

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 - 24.12.2024

GOOD MORNING/INVOCATION – Bobby & Hannah

BS: This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. Good evening and welcome to our Christmas Eve service. We're so glad you're here.

HS: Yes, Merry Christmas, friends. It is so, so fun to celebrate with you. How incredible that a Savior, Jesus was born unto the world, and that He is here now with us, and He loves you so much.

BS: Amen. Let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, we thank you so much that you're here with us, and I pray, God that tonight we would receive the word from you we need to hear. That tonight we would get the light of your resurrection power inside of us. We love you and it's in Jesus name we pray, amen.

HS: Amen.

HAVEN: Stand up and turn to the person next you and wish them a Merry Christmas.

SCRIPTURE – Matthew 2:1-2, 7-12 – Hannah Schuller

Matthew 2: After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 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 they worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. Amen.

SCRIPTURE – Luke 2:8-20 – Hannah Schuller

Luke 2:8: And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping a watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told to them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. The word of the Lord.

MESSAGE/PRAYER – Christmas Hope

Well welcome to Shepherds Grove. We're so glad you're here, and we really are glad you're in the house. I want to just let you know that we have church here every Sunday morning at 9:00 and 11, and we'd love to see you here again sometime.

Christmas Hope

I really want to convince you of something this evening in just a brief reflection. I want to convince you that your best days are ahead of you. It's hard, a lot of times in life, especially when you've had a good life, when you've done good things, to feel like the best is behind, like the best is already over, and that what you have left of life is well just the leftovers. And it's easy in life, I've felt this way sometimes and even in college or high school where you think the best time was when I was a kid. It's very easy to get trapped in that way of thinking. And I want to convince you tonight that your best years and your best days are actually ahead of you, but you have to believe. You have to get something in your heart called faith to believe that the best is yet to come.

Christmas Eve is an interesting time in this little gap between Christmas and New Year's, a lot of us are forced to spend a lot of time, well, thinking, because most of us work, usually that space, there's not a lot going on, and you're around your family, which is a good thing, but sometimes that brings up some old negative memories for some people. It also allows you.. you've got all these carbs and things, and you're kind of feeling sluggish; you're not feeling like doing as much. But there comes a time when you begin to think about the year behind, and the year before, or ahead of you.

And so we begin to think about the memories from the previous year, we begin to think about many regrets. Some of us here, this is the first Christmas we're having somebody passed away, or we've lost someone, or a breakup or a divorce. That can be very hard. We have tough things that we had to face and get through, and we think I can never go through something like that again. And a lot of us have some regrets. We had some negative things that we did, or bad decisions we made and we regret those things now, and we wish we could go back, but we can't.

But we have a lot of good memories, too. We have a lot of victories, a lot of successes, a lot of special moments with special people. And so what happens is we begin to think about, well what's the next year going to be like? And because we have some time to finally pause and think, we ask some of these really key questions about our life, and that's a good thing.

Very often in that thinking, here's what we get to: we get to some kind of a resolution, right? All of us are going to lose weight, I'm sure, in January. I know I am. Right? Maybe we start to think about I'll change my job, or I'll ask for a promotion, or I'll ask for a raise, or start my own business. Or maybe I'll change something. Maybe I'll get a new hairdo. That was me doing my new poofy long hair. There are many things we might do.

This is what I want for you to get, if you have some time to think in the next week, this is what I want for you as your friend. I want you to build a vision for your life, not just a resolution. I want you to get a fresh vision for your life, for what your life can be. And let me tell you, my friend, anything is possible for you. Anything is possible for you if you can get it in here and get it in here. I want you to get that tonight. I want you to leave here with a spark of hope that the best days are ahead of you, and that you're going to build a new dream for your year.

I want to tell you a story about an innkeeper tonight. Innkeepers. Men, many years ago, about two thousand years ago or so in a little town called Bethlehem. Bethlehem, by the way, it means a bakery. 'Beth' means a house, and 'lehem' means bread. Its house of bread. So the bread of life is born in a bakery town.

And it's in this town there's a man, we don't really know a lot about him, maybe his grandfather, his father, started an inn and he's carrying on the family business. Maybe he's married, maybe he's got kids and they're taking care of the business. And remember Bethlehem two thousand years ago is a small town. Three hundred people or so. In Oklahoma we call that a one horse town, or a yellow light town where all they've got is a little yellow light when you go through. You don't even come to a complete stop.

And so this guy with this business, his family business, is not used to having what's about to happen to him, which is that the great empire, the Roman republic says that everybody in this new domain of theirs in Israel, has to return to their hometown for a census. And so now everybody who was ever born in Bethlehem and lives in other places are all coming back to Bethlehem, and if they don't have family, they're staying at this guy's place, and things go crazy. Every room is full. It's late at night. Starting to get rowdy, right? They're running out of beer, and people are getting grumpy, but they're cheering and singing together. They're running low on food. They just weren't ready for whatever this is going on.

And now he and his wife and maybe his teenage children, they're running around like innkeepers do, trying to take care of things, trying to solve this problem of all these people, and now someone knocks on the door, and it's a pregnant woman and her husband.

Christmas Hope

And she wasn't just pregnant, she was very pregnant. You guys know what very pregnant is, right? It means you're about ready to burst. You're very pregnant.

And so he has a choice. He sees this woman, who may go into labor at any time, and we often think that the choice he has is to put her up like in the barn, or to send her away. But that's not really his choice, actually. I've thought about this a lot. Where does the innkeeper sleep? And the answer is, he's got his own bed, his own place. It's probably the owner's suite. It probably has a little fireplace. Probably the nicest room in the place. The choice he's making when she knocks on the door is not do I put her in the barn or turn her away, it's do I put her in the barn or do I put her in my room and do I sleep in the barn tonight.

It's an interesting choice that all of us have when Christ knocks at the door of our heart. I think that many of us don't reject Christ, we just put Him in the barn. And we sort of have this ability, this choice in life that's always laid before us. It's not a one-time thing when you're at a Billy Graham crusade. It's something that happens every day about where do we place this opportunity, that is, Christ among us. Do we put it in the barn, so what it means, I call myself a Christian, I go to church, or do we put it in like a deeper place where it's in our bones, it's who we are; it's the word of God incarnate inside of us. And I want to encourage you to get that inside of you tonight.

One of the things I learned, by the way, it's very cold in Bethlehem in the winter. I learned this because the first time I went to Bethlehem, I went with my grandfather, who was the founder of this church and a pastor, also. He had gathered 500 people from all around the world, mainly U.S., Canada and Europe, and they were in Bethlehem on this hill. And it was this amazing thing. I was 18-years-old, I had spikey blonde hair and a puka shell necklace. And I'm there and I'm with all these people, and I remember one of the main thoughts I had was how cold it got. We forget that in Bethlehem, you think oh well it's the desert. The desert should be warm, right? It's not, it's cold. It's three thousand feet above sea level, and can even snow in Bethlehem in the winter. That night it was raining, and it was this amazing experience where as the rain is coming down and they're about to go live to television to have this Christmas Eve service, which would have been the morning here, they were worried because what about the rain. And right when it was supposed to go live, the rain stopped. It really felt like a miracle and all the umbrellas went down.

Where was I? Oh yes, it's cold. It's cold in Bethlehem. And I think about this man, because of how cold it is, that he still kind of did the right thing; he got a place for the woman, and there she gave birth to her baby in a barn, and we know Him as Jesus to this day. But then I think about this man, and I think about him carrying on his life. And he goes on. He continues to have kids, and maybe he has grandkids, and he's a committed Jewish man. He goes to synagogue regularly, he prays, he prays the Shammah, he knows the Bible, he blesses people, he gives money away, he lives a very good life.

And late in life as he gets much older and in his sleep he passes away. And I've told this joke a lot, but I imagine him walking up to the pearly gates, and there's Jesus and there's this kind of like awkward moment where he's looking at the gates, and looking at Jesus, and Jesus says to him, 'so, suppose you want to get in.' This kind of thing.

But here's what I want to tell you about God is that that conversation never happened. He got in. Here's what I know about God. I know that when this very good man, this very sweet innkeeper who maybe didn't put this woman in his own room, he put her in a barn, that this man who lived a good life, that when he got to the pearly gates, the welcome was open arms. We don't serve a God who holds a grudge. He arrived at those gates and the Father saw His son, the innkeeper, that old innkeeper. He loved that man and He was so happy to welcome him home. And I know He embraced him and He loved him.

Everything God asks us to do is for our benefit because He loves us. Everything God makes available to us is to bless us. God loves you, and He will make it possible for you. He will make it possible for you.

Here's what was written two thousand years ago in the ancient script we call the Bible that is the word of God. Here's what was written all those years ago. It says this: all things are possible for the one who believes. All things are possible for the ones who believe. If you don't believe it, it's not possible. If you do believe it, it is possible. Believe it tonight. Leave here with belief in your heart that it's possible for you.

There's loads of Christmas Bible verses I would love to read to you tonight, but we don't have time because there's eggnog and cinnamon rolls waiting for you at home. Right? Me too. If you get the word of God inside of you, here's what's possible for you.

Christmas Hope

Here's the first thing I want to mention, the very first thing that is possible for you. It is possible that God will heal you. That God will heal your body. God will heal your body. God will heal you.

I can't tell you how many times I've heard 'Bobby, my doctor said.' One of the interesting things about being a pastor is you hear stories every day. They're not always good stories, but you get to see how the story carries on. And if I had a dollar for every time someone said 'Bobby, the doctor said I'll never get well.' 'Bobby, the doctor gave me six months.' 'Bobby, the doctor said there's no treatment.' My gosh, I would have like \$56. It happens a lot where God heals the person. God heals the person. They think it's over and then God heals them, or they find a medicine or something happens.

Hannah; God healed my wife Hannah. When she was in her twenties, she just had ongoing health issues, and it got worse and worse and worse. Finally her father, who is a well-to-do businessman, paid ten thousand dollars for Hannah to go to the Mayo Clinic, which is considered one of the finest medical clinics in the world. And it took several days. They did all sorts of analysis and bloodwork and scans and everything, and they came back to her and this is what they said – 'dear Hannah, you have an autoimmune disease. Your body's going to continue to degenerate. We need you to get on medicine for your joints. Your joints are going to begin to break down, your body's going to begin to wither, and there's nothing you can do about it. There's no cure for you.' Now that's heartbreaking when it's the Mayo Clinic saying that. Right?

And we love our doctors. Our doctors heal us and help us and work so hard. But doctors will be the first; doctors are the first to tell you they don't know everything. Right? Some doctors will be the first to tell you they don't know everything. Not all doctors. Hannah is healed, by God. A hundred percent better because of the word of God. So that was 15 years ago, you see. That was 15 years ago, and there is no medicine. It was the word of God.

This happened to me. This is a much lesser thing, but it was a big deal to me. I had a thing for like six months where I couldn't hear. My hearing in my right ear got worse and worse and worse. And you don't know it, but I'm a musician and I do other things. I love my hearing. I know most of you don't care about your hearing, but I like my hearing. I went to an ear doctor and he said 'Bobby, I'm so sorry,' because I used to have ear infections a lot when I was a kid, I had tubes in my ears, of just because of all these infections, 'you're just suffering early onset hearing loss like an old man would. And we're going to have to get you hearing aids.' And I can't tell you, I made an appointment to get hearing aids at 28. I came home, told Hannah, and I just was so crushed emotionally. I crawled into bed and went to sleep.

When I woke up, my hearing was better. I didn't even realize it for a second, I just got up and poured some.. and what I found out was Hannah called her mom, my mother-in-law, and told her, Martine. And Martine stayed up the whole night praying, and arguing with God for my healing. And I woke up and my ear was healed.

Now here's why I like that. I like science, and there is thing in science called placebo. When you hear that someone's praying for you, maybe something inside of you like a sugar pill, I didn't know anybody was praying for me. God heard Martine's cry and God healed me because of the word of God. God can heal you. It's possible for you. It's possible that you're going to be completely well. God will heal you. Believe it tonight.

Here's another thing that's possible if you get the word of God in you. It's possible that you will be able to accomplish that dream you had so long ago. But you have to believe. A dream is an important thing that we harp on a lot in this church. A goal, a vision for your life, its important. Here's why - because as you build your dream, the dream builds you. Dreams build you and we know this from work, too. As we work on the work, the work works on us. It makes us better. And when we have a reason to get up in the morning, we begin to build ourselves up, and that's a wonderful thing, too.

Build more than a resolution this year. Build a dream. Not just for what you can accomplish, but for who you can be. The Bible says that in the last days young men will dream dreams, and old men will see visions. You know what that means? That means in the last days there are either going to be some of the most amazing things accomplished by people like you and me, whether you're young or old. And by the way, if you're old, that's the best time to plant and begin a new dream. Why? Because you have all this experience, and you know all these people, and you understand other people better. You have more knowledge and experience today than you've ever had. And let me tell you, that's all you need, if you get the word of God inside of you.

Here's the last thing. And here's the most important thing that's possible for you. Here's what's possible for you if you believe in the word. It's possible for you to get a fresh start and a new identity.

Christmas Hope

A lot of us, we had a hard childhood growing up. It wasn't always our parents fault. Sometimes, maybe some of your parents died when you were a kid. Some of you, you had a bad school experience, or you had somebody in your life and your parents didn't know, and they hurt you, or something.

But for whatever reason, many of us, we grow up and we become hardened in the heart by life. And many people from our past, they put these labels on us that we still carry deep inside, even though we're grown adults, men and women now. We carry these labels inside of us, and we still find it feeding on us, in a way. And I want you to be free from that tonight. Free from those negative labels to receive what God says about you and what God thinks about you and what we, the church, think about you, that you're a precious son or daughter of God that is capable of anything.

And I want you to get a new identity and a fresh start. You can always get a fresh start in God's kingdom, a brand new start to be at peace with God tonight. Nothing can stop that, if you believe.

I'll just finish with this story that Sheila Walsh; I heard it say the first time. She's a Scottish woman who grew up on a sheep farm. And apparently sometimes when sheep give birth, the ewe lamb, when the sheep give birth, this little baby lamb, for whatever reason, the mother rejects the little baby, and we don't really know why. Sometimes the mother is out of milk and maybe we think it's that, or there's some other issue.

But whenever this happens, the shepherd then has to scoop up this little lamb, and it has a name, it's called a bummer lamb. And so they scoop up the bummer lamb, and the shepherd then raises this little lamb, feeds it a bottle, holds it, sometimes let's it sleep in its bed just like a cat or something. And those bummer lambs, once they get big enough to take care of themselves and don't need milk anymore, they get released back into the fold and they're accepted.

But one of the sweetest things, and this is very common, is that when the shepherd then goes out to the fold, and he goes "sheep, sheep, sheep, sheep, sheep. Sheep, sheep, sheep, sheep, sheep," the very first ones to run to the shepherd are these bummer lambs. Why? Because they know the voice of the shepherd. In fact, they know what he smells like. They know the songs he sings.

And very often, those of us here, maybe you've been hurt by life, or even by religion or had a church experience, that's from Satan. It's not from God. And you might even feel uncomfortable being in church today because of that or something, but I want you to know that very often the people who are the most broken are the ones who can be the most touched by God's love, and can touch others the most because they know what it's like to be rejected or to be broken or to have some same suitcase moving from one hand to the other. And it can become a precious gift that maybe you're a bummer lamb that God would scoop you up and hold you in His arms and take care of you until you're ready to go back out into the fold.

No matter who you are, God loves you just like He loved that old innkeeper. Here's what I know about Jesus Christ: Jesus shows us what God is like. Here's what God is like: He's a healer. God will heal you. God will inspire you and God will save you, but you got to believe here and you got to believe it here. You got to get out of here tonight believing.

You say what if I don't a hundred percent believe? God doesn't ask us to a hundred percent believe. You know how much He asks us for? (CHILD CRIES) Merry Christmas. Here's how much faith God asks from you, okay? One percent. He calls it a mustard seed. He said if you have a little mustard seed and you give that to Him, that's enough. God can use that. So try it.

Come home to God. You don't have to have all the answers. If you feel something stirring in your heart, I want to encourage you tonight to make a decision right where you are to come home to God and He will transform your life. Just as you are. God loves you. He's on your side and everything is possible to those who believe. Amen.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING – Schuller Family

BS: Well I'd like to invite my family forward to light the last candle of this Advent season.

HS: The four candles we lit over these Advent Sundays signify four promises God makes to each of us. They all come together in the last candle in our wreath, the Christ candle. It is written, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be upon his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

God's Messiah brings peace and justice for all, joy of life together and a love which brings us all together to actualize God's Kingdom and take us forward. EVELYN: Advent is a time of preparation, a time to think of others and for sharing life with all of God's children. It is a time to love others as God loved us and to give the world His most precious gift – God's good news, His Son Jesus Christ.

Christmas Hope

JOANNE: Let us pray these words together as a congregation: God of hope, Prince of peace, Provider of joy and the love of God, your goodness is beyond our comprehension. In the union of flesh and spirit, teach us to love this world and all people as you have loved us in Jesus Christ. Come into our darkness and reign. Open our hearts that we all might receive your transforming love. Amen

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

Thank you for joining us tonight. We hope you have a great time tonight wherever it is you're going, whether you're by yourself or with your friends or whatever it is, we just wish you a very Merry Christmas. 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 a very Merry Christmas. God bless you. Love you all.