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GOOD MORNING/INVOCATION – Bobby & Hannah

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

HS: And it is a good and beautiful morning, and we are so, so happy that you're here. Today let's praise our way to victory as we worship our God of more than enough. We're so happy you're here. You are loved.

BS: It's a nice, warm morning here in Southern California. If you're a fan of the heat, congratulations. If not, condolences. Welcome! We're so glad you're here. Glad you made it. And let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, we thank you so much for all that you're doing in our lives. It's easy to not see what you're doing. Lord, we love you and we thank you, 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 17,41-49 – Hannah Schuller

Let's feed our faith this morning. Would you open your Bibles with me to 1st Samuel 17:41 through 49. Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. He looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him. He said to David, "Am I a dog that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!" David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands. I will strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. And those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or by spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands." As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine in the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground. The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Please stand with me. We're going to say this together. Hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving from the Lord. Let's say this together: I'm not what I do. I'm not what I have. I'm not what people say about me. I am the beloved of God. It's who I am. No one can take it from me. I don't have to worry, I don't have to hurry, I can trust my friend Jesus and share His love with my neighbor. Thanks you can be seated.

MESSAGE/PRAYER – Goliath is Weaker Than You Think

Well today I'm going to share with you an epic story. You've probably heard it before, but maybe not. And baked within that story is a philosophy; a philosophy that will transform your business, your ministry, your marriage, your leadership, what you do in life. And on the likely chance that you have heard this epic story, my guess is you learned the wrong lesson, and my hope today is that you'll walk away with the right lesson from this. It goes a little like this. There's two nations who are at constant war with one another. The first group, you might have heard of them, the Israelites. The Israelites are a desert, fierce, pious people who have a few hundred years ago emerged from Egypt, come across into what they call the Promised Land in the Levant and conquered the Canaanite people, taken their lands, and settled there in a new kingdom called Israel and Judea.

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And to the south, let's see, it would be the southwest, along the ocean. Remember, the Jews hate the ocean. This is a thing throughout the Bible. They're desert people. There's a reason for that. They don't like the coast, and a lot of people's in the ancient world don't like the coast because even though it opens you up to trade, it also opens you up to pirates is the word I'm looking for. And there is such a people, the Philistines. The Philistines were a pirate people from the island of Crete who are a Greek speaking, Greek cultured people. We often think of them as being Middle Eastern. They were more Greek, and they came at the end of the historical thing.. the collapse of the bronze age around the twelve hundreds. They came and settled in that lower left area of the map. We often think of as Gaza. They settled there and created a new kingdom, the Philistinian kingdom. And make no doubt about it, they loved to pillage, they loved to do pirate-y things, all the things you think of pirates doing, this was what the Philistines loved to do. And you see that leading up to this story there are many different Israeli war lords, or Israelite war lords that fight these guys. And you have all these stories. And so finally it gets to this great story. These Philistines now are starting to creep up into the mountain regions of Israel where Jerusalem and Bethlehem and other areas are, and they're raiding and then they're coming back. And finally two armies are assembled, and they reach each other – the Philistine and Israelite army, and they're at an impasse because they're both on two separate hills, and between those two hills is this sort of steep valley that goes on either side, and because both militaries are about the same size and strength, if one descends down the hill to go up the other hill to attack the other, they'll be in a weakened position. So they're at an impasse. And now they're starting to get bored. Here they are in the valley of Elah. If you go there today, and back then, its vineyards and cattle. Very beautiful place, actually, but it becomes a very ugly place. They have this old tradition you see back in those days, you might have read it in the Iliad and the Odyssey and other places, that if two armies who can't settle and won't fight each other, can't seem to resolve the issue, very often they'll have their two greatest soldiers come out and fight one another. And the rule is whoever loses that fight, the other army has to do what? Has to join them. So, the Philistines try to enact this tradition. They have this huge hulking figure that stands at nine feet nine inches tall, and this man goes down into the valley with his army and he stomps down, he says fe, fi, fo, fum, if you read it in the Greek or in the Hebrew. And he shouts up at the armies of Israel, and says 'send your greatest soldier to come down and fight me.' For 40 days, every day, he does this and he curses God every time, and he curses the Israelites, and he mocks them, and it says every time that the Israelite army is full of terror because of what they're seeing. Just remember that. It's because of what they're seeing, which we're going to see in a bit is smoke and mirrors. This guy Goliath we read.. the narrator wants to tell us something interesting about him, and that is that he stands at six cubits tall. Everybody say six. (AUDIENCE – six) And his spearhead is six hundred shekels in weight. Everybody say six hundred. (AUDIENCE – six hundred) And he's wearing six pieces of armor. Everybody say six. (AUDIENCE – six) What are you hearing? Don't say it, not in church. Telling us something very clear. And then he tells us that his armor is scaly like a serpent, right? And that that armor weighs five thousand shekels. Remember in the Bible, if it ever says a number, there's a reason. If it says many or few, you can blow it off. But if it says a number, that's usually a reason. It's a symbol of something greater. Five thousand is the number for mankind. I read it as evil mankind. Satan incarnate, right? The serpent is in a man. And so here's this evil wicked man and makes no doubt about it, Goliath was a wicked, horrible, evil man. And he wanted to do nothing but tear the Israelites apart. Now there's a shepherd boy and the shepherd boy has seven older brothers. He's not old enough to be in the army quite yet; he's probably 15 or 16, but he's got seven older brothers. They're all in the army, and their dad is worried about them. The dad, Jesse. And so every day, Jesse gives little David, young David, he's not so little – 16, right? Not so little. Gives him some bread and some cheese to bring to the captains of the army, and the whole purpose is not just to run these errands but to have this young shepherd boy kind of be like a little spy and figure how are his brothers doing. And so every day the shepherd boy comes back and he says my brothers are fine, then the next day, the dad wakes up, he's kind of worried, he's like here's some bread and some cheese. Go bring it to them. He comes back, the boys are fine, the boys are fine, every day. One day the shepherd boy arrives, and he sees this giant, and no doubt you've picked apart what story I'm telling. David and Goliath, that's right! Its David and Goliath. He shows up, David, and he sees this giant, and he's insulted. And he says why are you letting this clown yap like this? That's in the Greek or in the Hebrew. They say oh, this is Goliath, etc., etc., and they tell him the reward. Here's the reward. Its three things.

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King Saul is so sick of this guy, he says here's three things I will give to any soldier who kills Goliath. Number one: great wealth. Number two: he can have my daughter's hand in marriage. And number three, for all you Republicans in the house, no taxes. Hey! And so David says, great wealth, princess, no taxes, huh? No taxes. Just kidding. No. Who here would kill Goliath for no taxes? So what does he say? He says I'll kill him! David – I'll kill him! Piece of cake. No problem. And of course you know the story. One of the interesting things that you'll pull from the story immediately is David's confidence. David has no doubt in his mind that he will win this fight. He has zero doubt at all. And very often when we read this story, we think that's David's youthful zeal. It's his naivete about life. Maybe we can even say he's kind of dumb, young teenager that doesn't know a guy that's nine feet, nine inches tall, four hundred fifty pounds of muscle. Maybe it's that. But no, David's none of those things. He's not naïve. He knows he can win, and here's why. Here's what he says. He says I have killed lions, and I have killed bears. How many of you know it's not likely that any human being, no matter how big they are, is going to beat a bear or a lion in the hand to hand combat. But David did. David says I've killed lions, I've killed bears, and the final insult – who is this uncircumcised Philistine? Now thank you for laughing. Some of you may not have been in church before. Some of you might be European and you're a little sensitive to that word. A big difference between Europeans and Americans. I won't get into it. But here's the point that David is making. Two things. Number one – I've killed lions and bears. He has a skill. David is a killer. David's a killer, and we're going to see this in a bit. He is a killer. He is tough as a coffin nail. And number two – David, uncircumcised what he's referring to is circumcision in Judaism is a sign of your covenant. It's given to a baby boy when they're eight years old when he's named, and it's a sign that this child is under the protection of the covenant of God's word. Now today as Christians, we use baptism as a sign of that covenant. Thank goodness. Especially if you convert as an adult, right? Okay, no more jokes. But David is relying, number one, on his own personal skill as a warrior, but number two, he's relying on God's word; God's covenant. The honesty of God. The faithfulness of God. The truth of God. The fact that he knows God does what God says. The only thing required from us is faith. Did I already get the slide circumcision is a sign of God's.. yes, covenant. Okay, remember that. Okay, so Goliath is down there, he's taunting. David goes to King Saul and he says let me kill him. And Saul is like oh, I don't know, you're kind of small, you're just a lad. He's like put on my armor. And he puts the armor on and he looks like Wart from Sword in the Stone. And he takes it off and he says no, I can't do this. And so he goes down, he picks five great stones from a riverbed. He takes his staff, and his sling, and he approaches Goliath, right, in the valley. And what does Goliath say? First of all, he's insulted that they would send such a, in his view, such a weakling to fight him. But he says to him, am I dog that you would come at me with sticks. Everybody say sticks. (AUDIENCE – sticks) Now he's not holding sticks, he's holding a stick. So why does he say sticks? We'll get back to that in a minute. What does Goliath say to David? Come here, lad, and I'll give your flesh to the birds. Then he does an obscene curse against David before his pagan gods. David, unfazed, gives his timeless response and it's in the word of God in 1st Samuel 17:45. "David said to the Philistine you come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord almighty, the God of the armies of Israel whom you have defiled. The day, this day the Lord will deliver you into my hands and I'll strike down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and wild animals and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those who gathered here will know that it is not by the sword or by the spear that the Lord saves, for the battle is the Lord's and he will give you all into our hands." Anybody facing a Goliath today? Anybody in a battle? Anybody facing a sickness you didn't expect? Anybody facing a challenge in your family you didn't expect? Anybody facing something in your school? Anybody get a big setback in your business? Someone here being sued unfairly, unjustly? Someone here got cheated? Somebody here got betrayed? Somebody here was stolen from? Somebody had their house broken into recently? Somebody here isn't sleeping well. Right? This happens in life. Everybody repeat after me: the battle is the Lord's. (AUDIENCE – the battle is the Lord's.) Now say it like you want to win. The battle is the Lord's! (AUDIENCE – the battle is the Lord's!) Say the battle is the Lord's! (AUDIENCE – the battle is the Lord's!) Amen. This Goliath in your life is nothing for God, and it's nothing for you. You've got this. You have what it takes and God has even more, amen? The battle is the Lord's, and then it all happened so fast. David, in a matter of seconds, very simply does what he's done a million times. Grabs a rock, puts it in a sling (WHOOSH, WOOSH, WOOSH) throws it at Goliath, hits him in the head. Probably Goliath is in the middle of saying something stupid.

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Goliath falls face first unconscious into the dirt, David runs at him, pulls Goliath's sword out of his own sheath, cuts his head off, wrenches it from Goliath's body, and by the hair, holds it before the Philistine army, and they all flee and run. The Israelite army goes what's this? Because this is like five seconds. What's this? And they all cheer in a roar and in one motion they all move into a charge to chase the fleeing Philistine army, and the enemy is scattered and they pillage their camp. What a great story. And by the way, David takes the head to Jerusalem. It's like his little trophy. It's a different world. It's a different world. David and Goliath, here's the first thing we got to learn about this story. You probably learned this story wrong. Here's the moral of the story. In this story, David and Goliath is not an underdog story. We're going to learn that. Even in the natural, it's not an underdog story. David and Goliath is not an underdog story. You know who the underdog is in this story? It's Goliath! You know who's in the weakest position? Even in the material world, it's Goliath. Let's take a scientific view for just a minute. This is not an underdog story, it's a looks are deceiving story. And looks are deceiving. We studied this in seminary and Malcolm Gladwell kind of make it famous. But here's Goliath, nine foot nine inches tall. He's huge. Everything is huge about Goliath. His muscles, he's big, his head is huge, his body is massive, his arms, even his hands are scary. One of my favorite pictures ever is of Andre the Giant, one of my favorites from the 80's, holding a can of bear. Check this out. Now look at those hands. So no doubt, Goliath had a similar size of hand. Now imagine that hand around your neck. That's not a good situation, is it? But what's probably happening is Goliath, being so tall, has a disorder called acromegaly, which is rare but even happens today. And it's what happens when a benign tumor grows on your pituitary gland, and your body continues to release growth hormone, and you continue to grow muscle, everything. But everything continues to grow in an abnormal way. So even though you look big and you are big, and you are strong, you have a lot of weaknesses, too. Some famous people who have it. You might know Tony Robbins, the great Tony Robbins has acromegaly. That's why his voice is so deep. If you've ever seen him, he's pretty tall. World's tallest man, Robert Wadlow has it. And yes, Andre the Giant had it, as well. There's a great documentary on Andre the Giant, who's apparently even though he was always a villain in the wrestling things, it's all a show. He was a really sweet and good guy. All of his friends really liked him. But one of the things they noticed about him is that he was constantly suffering because of this disorder. In fact, the reason he's holding a beer can is because the Andre the Giant drank consistently in order to manage his pain. He had pains in his back, his ribs, his hands, his arms, even his face, his organs. It all hurt for Andre the Giant. The symptoms of giant-ism or acromegaly are double vision. Notice how when Goliath, he says, what did he say, stick or sticks? There's one stick. But he's seeing, what? Sticks. Can't see very well. Another symptom is limited joint mobility. Another one is extreme fatigue. Notice how he has somebody else come out and carry all of his stuff for him? Well that's a little weird, isn't it? And constant pain. No doubt, Goliath was strong and big, no doubt he could swing a spear, no doubt if he punched you in the face it would hurt, but you wouldn't recruit someone with acromegaly into the NFL. They're not fast, they're not quick, they can't see very well. And although they're treasured by God, except for Goliath, they're not very capable. Now look at David. We always think of David as a little boy. He's a 16-year-old fit as a fiddle athlete who's a killer. David is no joke. In the ancient world, there's three types of soldiers: heavy infantry, which are the ones that are the tanks that sort of take a lot of the pain like Goliath. There's also cavalry, and then there's artillery and artillery's usually made up of two different types. One is archers, right, for the long range, and the other is slingers. Now slingers, don't think like maybe you had one of these when you were a kid, the slingers. It's not like that. A slinger is like a type of leather or it can be different types of materials. Long thing, you put the stone in the middle like this, and you swing it like this, and then release. And these guys were incredibly good at killing. In fact, studies that have been done on this, the expert slingers, when they launched the rock from their sling, the rock would be moving at a hundred feet per second. They're incredibly accurate. In fact, we know that back then they could knock birds, like in flight, they could knock them out of the air, and hunt them with stones. More than that, the river rocks that David used are twice the density of most rocks on the planet. Almost the density of lead. And in fact, an expert said that the stopping power against David's stone would have been the same stopping power you'd need for a 45-caliber pistol. And in fact we see that when the rock hits Goliath, it doesn't bounce off his head, it embeds in his skull. So although Goliath was heavy infantry and at close range, was very dangerous and probably very difficult to wrestle or fight with, Goliath was only great if you play by Goliath's rules! Close combat. But if you play by David's rules, and they did, Goliath was a sitting duck. He was just a sitting duck. He was just waiting to be killed. Goliath was the underdog.

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Goliath was the one in the weakened position. Goliath was all smoke and mirrors. A ghou. Nothing more. God has a different set of rules for us than many of the enemies and competitors we face in life, in business, in school, in music, in art. There are different rules for believers, and they work better. I want you to trust that the rules that God has when you're fighting, when you're winning, when you're living, whatever it is, these rules that God has for us, they actually work better. And resist the temptation to fight like Goliath. Okay, so here's some lessons we can learn that are really useful from this David and Goliath story. Here's the first one: what seems big and scary is often slow and fragile. I am now old enough that I can look back at some of these major companies – I went to business school – and I was in love with some of these amazing companies. Can I tell you the names of the companies I was in love with; that I probably, if I'd had money, would have invested in, that I was thinking about going to work for. Here's some of them. Here's some of the businesses I really was impressed with: Lehman Brothers. Blockbuster. Kodak. Sears. Enron. K-Mart. Now we look back on these gigantic multibillion dollar companies that employed tens, maybe sometimes hundreds of thousands of people all over the planet, that look invincible, and now we go ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. But you don't understand in the 80's, in the 70's, in the 90's, these companies looked invincible. Imagine me twenty years from now giving this exact same sermon, and I hope I do, and instead of these names, I'm saying Apple, Exxon, Disney. Disney's had a rough year. And others. Right? And others. Imagine that feeling today. These companies look so big and so invincible, it seems like there's no way they could ever collapse, and yet they do, and it's not just businesses, its kingdoms, and it's not just kingdoms, its churches. Its countries. I still remember when the Crystal Cathedral collapsed, which was from God, and which was a blessing to the world, but I remember there was a sense of this place is invincible. It's going to stand forever. It will never go away. You know how long it took to go from that attitude to bankruptcy? It was about two years. Two years. And isn't it interesting how quickly and how suddenly and how surprisingly the mighty fall and collapse. It is so strange. What seems so big and so amazing and so invincible is in fact very fragile, very delicate, and only requires a small stone to bring down like Goliath. Later this summer, I'm going to be giving some sermons from the journeys of Paul, actually. It's going to be great. And normally we go to Israel. Israel's at war. I tried to convince Hannah to let me go to Israel again, and she wouldn't let me. I said it'll be fine. We'll just go for a little bit, and we'll come back. She's like it won't be fine. I said it'll be fine. She said can you bring Haven with you? And I said no way, I'm not bringing Haven there. She says Haven can't go, you can't go! So we'll be in Greece. But one of the themes that you see from places like Greece is you look around and if you study the history, you think these kingdoms looked invincible. They were gilded, beautiful, covered in gold and marble, tapestries, food, armies, massive armies. Sometimes in the millions. Massive amounts of supplies. Invincible and many of them just collapsed overnight. Incredible. You go there now and you go to these archaeological sites and you say oh, this is amazing. But what you're looking at is trash. The temple of Apollo in Athens, we'll see it, it's just three pillars. This thing used to be magnificent. People would worship in the thousands. Its trash. Its garbage. But see what God does can't be turned to garbage. What God teaches us can't pass away with time. We've been proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ for two thousand years and we will continue to proclaim it till the Lord returns. And the word of God is four thousand years old and it stands the test of time. And long after the nations of the world have passed away, the gospel will stand true. Thank you, Lord. Don't trust in big things. Don't be afraid of big things. Don't be afraid of smoke and mirrors. Here's what you can put your trust in: you can put your trust in God and in His way of living. That's not just piety, that's not just me being a pastor; that is practical advice. Its practical advice for your business, its practical advice for your ministry. Sometimes being small and quick is better. In fact, in business and in ministry it oftentimes is, or anything else you're doing. Big things like Goliath I have realized are very often slow, and blind, and they only have one way to play the game. You can play the game any way you want, as long as you play it by God's rules. Isn't that interesting? Don't compare yourself to Goliath's. Why? Because you'll lose. Don't try and put on a bunch of armor and a spear and go down there. Fight a different way. Here's who you can compare Goliath to. Just compare him to other Goliath's. We compare Rome to Athens, right? We compare Athens to Carthage. You probably don't even know what these places are, do you. They're massive kingdoms that have evaporated from the earth. I'm not going to show off and list them all. That's stupid. Okay, let's keep going. When we're fighting the battles and the mountains in life, there is so much we just don't see. And here's the good news – you just don't have to see. You can just trust the Lord. And you can trust this. You can trust this. Here's what you can trust. You can trust what's happening in here and what's happening in here.

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What is happening in here and what is happening here? Are you developing? Are you becoming? Are you learning? Are you getting the heart? Is your heart changing? Are you developing the practices? Are you getting better? If you're getting better, I promise you, you are on the path to victory. Here's what the world says – my marriage will get better when my wife or husband gets better. But here's what God says. Your marriage gets better when you get better. We hate hearing that. Here's what we think – my business will get better when I get better employees. No. My business will get better when I become a better leader. Here's what we think – my church will get better, my this will get better, my that will be better, this person's fault. Here's when your life gets better. Your life gets better when what? When you get better. And God has a path for you. Here's what I used to think. Life is too hard. There's too many giants. There's too many Goliath's. And God says I've given you a sling and some rocks. Go to work. And I said I don't have armor! I don't have a spear! Okay. Don't count yourself because you're small. Very often, small is better in every aspect of life. Don't count yourself out because you're an outsider. Very often, it's the outsiders that change the world. Remember in high school how much you thought and how important it was to be the star, to be famous, or to be popular? And now you don't care at all, and how stupid you think that was. And how all those famous athletes on your football team now work for all the nerds? Remember that? And those same nerds work for that outsider guy who played guitar and got C's? Don't worry about being an outsider. Don't count yourself out because of how things look. Don't count yourself out because of your feelings. Your feelings mean nothing. I mean the world is so obsessed with feelings and emotions. Here's what matters: the word of God. That's what's true. That's what's true. I liken it to being on a flight. I often have this fantasy of being on a commercial flight with Benjamin Franklin, and I don't know why it's always that combination. Very often when I'm flying, I'm like man, Benjamin could be here. Like if we could get a time machine, are you tracking with me? Get a time machine, you put Benjamin Franklin in the time machine. You bring him to this world. And you take him on a commercial flight. And he freaks out. Wow, this is amazing. And then there's some turbulence and the thing is bouncing. And you're like Benjamin, relax. It's just turbulence. But he's like we're going to crash and die. Now you may not be Benjamin Franklin, but you may feel that way when you're feeling turbulence on a plane. But can I tell you a flight.. in turbulence you are safer on a flight in turbulence than you are sitting in your own home. Did you know that? You're more likely to be shot through the wall while sitting at your desk than you are to be in a commercial flight. But we don't think that way. And in fact whenever I'm in a commercial flight, as much as I've flown and it starts to be turbulent, and I get worried, I just look at the flight attendant, because they've done it a million times. And what do they do? They're like 'here you go, Mr. Schuller. Here's your cup of coffee.' Right? They're not worried at all. If they're not worried, I don't need to be worried, and it's always been true. Why? Because what you're feeling doesn't matter. Doesn't really matter. I mean it matters to God, and it matters in some ways, but not really. Emotions can deceive us. Fear can deceive us. Have faith. In the material what you're seeing and what you're facing, it looks bad, but in the spiritual God has already given you the victory. Do you believe? Do you believe? Don't try and impress people, just keep getting better and Goliath can't stand a chance if you do that. My friend, stand with me. There's someone here facing a Goliath and maybe you came to church, you're watching just because you just don't know what to do. Here's what you can do. You can trust the Lord and you can work on yourself. God's going to break it, God's going to win it, God's going to do it. Lift your hands with me. Lord, we come before you in Jesus' name, and I pray with the authority that you've given me, that every chain would be broken right now. Thank you Lord for those who need to pay the bills, that the opportunity will come, the money will come. For those that are facing sickness, the health will come. For those that are facing division, the healing will come. For those that are fighting something on the inside, I thank you that deliverance will come. We cast down any negative emotion or evil, anything that any assignment that is against anyone under the sound of my voice, Lord, that you will come and break chains. We thank you that you see what we can't see. We thank you that in the spirit, you've already achieved the victory. We thank you that because of the cross and resurrection, we don't have to worry about our past. We thank you that we stand before you, you your beloved children, and I pray, God, that when you open the door for the people under the sound of my voice, that they would walk through it and run through it. And they would run with victory, and we pray it in the strong name of Jesus, and all God's people said, amen. Thank you, Lord.