of the magi as the three kings because they brought three gifts, and there is a better way to think of the magi. There was actually a troupe, a large parade or group of traveling magicians or wizards. The word "magi" is where we get the word "magic" from. And that's exactly how they would have been seen. It's like weird wizards from the Orient, from the Far East, from the Persian Empire somewhere. Maybe Arabia, maybe India. I've made a claim in the past; I don't have time to make it today, that they were actually Jewish. In Jesus' day, Babylonia, which is a part of the Persian Empire in the time, still had more Jews in it than Israel did from the Babylonian exile. And many of them were going back and forth between Babylonia and Israel in the same way today someone from Russia or New York might go back and forth from Israel.

And so these men, they followed a star, as we know, and they came into Jerusalem. And now when they came into Jerusalem, it wasn't three dudes on camels, it was a giant group. There would have been soldiers to protect them, there would have been servants to cook the food, there might have even been some animals, and just think of a large parade. This is what happens when you have weeks or months of travel to get across a desert.

And they enter into Jerusalem, nobody knows they're coming, the doors open and picture the scene Prince Ali, happy is he, from Aladdin. Very similar. Everybody lines up the streets, they're wondering what's going on. They come through, they go to the governor or some important place, and they say to him (MAKES A SCROLL-OPENING SOUND) roll up a scroll, 'we have come.. we have followed a star because we heard that the king of the Jews has been born, and we've come to worship Him.' Well who's the king of the Jews? We just said it. Herod. And can we say Herod does not like a competition. He does not like a threat to his power. These magi do not know it, but they are in mortal danger. Major, major danger.

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And in fact immediately, when Herod hears this, it says all of Jerusalem was in an uproar, and Herod was in an uproar and he invites them to come up, we assume, to the Herodian, this building I just showed you. So they're just a couple miles from Bethlehem now, they go kind of south from Jerusalem just a few miles to the Herodian, they go up into this palace, they tell him everything, and he says we know where this Messiah is to be born. The prophets say He's born in Bethlehem. That's where the Messiah will be born. And he says when you find Him, please let me know so that I can go and worship Him, too. Right? And they say okay.

Now when they arrive, of course, they continue to follow the star. They find the house, they find Jesus, and you can imagine a major party breaks out. Not only have they brought the equivalent of lots of valuable items; today we would think of as a sum of a large amount of money, not just the gold, but the frankincense and myrrh, all very, very valuable. But in this sort of Middle Eastern style, there would have been probably days of celebrating and singing and music, and Bethlehem would have been a big party. And Herod wasn't there, nor was he told later where to find the baby Jesus.

And what we see here is a story of really two versions of success, because like Herod, we can say the magi were probably famous, they were certainly wealthy, they were certainly successful and well to do, but they were under God's blessing. They were at the party. They were giving and not taking. They were not threatened but were blessing those who were around them. And we can clearly say, I think every person in this room, that though we don't know of any buildings that they made, everybody knows the magi, the three kings more than Herod. More people are talking about them, more people have a bigger impact from them because their success was under God.

And so a question I want to ask today is how do we become like these magi if we want to be successful people instead of turning into this rotten to the core, horrible person like Herod. And the answer is so simple, and you will probably forget this answer, but if you remember it, it will change your life, and that is very simply, follow God. In all you do, follow God. Follow God. In all your ways, acknowledge Him and He'll make your path straight.

That's what the magi were doing when they followed the star. They weren't just following a star, they were following God. The star was God's way of leading them where to go. The star is a symbol for God's direction for you. It's God's dream for you. It's God's goal for you. It's God's next wonderful thing for you, and the first thing the Lord wants you to hear today is to believe that there is a star for you, and there is. God does not see your age, your mess ups; your mistakes. He's not worried about your lack of qualification, or your lack of a diploma. He chooses you. He's got a star for you, and it's very hard when we get in the ruts. I know, I've been there. It's hard when we're behind. It's hard when we are in just a stuck place to get out of the muck and the mud and get back to our dream and get back to our goals, but God has one for you. God has a star for you. You need only look up.

Here's something everybody needs, I believe. Everybody needs a dream. Everybody needs a goal. Everybody needs a vision for their life. And the reason we need those things is because its reasons. It gives us reasons to wake up in the morning. Gives us reasons to go to the doctor and press through the visits. It gives us reasons to lose the weight. It gives us reasons to get healthy. It gives us reasons to pray. It gives us reasons to love our neighbor. When we have a vision and a goal, we have a bigger reason than our pain, than our setback, and than, our difficulty.

Oh yes, did you guess the fifth king, by the way. I'm sure you guessed it – you all go to church. You should know His name. His name is Jesus Christ, King of kings, Lord of lords. That's king number five, in case you were wondering. And that's the first thing that we ought to know about building a big dream in God's kingdom.

Number one – it's about Jesus and His vision for your life. Maybe that's too abstract for you. Maybe you're not quite sure. Maybe you're a new believer. You're not a believer at all, but you're interested. Let me make it less abstract for you.

How do I know if my dream is God's dream, too? Here's a clue – if your dream is like this, it's probably from God. If you want to help and not harm. If you want to give and not take. If you want to lift up and not tear down. If your dream exists to serve and not to be served. And by the way, did you know that's the ultimate formula for success, by the way is to serve others. It's the impact of your service. And this is what I want you to hear – the greater impact of your service, the brighter your future. The word here to focus on is not "service." The word here to focus on is "impact." All of us want to serve others, all of us want to help others, but when your service makes an impact, when it touches a life, when it changes a mind, when it motivates a person, when it builds a product or a thing that really serves another person, then your future gets brighter. Number two. Okay, the first thing, how do we build a dream like the magi? Number one is we make it about the Lord and His vision.

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Number two is God's dreams are always big dreams. Always. His dreams are always big. Why does God insist on big dreams? The reason is so that you know He was a part of it! You have a little dream, you get it done, you think man, that's because of my hard work and elbow grease and I'm so smart. You pick a big dream, though, and you accomplish that dream, all the people you met along the way you weren't supposed to meet, all the doors that opened spontaneously right when you needed them, all the checks or resources that arrived just at the minute you needed it to get the thing done. You get to the end of that road and you go – the Lord was a part of this. And what does that do? I tell you what it does – you can see that, my friend, you are not alone. That God loves you. That God's coming alongside you to get the job done. That God's helping you create all that you were called to make. And it helps you see what God is like.

What is God like? He's a God of victory and not defeat. A God of life and not of death. He's a God of abundance and not lack. So here's what Dr. Schuller said – make sure your dreams are big enough for God to fit in. That is right. That is right. One little bonus point on this idea – just remember, big dreams and small dreams take the same amount of effort. They really do.

I've been a pastor of a small church and I've been a pastor of a big church, and boy can I tell you, they take the same amount of effort. It's very weird. Actually, I will make this argument – pastoring a small church is harder than pastoring a big church. When I pastored a small church, I did the accounting, I did the website, I did everybody's wedding, everybody's funeral, I visited everybody when they got sick, I answered every phone call, right. Had to make sure the lease was paid, I had to make sure there was money in the account, and I didn't get paid. And then I wouldn't do somebody's second cousins wedding because I was so busy working on the website, they'd be like 'he's lazy.' Yes. Can I tell you it was more work to have a small dream than a big dream? That's right.

Here's what a big dream forces you to do. It forces you to get a big team. Big dream you can't do on your own. You need a big team or big machine. You need something bigger. The guy who opens a pizza shop versus the guy who opens a SAAS company – software as a service – both are going to work just as hard as each other, but they're going to have very different outcomes at the end of that journey. Who here knows that starting and running a pizza shop is very, very hard work and does not pay very well.

And so that is my point. The big dreams take just as much effort as the small dreams. The difference is, to make your big dream, you need a big team. I even made it rhyme for you! Isn't that great? I am a Schuller. Big dreams require big teams. And by the way, a big team is not just a number thing, it means big people on your team. That when you have a team full of big people, everything gets better.

And that brings me to my third point – how do we do these big dreams? We get around big dreamers. You've got to do this. I was driving through Hesperia, and I know nothing about this church at all, but I loved the name of the church. The name of the church was Oasis of Faith. What a great name. You know that those pastors probably went to a church and they just said we want to get around people who have faith! We don't want to be around a bunch of sleepy religious people who have no dreams or goals. We want to believe in a bigger life for ourselves. We're starting a church and we're calling it Oasis of Faith. I don't know. But maybe that's true.

It is interesting, isn't it? I remember I had friends around me at a time in my life that I loved and I still love, but I remember that there was a season where it felt like you couldn't achieve with them. Like I remember I got a new car. No big deal. And they came to my house and they said 'oh, you got a new car.' And I found myself making a bunch of excuses and reasons why I got a new car, and how I got a good deal, and how I probably shouldn't have gotten it, and this type of thing. And those friends left and later I thought I need new friends. I need new friends that are going to encourage me to achieve my dreams, and not make me feel guilty for something as silly as buying a new car. It's not their fault, right? This is the kind of life that God has called for me.

And so I remember Martine told me the same thing – my mother-in-law. She said when we were younger, and we were in this church, the church all the time talked about how people that had anything, they had pride. They had pride in what they had. But I realized we had pride in what we didn't have. We had pride in our poverty, we had pride in our lack; we had pride in our judgment. And she realized that that had to change. Again, we're not judging anybody, but we're recognizing something that the people you're around are going to affect your faith. They're going to affect your achievement, they're going to affect your mindset. We want to get around big dreamers.

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We want to get around positive people. We want to get around people full of faith and vision. We want to get around 'anything is possible' kind of people.

Can we just say – one thing we can say about the magi is that they weren't alone. Herod was alone, and anytime somebody got close to him, he killed them. The magi were not alone. And I don't believe crossing fifteen hundred miles of desert in the first century was an easy thing to do. You know there had to be days when they were hot or thirsty or wanted to go home, or they said this is stupid, why are we following a stupid star? Who is this guy again? I'm sure that happened. But Belshazzar, or one of the three kings said no, we're still going.

If you're building a dream, you're building a team. And you've got to recognize that the people around you are going to help you get through those tough times, and boy you're going to go through tough times. Jesus tells us plainly – storm is always coming. To not expect it is to be naïve.

So how do we prepare for a storm? How do we build our life on the rock other than following Jesus' teaching? We surround ourselves with the kind of people that are going to help us get through those tough times. And you get those kind of people at this church, I believe, and welcome to Shepherd's Grove. We're glad you're here.

Famous coach famously said you don't win in the game, you win in the draft. This is so important. Your team is so important. Who you have on your team is so important. Getting people smarter than you, getting people as bigger dreamers than you, getting people that are going to pull you up and not push you down, people that are going to lift you up and encourage you and carry you through the difficult times.

My grandpa had a great team. Did you know this? I think it was.. wish Jim Dawson was here in the last service, because I believe it was John Crean, and now he can confirm for me. The first million dollars that was given to the Crystal Cathedral, was that John and Linda Crean? It was, okay. So John Crean gives a million dollars to my grandpa for this vision to build what many consider the most important church building in America: ten thousand windows, a Crystal Cathedral, incredible vision. And he's trying to raise money to build this thing. He doesn't want to borrow money, he wants to pay cash for it. Can't raise the money. He's got his million bucks, but nobody else seems to want to give. Finally, he realized the dream is over. He calls John Crean and he says, 'Mr. Crean, I'm so sorry, I need to send you your million dollars back.' And John Crean says 'well what do you mean?' He says 'nobody believes in this, nobody's giving to this.' And John Crean says, 'well surely you can do something with a million dollars.' And he says 'what?' And he goes 'well can you do something with a million dollars?' And he says 'I suppose I can dig a hole.' He goes 'dig a hole! Dig a million dollar hole.' My grandpa digs a hole, a million dollar hole, and all the reporters come out, the cameras, the newspapers: 'Dr. Schuller's building a ten thousand glass building,' and people begin to give. People say whoa, he's really doing it. The cranes are out. The shovels are digging and it happened. Can you believe he was that close to giving up? The thing that carried him through was one guy. One guy saying dig a hole. One guy.

This is the importance of the people in your life. Surrounding yourself with dreamers, achievers, people who lift you up and don't tear you down. You get caught in a community like in Australia where they say.. I love Australians, I'm not saying all Australians, but in Australia they have a saying that something like a poppy that rises above the others gets cut down. We have people like that in the U.S. that are like that everywhere. Don't be around people like that. Just get away from those kinds of people. Get around people that are like come on poppy, get higher. Get higher. Get bigger. You can do it. I believe in you. That's what God sees when He sees you. He's your Father and He loves you. He's not trying to chop you down, He's trying to lift you up. He's not trying to judge you, He's trying to encourage you. He wants you to see all that you can be, and what faith can do in your life. Number four – when your dream becomes clear, it becomes a goal, and you have gotten one step closer to a brand new life. It's interesting when you think about what the magi did, and what did they say? They said we just follow a star. It's super clear. I wondered, I don't even know if they knew they were going to Israel. That's just the way the star was going, right? They're like oh, it's going that.. let's go. Here we go. There goes the star, we got to follow it, right? Here goes the star. And then they'll be like op, op, it's going that way, time to go, let's go. Time to go.

And think about how very often when it was clear about what you were supposed to do and what you were supposed to achieve, how much easier things became in whatever task it was that you were doing. Abstract is not good. For a little time, its fine, but if you really want to achieve something, make it clear.

God is the Most Joyful Person in the Universe

A goal in your life is like having your hands on the steering wheel of your car. Doesn't matter how good the alignment is, doesn't matter if you're driving a BMW or some beautiful amazing car, you take your hands off the wheel, you're going to crash. Have a goal in your life. Make it clear. The clearer the better.

And number five – this is the last one – the magi, hey look, they had something to give. They had a real treasure. They weren't just there to worship, they were there to give something. Have something to give the world. You say I don't have anything. Get something. Get the treasure inside of you. Build up the treasure inside of you. Spend a little time every day growing as a person. One of the most important things you can do. You can serve people, but if you don't build yourself up, if you're not reading the books, listening to the podcasts, spending the time in prayer, developing yourself the way you know you're supposed to develop yourself, life won't get better.

Life does not get better when we blame others. Life does not get better when we blame our political parties, or our government, or our leaders, or our schools, or our boss, or our work, or a spouse, or a family, life does not get better when they get better. Life gets better when I get better. Life gets better when you get better. And that happens when you develop yourself. In the church, we call that discipleship. Develop yourself every day. Spend twenty minutes, an hour, whatever it is, every day to get this treasure inside of you. Paul says we have this treasure in earthen vessels so that we can show that the power is not from us but it's from God. That's why we develop the power inside of us. It reveals to the world what God can do in an everyday person like you and me.

By the way, as much as I talk about having big goals, don't be afraid of having tiny goals, too. Have tiny goals and humungous goals, just no medium goals. All right? Medium is the worst. Huge goals and tiny goals. Why tiny goals? You have a goal to floss your teeth more. Change the goal to floss three teeth. You floss three teeth, and then if you do four, you're a what? An overachiever! Yes! Wow!

See tiny goals are important because they get us in motion. They get us doing things rather than stuck in our heads all the time. Here's why a magic word we call momentum. Momentum. That is why we have tiny goals that go with our humungous goals. We get a little momentum going. Momentum is like a train. It's hard to start, and it's hard to stop. Keep that train going, faster, faster, more power, go, go, go. You can do it.

God had you in mind with this sermon. And if you want to hear it again, you can go to YouTube and listen to it again. But God wanted you to hear this sermon. That means that God still has a dream for you. God has a star for you. God has a vision for you, if you just look up. It's there waiting for you. Finally, things in our life can't have a second place if God's not in first place. I want to encourage you today to come home to God. Today is a wonderful day to become a Christian. Many of us, we think, oh, maybe some time, I like God, I like this, that. I want to encourage you, my friend, take a leap. Jump into God's kingdom. Trust your life to Him. Live a life at peace with God. All of us have made mistakes in our life. We need forgiveness. We need a fresh start. God offers that to us because Christ was crucified on the cross and raised from the dead three days later. If you trust in Him and believe in Him, you'll be saved. And I want to encourage you to do that today before you leave. You can just say it in your heart. Invite Christ into your heart. And if you do that, I want you to text me the word HOPE to the number on the screen.

Let's pray – We love you, Father and we thank you for your Holy Spirit and your presence here. Thank you, God that you give us big dreams and goals. We love you and we ask for your Holy Spirit to be in our hearts and minds today. Father, we love you and we thank you and it's in Jesus' name we pray, all God's people said, amen. Would you stand with me?

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

Amen. 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.