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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: Welcome friends. We are so happy that you're here. There are many stories in the Bible where victory came as the people worshipped God. If you need victory today, or you want to stand with someone who does, let's glorify the Lord of more than enough right now. You are loved.

BS: Father, we thank you so much that you've gathered us here in your house. We come to lift up the name of Jesus Christ in all that we do. Lord, we thank you that all worship, that if our heart is right and the words are true, that it is belonging and worthy of you. And so we ask for that today, that everything we say and do would lift up your name. We thank you that you have the victory, you have the power, you have the glory. We trust you and it's in Jesus' name we pray, all God's people said, amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – 1. Samuel 16,6-12 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, would you open your Bibles with me to 1st Samuel 16:6-12.

When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The Lord has not chosen this one either." Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the Lord chosen this one." Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The Lord has not chosen these."

So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered. "He is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives." So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; this is the one."

So God sees our hearts and not our stature. I love that. The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE/PRAYER – God Sees Your Work, Not Your Stature

Today's sermon is going to offer you some advice that you're not likely to get from the world, and this advice is advice that will lead to success, fulfillment, joy, achievement, but it's not the world's way, it's God's way.

It's interesting because the way achievement seems to happen in the world or society, very often it's quick and it's a quick flip. This is very common in the world of low interest rates to have new businesses or things that jump up, they sell and the person vanishes or shrinks. This sort of bit-coin style way of investing or doing things.

But in God's kingdom, I find, that Christians in business, for example, churches, organizations, they tend to have a longer term or ought to have a longer term view of whatever it is they're doing. And I tend to see that people who do things God's way, not that there's anything immoral about making a quick buck, but people who do things God's way, there tends to be a.. Malcolm Gladwell called it a tipping point. There tends to be this like, or Taleb, a fat-tailed event, where you have very little growth, and then all of a sudden you have this boom, this big breakthrough.

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And I want to talk a little bit about why I think that happens today, and I want to look closely at the story of King David being anointed, and there's something really important we can learn from this.

So in 1st Samuel, we see a story about how humility and courage overcome. Now a lot of times we don't think of those two words "humility" and "courage" being in the same pie, right, but they are. They're baked together for the life of the believer. And that is really the key theme in 1st Samuel.

Before we get to King David, let's talk about King Saul, who comes just before him. Last week we talked about the kingdom of God, you remember? And we talked about how when Israel asked for a king, they dethroned God from being the king of Israel, and they wanted a worldly king. And they got King Saul. And here's what they got in King Saul. They got someone who is good looking. They got someone who is tall. They got someone who had it all, and yet here was the problem for King Saul – he was just full of pride. Super prideful.

We see that as King Saul continues to reign, God really does give him a chance or an opportunity to prove himself. Oh we see time and time again, as just frankly God is not impressed with Saul. He's just not impressed. As God is watching, He watches Saul continue to bend and break the rules, He continues to see a heart that on the outside looks good, but on the inside is full of pride and fear. And the final straw comes in 1st Samuel 15 where God tells King Saul to do war against the Amalekites, and He says but after you defeat them, don't loot them. Don't loot their stuff. He doesn't say why. God doesn't say why not to loot them, but He just says defeat them but don't loot them. And King Saul, in his arrogance, goes to war with the Amalekites, he defeats them, and then what does he do? He loots them! God specifically goes out of His way to say don't loot them, and he and his men do it, and this is the last straw for God and Saul, the last straw.

Samuel comes before King Saul. Samuel is the prophet, so Samuel comes before King Saul, and what does he say? The Lord saw what you did! He specifically told you don't loot them. Just defeat them. Don't loot them. Why did you loot them?

And here's how King Saul responds: it's not a big deal. What's the big deal? We didn't loot that much. We only took the best stuff. This is what he said. And we only took the best stuff so we can sacrifice it to God. At one point he even says we did it for God. And here he said, we did it so we could have the best sacrifices for God. We did it so we could enrich God's country and God's people. And here's this silly game that Saul is playing with the prophet. He's saying, yes He told us not to, but it's not a big deal. It's not a big deal.

And then Samuel says to Saul, this is it, God is taking this kingdom from you. And at that point, King Saul emotionally and spiritually breaks. He goes from it's not a big deal, who cares, to please forgive me, please have mercy, I didn't mean to do it. And then he finally says why – he says I was afraid of my men. Why was he afraid of his men? That's how soldiers got paid in the ancient world – the spoils of war. You loot the other team, and you divide it amongst everybody, and he was afraid of telling those soldiers "no loot today, because God told me so." You can see why he was afraid.

But here's what happened. It's not that it wasn't a big deal, no doubt Saul wore within his spirit and his mind about making this decision, and in the end, who won, God or man? No good king can live in fear of his men and rule a kingdom, at least not in God's world. I was afraid.

Here's the problem with King Saul's heart – King Saul fears the opinions of people more than God. Can I just pause here and say this is a major danger for anyone who is successful? I have seen that there are authors, pastors, political leaders, business people, also academics who when they start out, they have a principle, they have a value, they have the right heart. They're full of courage. Many of them, they don't care what people think.

And in part, that is why they become so great. That's why they achieve so much, but then they get there, and they are so afraid of what? Losing it. And being so afraid of losing their position, losing their appeal, losing the voter, making a board member mad, making a church member mad, whatever. Whatever organization they're leading, or whatever successful thing they're doing, they become so obsessed with what society thinks, what their people think, what their employees think, what their investors think, whatever, that they're not them anymore! They become a different person. Something weirdly just changes inside of them.

Don't let this happen to you. I think you'll lead a successful life, but watch out for this danger. So much better to have nothing and have the right walk with God, and to be truly you, than it is to have all the kingdoms of the world and lose yourself. Isn't that what Jesus says? What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, but loses his soul? Okay?

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So when Samuel says this to Saul, you're not king anymore, here's the weird thing – Saul remains king for ten more years. The minute Samuel speaks the oracles of God to Saul, in the spirit, Saul is not king anymore. Isn't that weird?

And this happens a lot. This is something you ought to watch out in your life that very often things happen in the spirit first before they happen in the material. The second Samuel says you're not king anymore, Saul's reign was over, even though he was going to have ten more years. It's a weird principle, but in the spirit, Saul is no longer king. His reign is over. What a mystery that is.

So who's the new king going to be? Well, God does have a new king in mind. He wants to reveal it to Samuel, and so He says here's what I've decided (He's talking to the prophet) here's what I've decided, Samuel – I want you to go to Bethlehem, (you've heard of it, another famous guy was born there). I want you to go to Bethlehem, and I want you to go to the house of Jesse and you will see that a member of his family is going to be the next king of Israel.

Samuel shows up to Bethlehem, and remember this is the Old Testament, right? So when he arrives, everybody is afraid. And they say do you come in peace? Do you come in peace? And he says yes, I come in peace. Pretty cool. I wish people did that with pastors. Do you come in..? Do you come in peace? Okay.

He says yes, I've come to have a sacrifice. I'm going to consecrate the Lord's people, we're going to have a sacrifice. Now when you hear sacrifice before the temple period, because remember the temple doesn't get built for another couple generations, remember that sacrifices to the Lord would happen anywhere, and it was effectively a holy barbeque. Anybody here grow up Catholic? Remember a fish fry? It's basically a fish fry, okay, but with meat, because fish isn't meat. Fish is basically the vegetables of the sea, right? Isn't that what they say? So with real meat. It is a sacrifice to God, but the meat that a sacrifice to God gets butchered and served to the people there, and they eat it, actually, and its consecrated. Okay.

So as this happens, the prophet then consecrates Jesse's family. And Jesse, because Samuel asked for it, begins to walk his sons before the prophet Samuel. And the first and eldest son who comes along is tall and handsome and glowing, and what does Samuel say? Surely this is the Lord's anointed! Eliab, yes! And what does God say? I am not impressed. And going back further, what does He say? Here's what people see. People see the outside. Now by the way, that's important. That's the word of God. God doesn't say that's a bad thing, by the way. We're going to see that in just a minute, that people see the outside. You say, oh people shouldn't see the outside. Well guess what – they do. It's good to brush your teeth, comb your hair, look a little nice, if you can. Anyway, I'll come back to that.

People see the outside, but what? The Lord sees the heart. So people are easily tricked by a man being tall, or a woman, being good looking. But God's not impressed by those things. So here's a good question: what impresses God? This is one of the most important questions we can ask in life. If all good things come from God, who wants more good things in your life? If all good things come from God, 'how do we impress God' is a valuable question to ask, to be a fulfilled and successful person in life.

So it's not Eliab, then who is it? Well, Jesse has more sons. He walks six more of seven, six more of seven sons, one after another. Samuel's like oh well that looks pretty good. And God – nope. He looks great.. nope, nope, nope, nope, nope, and then they run out of sons! And Samuel says to Jesse, is there nobody else? Like he doesn't understand, like all the sons, I went through all the sons, is there nobody else? And they all kind of look at each other, and one of them scratches their heads and says oh well I mean I guess there's David. Little David, the 15-year-old. He's a kid, a 15-year-old. Where's David? He's working. Somebody has to watch the sheep and the goats. We can't just let them run around. He's out there taking care of the sheep. And he says we will not begin until he comes here.

What's the first thing we learn from that? David didn't get invited. Any remember being like 12, 13, you got an older sibling, they're having a party, and guess what – baby brother doesn't get invited. That happened to me a couple times. You got to wash the dishes. I got to mow the lawn. I got to do this, I got to do that.

So David didn't get invited. Why? Because he had to work. And for him, this is a huge bummer. Here's one thing we can remember about the ancient world – it was boring. I still remember my grandma Schuller, who grew up on a farm, saying, don't let anybody tell you it used to be so much better. She's like I grew up on a farm and let me just tell you, it wasn't good. It was boring. I hated it. I couldn't wait to get out. There's no air conditioning, there's no refrigerator. There was no movies.

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It was just work, work, work, and boring. Okay. So when there's a party like this, a big barbeque, and you're 15 and you have to work while all your brothers get to go, we call that, in California, we call that a bummer. That's a bummer. We won't start until David comes here!

And what does God say? David enters the room, and God says he impresses me. Wow, isn't that great! He is the one who impresses me. Now here's the first thing it says about him, and don't miss this. It says he was glowing, full of health, very fair and very handsome. Why does it mention that? Here's why – he already said it – people look at the outside. I hate to say it, but it seems clear that not that we've got to look great, but as believers, I do think it is important that we recognize in a secular world, if we want to have an influence and we want to lead, you got to be put together. You say it shouldn't be that way. Well it is. I don't know, take it or leave it. I think I part from most pastors on this one.

I had a friend back in the day, good friend, John, who was super intelligent, big heart for the Lord, really gifted, and just would not put himself together. And I remember, he got a dream job, like double the pay, and the boss said the only thing is, because he had this big gnarly beard, it wasn't trimmed, it was like kind of scraggly, looked like a wizard, but he's like 28, and there's nothing wrong with that, but the boss says, hey I want you to shave your beard or trim it. And John said nope, so he passed on the job because he didn't want to trim his beard. And I said John, you got to get married, because if you had been married, your wife would have said you shave your stupid beard and you go get your better job. See this is why men do better married, a lot of times. Where was I? Oh yes! Okay.

But at the end of the day, that's a little thing, and it doesn't impress or matter to God. And that's the irony of life is there are little things that we have to do to impress our boss. There's little things we got to do to make it in society, but at the end of the day, that should never be the most important thing. It should never be not important at all, but it should never be the most important. That's how I am reading this passage.

What impresses God and it's so simple, isn't it – faithfulness! Just faithfulness. Break that word down, what does it mean? Faithful = full of faith. So someone who is faithful is someone who is willing to be obedient and do the little things that get no credit and no money just because God asked them to. That is full of faith to do that long term and trust like that over time, boom, you're going to have this breakthrough. Why? Because you're just trusting that if I'm in God's will, it's going to work out really well for me. What impresses God? Faithfulness.

Here's what dad Jesse, here's what dad says to little David. David, go feed my sheep. David, do you love me? Go feed my sheep. And what does David do? He goes out there and he feeds the sheep, and he protects the sheep, and he cares for the sheep. It's not just Jesse's sheep, the sheep belong to the whole town, so he's there, he's going to protect these sheep, he's going to guard them. He's a little soldier. That fox comes along and he chases off the fox, even though the fox is barking, and maybe he's like 10 or 8. He goes home – dad, I fought a fox and the guy bit my arm, but I'm okay, and I got the fight.. this kind of story?

And what I believe, and this is just in my mind's eye, the Bible doesn't say this, but it seems clear to me that we live in a kind of world where first David cares for the fox, he fights off the fox, then he fights off the coyote, then he fights off the wolf, and then he's fighting off lions and bears, and this is the process that prepares him.. and we'll talk about this next week, for fighting giants. You got to start with foxes and you'll get to giants. And that's very often why God has us doing the little stupid faithful things is practice and a test of the heart. God cares about the heart. If you're faithful with foxes, God will trust you with giants.

Here's another little weird thing about life, is just how these little stressors, we just need them. It's such a mystery, isn't it? In life, we need the little challenges. We need the little stressors, and we need the stick-to-it-ness and the stretching of that experience for us to grow as a person.

All right, here's what we learn from this story, big time. Apparently God sees it all. Apparently, God sees. When nobody else does, God sees. And here's the real question in life that's going to probably make one of the biggest differences in whether you succeed or fail; whether you live a good life or an awful life. Do you believe that? When nobody's looking and you totally get away with it, do you believe that? When you're not going to get any credit from anybody, nobody's going to know but you do what's right and what's good, do you still believe that? And do you go - I believe God sees that. I think in life that's one of the biggest things is that makes all the difference.

God sees. God sees the visits that you paid to that person, and that nobody.. he didn't care, nobody cared. God sees you changing the diapers, dads, on Father's day, too. Dad's change diapers, too.

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God sees you working late. God sees you attending the courses or the church services. God sees the gifts that you've made that nobody cares about. God sees those things.

And here's what we learn from this is that little things are a big deal to God. They just are. And when we learn that little things are a big deal to God, our faith grows and we recognize that what we think are big things, are no big deal to God. Your disease is no big deal to God. He can heal you. Your financial problem is no big deal to God. He can fix that problem. Your bondage, your addiction, it's not a big deal for God. He can handle those things.

Here's what we handle – we focus on the little things and we respond in faith. Hallelujah. What matters most to God is the heart. The heart is not the emotions. Here in the U.S., when we think of the heart, we see a heart symbol, what do we think of? We often think of romantic love or loving someone. That's not the heart. Actually in Biblical anatomy when you're using metaphors, emotions are in the belly. In fact, this is one reason why you fast. Fasting is training your emotions to not just let the flesh win out. The passions are not considered a good thing in the Bible, usually. Zeal is, but not the passions, anger and this kind of thing. And so we put that to death by fasting.

The heart then is the will. It's who you truly are on the inside. It's what you want, it's what you choose to do. So a man who's on a diet, right? He's faced with a chocolate cake, and then the server makes it worse by adding a scoop of ice cream – vanilla. Madagascar vanilla bean. So, okay. So what is the man's heart? If the man wants and desires the cake, but he refuses it, his heart is right. He's a dieter. He's got the heart of a dieter. He's got the heart of a healthy person, if that's what he needs to do. I did not pre-think this analogy but I hope you get it. I hope you get it. Okay.

It's not our emotions. You don't need to feel guilty for feeling something. You need to feel guilty for doing something, you see? It's your action that matters. It's the will. And it's what you really want, and why you're doing the wicked thing or the good thing that you're doing.

Here's one way to think about it. Saul versus David. Saul did what a lot of people would think is just not a big deal, or is even a good thing. He looted! He looted the defeated army. So that's what's visible, but here's what's invisible – that no one sees, including his men, what's invisible, what's in his heart, he's afraid of his men.

Okay, now David. David is doing something visibly. He's working. He's obeying his dad. He's honoring his father. He's caring for the flock. That's a boring, stupid chore in those days. Nobody cares about that. Nobody's going to honor him, nobody's going to give him a trophy, right? He's just what? So visibly, visibly he's not really doing anything that impressive. But what does God see? The heart. What's invisible. So what is invisible is that David is willing to die for those sheep. It says it clearly. He is willing to.. if a thousand foxes kill him, he died a hero, and God sees that, even though it's a kid. God sees that heart that even though he's doing a menial chore behind the chore, is a heart that is willing to die to fulfill and be obedient to God and to his father. And the Lord just loves that.

All right. You want a blessing? Get a new heart. You want God's blessing? Get a new will. Become a new spirit. Train your heart to love what is good and hate what is evil, especially when nobody's looking. To just love the good, and to do the good, and to be faithful.

All right, let's go a little bit deeper with the last five minutes. Here's the two big life lessons if you walk out of here, if you're taking notes, and I know so many of you are. I can see it. I can see hands moving, but only see it in the spirit, but in the material it's going to happen. Okay. Here's the two big life lessons, especially for achievement, for overcoming, for victory. Number one, a big part of faith is believing the little things matter, especially when nobody's looking.

Famous story at the temple, Jesus is there, a lot of people are coming and they're putting money in the bucket to give to God. Some people put big bags of money, some people put medium sizes of money, some people put in a hundred bucks, some people put in twenty bucks, somebody put in ten thousand bucks, and then a widow comes along, she's impoverished, and she puts in two pennies. And what does Jesus say? Whoa, look there. Look at that. Why? Like nobody sees, nobody.. what? Look, there. Look at what she's doing. Disciples say two pennies, two pennies, who cares about it. Its two pennies. Who cares. No, look. What? She's giving everything. See that's the way God sees. Who can catch this? You're going to catch so much victory in your life. That's what God sees.

Here's the second thing we learn from widow's mite. Jesus didn't reach in the bucket, grab the two pennies and say no, no, no, you don't have to do that. Here you go. Right? He leaves it in the box. Why? Why? Spiritually, the answer as a Christian. Why? Anybody have an answer? When you give, you open up. You open up providence in your life.

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And the more that giving stretches you, the more you open your life. This is one of the best ways He could have financially blessed her was leaving the seed in the ground. Amen? Leave the seed in the ground.

I remember we had some friends, I hope they're not listening to this sermon, because they're still great friends of ours. But we had a debate. They had a lot of debt and we were making a good living, and they said we're going to tweeth, which meant they're going to give five percent instead of tithing. And I was kind of impressed by that. I thought well that's a nice way to do it. You kind of build up. You do five percent and then you'll eventually get to ten percent. And I even worked it into a sermon once, and Hannah goes no! No! You don't teach that. That's not what the word says. And she was like when we were broke, we tithed. When we were up to our necks in debt and student loans and were eating Ramen noodles, did we ever not tithe? And I was like no, we always tithed. So why would you want to bring a curse upon the church. Why would you want to teach people to rob God? Right? Thank you, Hannah.

See that's why we stay on the straight and narrow. So I removed it from my sermon. But I think that's right. You see, it's easy, it's to be like oh I'll just do five percent. I mean God will receive your five percent, but when we compare that to widow's mite, what does it say? Okay. It's not about giving, by the way. I'm talking about your heart; about doing what's right.

Here are some little things, okay? You say little things don't matter to God. Little things aren't a big deal. Here's some little things to think about. A germ. A bullet. A drip in your bathroom while you're on vacation and the thing is plugged. Call that a flooded house. A termite, there's a little thing. What's the big deal? It's just a termite. Here's a little thing – an embryo. Here's a little thing – a seed.

See? Some little things are positive, some little things are negative, but these little things are bigger than the big things. Are you planting? You're planting the seeds? Fields do not respond to hopes and needs and demands, they respond to seeds. Guy looks at the field, and he says I need, I need, I need, I need! I demand, I demand, I demand! I hope, I hope, I hope! What does the field do? How about some seed? Okay.

What seeds are you planting? Whatever you're planting, that's your future. If you have a need, I learned this from Oral Roberts when I was at ORU, great saying because it rhymes, but it's also true – if you have a need, plant a seed. Okay.

Here's the second thing. I want to be very careful about this, but sometimes in life you have to leave the old flock to shepherd the new. We'll see that David didn't stay with that flock forever. When the job was done, God asked him to leave that flock and shepherd a new flock – Israel. Now that takes a lot of faith. Here's the temptation for the faithful person is that when you've been faithful, faithful, faithful, there will come a season where God promotes you, and you have to be willing to leave the old flock for the new. That's hard to do. It's hard to end a season, especially when you're getting a rhythm, when you've got it, when its feeling good, when you're doing it, when you're chugging away. Maybe the money's good, but you know in the spirit, it's time to, whatever, sell the business, or close the thing, or move on from the church and the ministry. That sometimes God calls us to end the class, to end the deal. These things are very, very hard because you have to go almost against your training and act in faith to what God is telling you to do.

See very often, one of the main reasons we don't do it, is because we're people pleasing. I remember when we wanted to leave our old church to plant a church, I remember one of the biggest things was like well what's so and so going to say, and how's this person going to feel, but we just knew God was calling us to do it. Can I just say: people pleasing is not faithfulness to God. Okay? People pleasing is not faithfulness, and as a pastor, if you're a pastor or you're a good leader, you love the people you lead, so very often it's hard to make those changes. When it's time to launch, launch.

Here's why – everybody says what's my calling, God? What's my calling? What's my calling? I need to know my calling. And you'll hear me say this over and over, you don't have one calling in God's kingdom. You have several. And those callings fold into one another. They fold into each other. See David could not be king of Israel without first being a pretty good shepherd, you see, and being a fighter, and learning how to fight a bear. I can't fight a bear, can you? He figured out at 15 how to kill a bear. So that's pretty cool. Walk through the open door and watch what God will do.

All right, finally, I just want to give you an opportunity to receive Christ as your Lord and Savior. I know a lot of us here, we go to church every week, but some of us, we need to get right with God, and we need to trust our lives to Him, and I want to encourage you to make that decision today.

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You can become a believer today, you can be saved right where you are, right now, making a decision to invite Christ into your heart. And if you do that, text me the word HOPE to the number on the screen.

Will you stand with me? Let's pray together. Some of you here, you feel like why are you doing these stupid little things, but you feel like God's calling you to do it. God sees. Okay? God sees it. God sees you caring for those people, He sees you planting, He sees you doing the work, He sees you being faithful. I want to just ask that God increases your faith today, that He increases what's possible in your life; that He helps you to see the open door; that He gives you the courage and the boldness to walk through.

Raise your hands with me – Lord, we lift up our lives to you, and we thank you that you care as much about our lives as we do. We reach out to you, God and we pray that you would bless the seeds that we plant. We pray that they would grow. We pray that they would bear fruit. And Lord, I pray over my congregation. You've given me authority over this group of people. I pray that chains would be broken in their lives, and I trust that they are, in Jesus' name. I thank you that disease is healed. I thank you that sins are forgiven. I thank you that marriages are restored. I thank you that truth is established rightly by your word in the hearts of the disciples in this house. And Lord, I thank you that you would increase and not decrease our faith. That we could walk boldly in the world with love, with compassion, with faith, with courage, that we would love what is good and hate what is evil. And I pray it in the strong name of Jesus Christ, and all God's people said amen. Thank you, Lord.

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.