

# HOUR OF POWER OF 13.07.2008

## PROGRAM OPENING/TRUMPET FANFARE/V.O.

VO: Today on the Hour of Power: Marian Hammaren lost her only daughter Caitlin just one year ago in the tragic Virginia Tech shooting. It started her on a journey of faith.

MARIAN: When things get tough, to really have hope and faith. I can absolutely attest to the reason why my husband and I are still standing and still standing strong was through the works of God.

VO: Then the amazing voice of American Idol star Chris Sligh.

CHRIS: (SINGING) Let me a vessel pure and holy, perfect in Your eyes.

VO: Then is anxiety pulling you down? Let Donna Schuller plant the seeds of peace in your heart.

DONNA: A young man had a shirt on and it said "peace is a state of mind." It was a simple t-shirt and I thought wow that's great. What a great message. And I thought a little more about it and I thought you know it could say peace is a state of mind or prayer is a state of mind.

VO: Join us today for the best hour on television, the Hour of Power with Robert Schuller.

## HYMN - "Joyful, Joyful.."

Joyful, joyful, we adore You, God of glory, Lord of love; Hearts unfold like flowers before You, opening to the sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the dark of doubt away; Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day. Amen! Amen! Amen!

## GOOD MORNING/INVOCATION - RAS

RAS: Good morning! And welcome to the Crystal Cathedral. Well I know that you are here today because God wanted you to be here. Some of you may be thinking that you're here today because your mother wanted you to be here and that may be true as well. However, I know that there's a far greater reason that you're here and I'm convinced that as you hear the words that God wants you to hear today, you're going to laugh and you're going to cry. You're going to be uplifted and you're going to be motivated and you're going to be inspired. And so it's a powerful, wonderful opportunity to gather together and to feel the electricity of life that's here, that has been released by the love of God.

So I want to give everybody an opportunity right now to express their love for one another, that God has given to us by reaching out and saying God loves you and so do I. So would you please do that right now? Shake hands with a couple of people and say God loves you and so do I. Well it gives me great joy this morning, thank you, to introduce my wife Donna who is actually going to be presenting the morning message, and so I'm very honored to have her here this morning to share a very positive message.

So with that, would you please join me for a moment of prayer? Dear Heavenly Father we thank You that You're a God who loves us. You're a God who cares about us. You're a God who has a special message for us today. And so as we join together hand in hand and heart in heart and soul in soul, we know that You are here because that's Your promise. And so we rely on Your promises always and forever, Amen.

HYMN - "Medley – For the Beauty/Fairest Lord Jesus"

For the beauty of the earth, for the beauty of the skies, for the love which from our birth over and around us lies. Lord of all, to You we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child. Friends on earth and friends above, for all gentle thoughts and mild. Lord of all, to You we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature, Son of God and God the Son, truly I love Him, truly I serve Him, light of my soul, my joy, my all.

Fair is the sunshine, fairer still the moonlight and all the twinkling, starry host; Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer, than all the angels heaven can boast.

Beautiful Savior, Lord of the nations, Son of God and God the Son! Glory and honor, praise, adoration, to Christ the Lord forevermore!

SCRIPTURE – Psalm 33:1-9 - RAS

RAS: Please be seated. This morning I'm going to be reading from our new Power for Life Bible, which is only available here at the Crystal Cathedral and I want to encourage you to open your bibles if you would like to, to Psalm 33, and in our Power for Life Bible, that's on page 575 and I'm going to read this beautiful words of God, and so I want you to hear these words:

Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise Him. Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to Him on the ten-stringed lyre. Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully and shout for joy. For the word of the Lord is right and true; He is faithful in all He does. The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of His unfailing love. By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, their starry hosts by the breath of His mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; He puts the deep into storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the people of the world revere Him. For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded and it stood firm.

And so the word of God is true, it's real, it's reliable.

ANTHEM - "Glorious Everlasting"

Glorious, glorious, glorious everlasting. I will praise You, O Lord, among the people, I will sing unto You among the nations. I will praise You, O Lord, among the people, I will sing unto You among the nations. I will praise You, O Lord, among the people, I will sing unto You among the nations. I will praise You, O Lord, among the people, I will sing unto You among the nations.

I will sing, I will praise You, O Lord. I will sing, I will sing unto You. I will praise You, O Lord, I will sing unto You. I will praise You, O Lord, I will sing unto You.

Glorious everlasting! I will praise You, I will praise You, praise You among the people. I will praise You, I will praise You, praise You among the people. I will sing unto You, O Lord. O be exalted, O God, O be exalted, O God above the heavens, O be exalted, O God, O be exalted, O God above the heavens. Let Your glory, let Your glory be above the earth, let Your glory, let Your glory be above the earth, glorious, glorious, glorious everlasting! Amen!

RAS THANK YOU TO CATHEDRAL CHOIR

RAS: Thank you choir, thank you orchestra.

INTERVIEW – MARIAN HAMMAREN

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RAS: ROBERT A. SCHULLER      MH: MARIAN HAMMAREN

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RAS: This morning I have the opportunity to introduce you to a woman whose life has been tragically touched and as a result of this has gone through healing in a special way. You probably remember where you were when you heard about the Virginia Tech Massacre. The world watched in shock on April 16th, 2007 as over 30 innocent college students, staff and faculty were shot and killed on the Virginia Tech Campus. For reasons that will never be known or adequately explained, a young man decided to wreck havoc on an entire community that day, and that ripples were felt all around the world. My guest today, Marian Hammaren lost her only child, her daughter Caitlin in that tragic event. She's here today to share how the power of God has given her the strength to go on and to grow stronger. Please welcome with me, Marian Hammaren. It's been a little over a year.

MH: That's correct.

RAS: And this past year you've gone through a lot. So maybe the best way to start this interview is take us back to that tragic day. How did you hear what happened?

MH: Actually my husband had heard it on the news. I was on my way to work and by the time I got to work, he'd already called the office and said something's going on. In the meantime, several of her friends had already called us to say have you heard from her? And we had a method of communicating every morning, where we would text message and it got to the point where I think she felt it was a little bit of an annoyance that mother was always checking in. So I had told her you know we know you're busy and you know you're moving on with your life so just send us a text message back that says ok. And then that wasn't happening so I was just like okay just send me an O and that would be our form of communication. But that day we did not receive any text message. That would be very unusual for her. Her friends also could not reach her that were there on campus. Again, very unusual. So we pretty much knew that we had a problem.

RAS: That something serious had happened.

MH: Yes.

RAS: What was your prayer at that point? Were you praying that she lost her cell phone or something?

MH: Absolutely I was. I was praying that maybe they had ushered them out of that building and it was in such a rush that she didn't have it, or that she'd lost it. As the day progressed and we realized the significance of the lack of communication we were really just hoping for a gurney in a hospital.

RAS: But that's not what happened.

MH: No.

RAS: How did they inform you?

MH: We didn't know. My husband and I on the way down to Tech from New York, we pretty much already knew. We had children on the ground going to all the hospitals; we'd been speaking to the police. Nobody would confirm it until we reached Tech and probably about 10:30 that night. We had left New York around 11:00 that morning and about 10:30 that night we were informed by the police.

RAS: Well I read that you saw a police officer and a chaplain walking towards you. And that's when you really knew what was happening.

MH: Oh absolutely.

RAS: And since then you've gone through a lot of emotions. What was the first emotion you went through?

MH: The very first is what God gives you in regards to you're just numb. You need to get through what you need to do, so you're numb. Soon after that, you become very angry, you become very angry at God. We had taught Caitlin to let God guide her life; you know to leave it in the hands of God. Sometimes she would get a little concerned about her next step in growing up and we used to always tell her leave it in the hands of God. And quite frankly at that point I was like where were You? We had taught her to trust You, that You would take care of her. On her laptop, she had a little prayer taped to the inside of her laptop that was pretty much that, you know, Lord let nothing happen to me today that You and I can't handle together. So she knew. She was very strong in her own faith.

RAS: And so your emotions, as I understand, turned to anger and how did you express that anger to God?

MH: Oh whew I think I resembled a very angry truck driver, at times. Because you know there were new words coming out of my mouth, you know, just from the anger. Totally felt left out, you know, let down by Him at that.

RAS: Abandoned?

MH: Exactly, exactly. And little things just going to a shopping mall would really be very difficult because I would shop mostly for Katie and she, you know, she always looked cute in things, and so just going into a mall would be very, very difficult. And soon, upon returning to New York, I happened to find myself in an instance where I was in a bookstore and realizing that I needed to understand what happened, I needed to understand where God was, I needed to understand where Caitlin was. And I stumbled across a book by Anthony Destefano Ten Prayers God Always Answers Yes To. And at first I was a little cynical about the whole book and there were two in particular chapters about suffering and about God giving you grace that sort of spoke to me, kind of brought me back. I mean we were Christian, but I don't think we were really practicing exactly what Christianity truly was in regards to our relationship with God. So that book sent me back to our Lord, and while between that book and my very serious conversations with God, one day I was sitting in our garden very angry, and finally in the midst of crying, all of a sudden a calm came over me, and it was pretty much Him telling me you want to get to Caitlin but you have to get to Me before you can get to Caitlin so you must go through Me. And I really think I did a 180 in regards to my anger and my understanding.

RAS: So was that the thing that really turned you around?

MH: Yes, those two things were the ah ha moments, absolutely.

RAS: So the ah ha moment was your only way you could ever get to Caitlin. Was to go through God. And you came to that realization and did you feel a peace then through that?

MH: Absolutely. I felt a peace and yet I felt I needed to know more, so it has really become a journey. A journey of faith, a journey of hope, a journey of forgiveness, which that's a very hard journey.

RAS: Explain the journey of forgiveness. How does that.. because you say forgiveness and I immediately think of the young man who took the lives of all these young people. Are you talking about forgiveness for him?

MH: Exactly. Exactly. Knowing the circumstances that I know now is.. I think those children, staff members; I think they met evil that day. I really do, and when somebody is that sick, how do you get angry? I mean you get angry for their action, but in regards to what they did I don't believe he could have helped it.

RAS: And so you have forgiven him?

MH: Oh absolutely.

RAS: And what did that do to you physically and..

MH: That..

RAS: ..and psychologically..

MH: ..it's very..

RAS: ..to be able to forgive him for that.

MH: ..it really sets you free. And it really allows you to get past all of the other emotion. For those families that might still be angry or still.. I see they kind of get stuck sometimes in the mire of that, but it's very liberating.

RAS: How were you able to do that? What did you do to be able to forgive him like that?

MH: I just think it was an understanding of knowing that he was very sick.

RAS: He was a..

MH: He was very sick.

RAS: ..he was a sick young man and coming to the realization that he himself needed..

MH: Yeah.

RAS: ..needed many things that were never fulfilled.

MH: Exactly.

RAS: Gave you the ability to..

MH: Exactly.

RAS: ..actually..

MH: And it wouldn't do any of us any good to hold that grudge.

RAS: Have you done anything as far as like reaching out to his family and expressing..

MH: No, not yet.

RAS: Well they may now know. And they may..

MH: They lost a child also.

RAS: They lost a child as well, exactly. And I understand that they felt extreme humiliation and embarrassment and grief as well as everything else. And so what do you think is the most important lesson that we can learn from your experience?

MH: I would have to say the most important lesson in a nutshell, it's to have hope, it's to have faith, and it's honestly to take no one for granted and when things get tough, to really have hope and faith. I can absolutely attest to the reason why my husband and I are still standing and still standing strong was through the works of God.

RAS: When you were at your lowest point, God was there.

MH: Absolutely.

RAS: And in spite of you yelling at Him, and swearing at Him, and cursing Him, which is what I think I would do the same thing! I think its part of a natural human process if we're real. We may not even.. the words may not come out of the mouth but they're in the heart and they're in the head. And God understood what you were going through through that time. And He carried you through.

MH: Yes.

RAS: And so I just want to thank you Marian for your..

MH: Thank you so much.

RAS: ..your strength, to be able to come and stand before us today and talk about this just tragic event that took place. And we want you to know that we're praying for you.

MH: Thank you.

RAS: And I want to give you the bible that I read from today.

MH: Thank you very much.

RAS: I want you to take this with you..

MH: Thank you.

RAS: ..and there are things in here that I think you'll find that empower you and strengthen you in many powerful ways. And so with that I want to have a prayer for you. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You for Marian. We thank You for the life that You have given to her and to her husband, we thank You for the gift that You gave to them in the birth of a little baby, and for many years they had the joy of embracing that child. And so now they have given her to You and You're keeping her safe and holding her until they come together someday. And so we love You Lord, for everything, Amen.

MH: Amen.

RAS: Marian, God loves you..

MH: Thank you.

RAS: ..and so do we.

MH: Thanks.

#### RAS INTRODUCES CHRIS SLIGH

RAS: And at this time, it gives me great joy to welcome to the Crystal Cathedral, a gentleman whom you may have seen on one of America's great talent shows called American Idol. Hundreds of thousands of people tried out but only a few make it to the finals and in 2007 our guest made it all the way to one of the finalists and you'll know why when you hear him sing. Would you please give a very warm welcome to American Idol's Chris Sligh! Chris, welcome to the Crystal Cathedral.

CS: It is great to be here.

RAS: Well you know one of the things that you did on American Idol is you sang a Christian song.

CS: I did, I sang a song by a band called DC Talk called We All Want to Be Loved.

RAS: And that's not very common, is it?

CS: No it's not actually. In fact the producers were not very happy with me on the show that I sang a Christian song.

RAS: But you decided to do it anyway and why did you do that?

CS: You know on American Idol they tell you to choose songs that you know; during the semi finals you're allowed to choose any song you want, and so they tell you to choose songs that you know and that you grew up with. I grew up listening to Christian music and so it was just a natural fit for me to choose something, like we all want to be loved by DC Talk. It was just one of my favorite songs.

RAS: And now you have a new CD, it's called Running Back to You.

CS: That's right.

RAS: And you, I'm assuming refers to God or to Jesus Christ?

CS: Yeah it's actually kind of a double meaning. You know in the song that it's talking about, it's actually talking about God's mercies being made new every

morning, and that I'm running with the morning that finds me running back to You but it also, you know, being on American Idol and growing up as a worship leader in the last seven or eight years, its kind of a coming back to the church also and saying, you know, I'm glad to be running back to the church.

RAS: And so are you going to sing that for us this morning?

CS: I'm going to sing a song called Vessel from the CD.

RAS: And what does that mean to you?

CS: It's just a simple prayer. I wrote this in my dorm room when I was a junior in college and just talking about God making me a vessel that He can always use.

RAS: Thank you, Chris, so much.

SOLO – CHRIS SLIGH – “Vessel”

Safe inside Your hand, You hold me. Pain and tribulations mold me. I try to run away from You, the pains too great You put me through, I find myself on my knees to pray. And then You hear the words You long for me to say.

Make of me a vessel that You can always use, no matter how You break me, what I win or what I lose. Let me be Your vessel pure and holy, perfect in Your eyes. Lord, hear me when I cry for You will make me a vessel.

Deep inside my heart You've shown me, despite all my sins, You've known me. I try to run away again, I break Your heart with all my sin, I fall to You, with tear-filled eyes. I run to you with broken heart and cry.

Make of me a vessel that You can always use, no matter how You break me, what I win or what I lose. Let me be Your vessel, pure and holy, perfect in Your eyes. Lord, hear me when I cry for You will make me a vessel.

Make me into what You want me to be, oh Lord, may my prayer be. Make of me a vessel that You can always use, no matter how You break me, what I win or what I lose. Let me be Your vessel, pure and holy, perfect in Your eyes. Lord, hear me when I cry for You will make me, oh Lord make me a vessel.

DONNA THANK YOU TO CHRIS SLIGH

DS: Thank you Chris. You know in our eyes you're the winner; I don't even know who won that year but I just know you should have been the winner and you're our winner. So thank you so much for being here.

CS: Well, thank you so much. Thank you.

DS: It really means a lot to us. Thank you.

MESSAGE/PRAYER - DONNA SCHULLER

"The Power of Peacefulness"

DS: You know I recently had a lot of fun here on a Sunday in between church services. Actually it was after church service and maybe you saw me, I got to go around and talk to people for a while so I want you to take a look and see some of the things I found out.

(VIDEO ROLL IN)

DONNA: I just want to ask you to today, I want to ask you what you're feeling anxious about or worried about, or perhaps, I don't know, stressed about?

FEMALE: I have a tea party in a half an hour and we're a half an hour away and I got to go change because I have dirt on my pants and my daughter

needs a change, and she's got muddy and she's hot, so yeah that, today right at this second, that's my stress.

MALE: I'm originally from Nigeria and I'm here alone, you know, so every other day I continue to worry, I continue to pray and God continues to keep them, you know, safe back home until I go to see them.

FEMALE: I think that busyness really just takes over my life, like school and I play basketball and that takes over also, and then money being in college, really is a tough thing right now.

FEMALE: Right now it's my children. I have a daughter who's 32 and she's been having heart problems and she had to wear a heart monitor all day Friday and so now we have to wait for the results to find out what's going on and what's wrong with her heart.

FEMALE: You know I sometimes question my calling and my function and my purpose.

FEMALE: Making sure that I'm doing the best I can for him. That's probably my biggest anxiety, is making sure that I'm doing the best I can.

CHILD: I have a lot of math.

DONNA: Oh, a lot of math homework or just in school?

CHILD: Just in school and at home, every time.

FEMALE: I'm a school fanatic and I know that I'm going to be going back to school in the evenings and where should I go, what should I be studying, is it going to interfere with my marriage, with my work, it's a pretty heavy question for me.

MALE: I'm anxious about the world situation. Everything's happening around us and negative things people are involved in, that's it for me. But in my personal life, no, I believe in Jesus.

(END OF VIDEO ROLL IN)

DS: Thank you everyone who participated. A few of you I see here this morning. I find it very interesting. I've been a pastors wife for twenty four years and I think one of the things people assume about me is since I'm a pastors wife I never have any reason to be anxious or stressed or nervous or any of those anxiety filled. And to a certain extent I would say yes I probably am better than most at putting that over to the side and handing it over to the Lord and going on with my life. But on the other hand I want you to know I'm just like all of you. In fact let me tell you there are a couple things I can think of right now that I'm stressed about. For one, my husband and I have two kids in college; okay that's very expensive. So we've got the financial stress. The third thing I can think of right off the top of my head is we have a daughter that's getting married June 7th. That's a positive stress, as is having kids in college, but there you go. Once again there's the anxiety associated with planning a wedding and the financial stress. So those are just a few things I can just come up with that quick.

You know it's really interesting we all get these emails from time to time. Does anybody else get like what I call junk mail and some times you delete it and sometimes you don't. Yes I get tons of it, but most of the time you know I use my email a lot for work, for ministry work so I don't have time to read all those things. But one came across my desk the other day. I took a minute to look at it because the title caught my eye because I was planning on speaking to you about the power of peacefulness. And it said how to have peace and calmness in your lives. So I just want to read it to you, it's very brief. This lady wrote this email and she said; she recently saw a talk show where the talk show host was sharing one of the ways to achieve inner peace was to finish all the things that you've

started and have never finished. That sounded good enough so I read on. She went on to say, so I looked around my house to see all the things I'd started and I hadn't finished. Before the day was over I finished off a bottle of white zinfandel, a bottle of bailey's Irish cream, a package of Oreos, the remainder of my old Prozac prescription, the rest of the cheesecake, some Doritos, and a box of chocolates. And she goes on to say I felt terrific. Now you know I read that I laughed also and there's a real funny part about that. It's funny, but the flip side of that is it's really rather tragic because people do live their lives that way. That's where they find their peace. And I'll admit I mean its temporary peace maybe, it feels great to go out and eat chocolates doesn't it? Afterwards you feel kind of bad and I could go on and on. You know people that drink excessively, excessive amounts of alcohol. People that abuse drugs. People that don't take care of this temple of the Holy Spirit as the bible instructs us. They're really not living a peaceful life.

With that in mind I'd like to share with you where I find my peace and my comfort and how I de-stress. So again we're going to be referring to the Power for Life Bible. This is a new bible put out by the Crystal Cathedral. It's the same great bible Old and New Testament. Happens to be today's new international version. In the beginning of each book of the bible there is a power purpose and a power focus. The power purpose of the book of Philippians is where St. Paul encourages us to rejoice in all circumstances. Now you have to remember something really important. Paul was in prison okay? He was in prison in Rome. Now I know some of us today, some people that will be listening to me when this airs, they will physically be in prison. But I also realize that there are intangible prisons that we all put ourselves in from time to time. That's the prison of self-doubt; the prison of sadness and anxiety or maybe it's something a little more concrete, like maybe you're in the prison of drugs or alcohol. But I know this: Paul broke free. Paul teaches us and again in the power focus of this book is that God will complete the positive work He began in us and He will supply everything we need to fulfill His plans for our lives.

So hear what Paul says from prison. "Rejoice in the Lord always, I'll say it again rejoice. Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything but in every situation by prayer and petition with thanksgiving present your requests to God and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. And finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable if anything is excellent or praiseworthy think about such things. Let your gentleness be evident to all," we read in that verse 5. Be gentle. Be gentle with yourself, with others and with God's creation. What do I mean by self? You know if you're like me you're probably your worst critic. I know I am so hard on myself. I have to constantly tell myself take it easy Donna, relax, chill out, be good to yourself, right? I'm my worse critic. So be good to yourself.

Some of the ways that I've found to do that is I try to wake up slowly in the morning. You know that alarm clock or opportunity clock I try to call it, which is kind of tough some mornings, it goes off. Instead of just bolting right out of bed, which is my God given nature. That's just the way I am. Robert will tell you I used to make the bed up when he was still sleeping. Seriously. When we first got married. I've overcome a lot and I don't do that anymore. But that's my natural God given bent, that's my personality. So I have learned to be gentle. If it takes waking up two, three, four, five minutes is ideal, early, I like to stretch before I get out of bed. I like to think about in my mind what I have ahead of me. I like to

say a quick prayer to God and I like to be gentle to myself. It's made a big difference to me in the way I wake up in the morning. I try to eat right, I exercise and I encourage you to do the same thing as difficult as it might be. It really does help.

Breathe. So many of us don't breathe. You know it's the first thing we give up is proper breathing when we get stressed out. And I think if you pay attention you'll agree with me that you know that when you're anxious its like you either forget to breathe and so you take a couple of deep breaths and then you don't breathe for a couple of minutes and then a couple more and then you don't breath or you do huffing and puffing. Not because you're exhausted physically. So I want to encourage you to breathe. Breathe in the beautiful, beautiful life that Jesus has given to you and then breathe out all that stress and anxiety. I guess that it's worked for me, I'm practical.

Be gentle with others. You know its amazing what you can see just driving around or walking around and I'll never forget just recently, this past Easter my husband and I were taking a walk. We're walking down the street and we don't have little kids at home anymore so I'm always busy looking at what everybody else's little kids are doing. I can't wait to have grandkids, but we're not quite there yet. But I'm looking and we hear this woman come running out of her house and there are quite a few children out playing on swing sets and fiddling with bikes and things children do. But she says get in here! Get in here real quick, little Johnny, little Bobby! We are going to die Easter eggs by golly and we're going to do it now! The Easter eggs are ready! Get in! We're going to die Easter eggs! We're going to have fun. And I thought wow! Gee! You know and it reminded me, right? It's like holding a mirror up, it reminded me that perhaps I've been a little harsh when I had little children at home, we all get a little stressed out, but how interesting. You know that in the midst of trying to create a beautiful, wonderful experience for our kids or for anybody, we can treat them in less than a gentle way. So you know it's like our guest Marian said today, we never know, we never know when it's our child's last day or our spouse or our friends. So I would just encourage you to look at people that way and to treat people with gentle kindness.

Be gentle with God's creation. What do I mean by that? You know it was recently Earth Day and I'm not going to get off on a big green message although I think that a lot of that is just really wonderful, but we don't have time for that today. I will say this; my mom raised me, I'm now looking back and realizing my mom raised me to be so ecologically minded. I mean I have been recycling my whole life. And like in every way imaginable. I think it's because she was brought up so poor that it was just part of her nature and thus I've just kind of probably inherited that and passed it on. But let me give you a couple of examples of what you can do, just a few. And we won't go into them in great detail but these are just really easy things you can do to be gentle with the earth. Number one: recycle. We recycle Christmas cards. We get Christmas cards, my mom and I have been doing this together since I was a little kid. It's like a craft project, but I never really realized that, it was just part of what we did. You rip off the cover of the Christmas card if people don't write in it, right? And then you make little gift tags and you put them on your gifts and you make them so they can coordinate in with your wrapping. I'm sounding like Martha Stewart aren't I, but anyway. That's the only Martha Stewart part of me; I'm not that crafty. But that is something we can do that is so easy.

Another thing that is so easy, you know how we all get those bags, like either you go to a luncheon or maybe somebody will give you one for Christmas, it's a book

bag or sometimes you can get them at various bookstores. They are canvas bags. Put all those bags that you don't know what to do, put them in the trunk of your car. Next time you go to the grocery store pull them out so you don't have to use the bags in the grocery store. Now these are just easy things. And if you're anything like me, you'll leave them in the trunk of your car, you'll be checking out and you'll have to say wait a minute, wait a minute, I'll be right back I promise, and you go sprinting out to your car and you open your trunk and you get them and you bring them in. But it works.

Third thing is that I think is so easy to do to be gentle with our earth is to turn off the lights and the TV's before you leave the bedrooms, the dining rooms or your house. Turn off the radio, I don't know I think maybe women are better at turning things off than men; I'm not sure how it is in your house. But turn things off. You know it's so easy. So be gentle. Be gentle with yourself with others and with God's creation.

Moving on to verse 6, Paul tells us to pray with thanksgiving. Be grateful; be grateful for where you are, for what you have. I also saw driving down the street a couple weeks ago a young man had a shirt on; it said peace is a state of mind. It was a simple t-shirt and I thought wow that's great. What a great message. And I thought a little more about it and I thought you know it could say peace is a state of mind or prayer is a state of mind. I really believe prayer is a state of mind. Being grateful for all things all the time. You know I took a class many years ago where the professor said that one of our assignments was to come up with a gratitude list. And he said you will be graded depending on how heavy it is. Make a gratitude list; it will help you be grateful.

You know I'm wearing this suit this morning and it's not by accident that I chose this suit. I'm wondering if one of the cameramen might be able to get the buttons here because I wore this because of the buttons. These buttons belonged to my grandmother who died last year just shy of her one hundred and first birthday. And it's interesting because I think they actually were my great grandmothers. My grandmother was a great seamstress. With that being said, every time I look at these buttons they remind me of my grandmother's last year or two of her life and how grateful I am that she taught me how to stop and smell the roses. Now I know that's cliché, but I mean that literally. I used to take my grandmother from the center she lived in, and I would take her for a ride in the wheelchair around the building and that was the highlight of her day. She'd put on her little hat, and she'd put on her little glasses so she wouldn't get sunburned and we'd wheel around and you know I'd be like okay I've got an hour, and hour and a half, I'm going to wheel my grandmother, but I've got to get back. I've got to get to work, I've got to go shopping, I've got to make dinner, you know? And sure enough as God would have it, my grandmother would say something like, "wait, wait, wait Donna. Wait honey, stop there. Look at those flowers. Aren't they beautiful?" And I'm sitting there yeah they're beautiful grandma. So we'd stop. I'd pick flowers for her. She'd collect them, we'd smell them together. We'd go a little further she'd say wait, wait, wait look at the birds. Listen to those birds. Aren't those birds beautiful? Wow, grandma yeah they're beautiful. I don't take time to appreciate the birds. You know there are so many beautiful things. Look at this building here. This building is just unbelievable. We have a gorgeous church, we have gorgeous campus. Everything about life can either be looked at in its splendor or you can look at it negatively. So I want to encourage you to just be grateful for what you do have.

Another way to always live your life in gratitude is to give back. You can give of your finances; you can give of your time by volunteering and serving. The great

Bishop Fulton Sheen said, "The way not to lead a monotonous life is to live for others." And I truly believe that. And I truly believe that God wants us to live that way. You know living for others starts in our home. We already talked about being gentle in our home to our children. But if you have the urge and if you have the desire there's so many great things going on at this church locally out in the mission field. Just last week I went with a group of women to the house of hope. It's a transitional home for women and children that have nowhere else to go. And I've got to tell you if I didn't feel just filled, overflowing with gratitude after I left that place it was just fantastic. I'm going back. We have all kinds of these things happening all the time, every day. Get in touch with somebody if you're interested. Once you start giving locally, I want to encourage you to give globally. We're a global church. We are televised to the entire world. We are going; Robert and I are going to China. So we have a China project you can get involved in. If you are interested we will let you know what you can do for the people in China. China has one sixth of the world's population. We have a responsibility to share the good news, to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with China. They're huge, they need us. They need the positive word of Christ. So you can get involved there. Nepal: my son's church, The Gathering, they're leaving for Nepal on June 18th I believe, it's coming up real quick. They're going on a medical mission there. I know three of my kids are going on that one. My son and his wife and then Anthony, our college son is going to Nepal. So if you want more information on how you can support that mission I can tell you there's a lot of kids that can't afford to go and they're just, every day writing letters to their aunts, uncles, friends, neighbors so if you want to help with Nepal it's an amazing thing! You want to feel grateful? They'll come back with a report about Christ's word exploding in Nepal like you won't believe.

Going on to verse eight: Be deliberate. The bible says in verse eight Paul says, "Think of good things. Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy, think about those things. Be deliberate. Be deliberate in what you choose to watch before you go to bed at night. Be deliberate if you're having a bad day of what kind of music you listen to in your car. Surround yourself with good people. This bible, every bible is filled with power people. They're powerful not because they had power on their own. They were ordinary people, many times, just like you and I. But they filled their life with powerful purpose and that's what made them powerful people. So surround yourself with power people. Everyone you have a relationship with is either bringing you closer to God or pulling you further away from Him. I don't know if you've ever heard that before but I truly believe that.

And then back to Marian; gee it's just so humbling having her share about the loss of her daughter; I have two daughters, I can't even begin to imagine. But one thing I heard loud and clear is she talked about not being angry. And another way to be deliberate in our attitudes and all is to not hold resentments, to not be angry with people, to not hate. Now I don't know if you've heard it said before but I've heard that anger and resentment, if you hold onto those things, it's like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. So please be deliberate about getting rid of your anger and your resentments.

And in verse nine we go on to read, "Put these things into practice." St. Paul says, "Put them into practice. Be persistent. Practice makes perfect, you've heard of that before, right? Long ago a man sought the perfect picture of peace. Not finding one that satisfied, he announced a contest to produce this masterpiece. The challenge stirred the imagination of artists everywhere and paintings arrived from far and wide. Finally, the great day of revelation arrived. The judge's uncovered

one peaceful scene after another while the viewers clapped and cheered. The tensions grew. Only two pictures remained veiled. As the judge pulled the cover from one, a hush fell over the crowd. A mirror smooth lake reflected lacy green birches under the soft blush of the evening sky. Along the grassy shore a flock of sheep grazed undisturbed. Surely, this picture was the winner. The man with the vision uncovered the second painting himself and the crowd gasped in surprise. Could this be peace? A tumultuous waterfall cascaded down a rocky precipice. The crowd could almost feel its cold penetrating spray. Stormy gray clouds threatened to explode with lightening, wind and rain. In the midst of the thundering noises and bitter chill, a spindly tree clung to the rocks at the edge of the falls. One of its branches reached out in front of the torrential waters as it foolishly was seeking to experience its full and powerful force. A little bird had built a nest in the elbow of that branch. Content and undisturbed in her stormy surroundings, she rested on her eggs. With her eyes closed and her wings ready to cover her little ones, she manifested the peace that transcends all earthly turmoil. Be gentle, be grateful, be deliberate and be persistent and finally in verse nine we read and this is a promise: "The God of peace, He will be with you." Thank you.

#### HYMN - "Wonderful Peace"

What a treasure I have in this wonderful peace, buried deep in the heart of my soul, so secure that no power can take it away, while the years of eternity roll.

Peace, peace, wonderful peace coming down from the Father above. Sweep over my spirit forever I pray in Your infinite mercy and love, amen.

#### BENEDICTION - RAS

RAS: And now may the power of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ fill your hearts and your minds with His constant peace today, tomorrow and forever, amen.