

HOURLY OF POWER OF 22.03.2009

PROGRAM OPENING/TRUMPET FANFARE/V.O.

VO: Today on the Hour of Power: Cathleen Lewis found herself alone and in fear when she found out her newborn son was born blind and with autism. Today, she shares the faith in God her son Rex helped her discover.

CL: As I began going to church, in desperation really, to plead for my son, there were two immediate miracles. One was a little keyboard for Rex that showed up in our house as a gift for his second birthday, right after I began going to church.

VO: It turned out that Cathleen's blind and autistic son Rex was a musical savant, and he performs for us on the Hour of Power.

PIANO MUSIC PLAYING:

JJ: Visions of rapture now burst on my sight.

VO: Then, Dr. Schuller is pleased to welcome as our guest pastor, Yale University professor of Systematic Theology, Miroslav Volf. He was born and raised in war torn Croatia but truly learned that God makes all things new again.

MV: The future comes to us, not from the past or the present; the future comes to us from God's eternity. Then future can be new.

VO: Join us today for the best hour on television, the Hour of Power from the Crystal Cathedral.

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/PRAYER - RHS

RHS: Legend tells us that when the beloved apostle John was 90 years old, he would visit one church after another always to deliver the same sermon in three words: Love one another. And he would leave. And there's been so much of that in the history of this church which is why God has found it able to bless us with His presence. And we feel a presence in His not suspicion, or jealousy, or hate, or anger in His. Love one another! Turn to somebody on either side of you. Shake their hand and repeat the line to them: Love one another.

So you have come to a place of hope, peace, love, followers of Jesus Christ, choosing to be positive, not negative. We are a place where Jesus likes us and it shows. Wow. Let's pray: Thank You God for putting this whole thing together the past 54 years. People who didn't believe and had good reason to doubt, but they came and they experienced the presence of a peace, of forgiveness, and encouragement, and hope and love. And here we love one another and so it is Your spirit that we feel. Thank You Lord, Amen.

HYMN - "Medley – Take My Life/Steadfast Love/Great is Your Faithfulness"

Take my life and make it new; let me walk, O Lord, with You. Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of Your love, at the impulse of Your love.

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end; They are new every morning, new every morning, great is Your faithfulness, O Lord, great is Your faithfulness.

Great is Your faithfulness, O God my Father! There is no shadow of turning with You; You never change, Your compassion it fails not: As You have been You forever will be. Great is Your faithfulness, great is Your faithfulness, morning by morning new mercies I see; All I have needed Your hand has provided. Great is Your faithfulness, great is Your faithfulness, great is Your faithfulness Lord unto me!

SCRIPTURE – Sel. Verses Psalm 103 - RHS

RHS: You may be seated. From the scriptures this morning, hear these words:

Bless the Lord, oh my soul and all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, oh my soul; forget not all His benefits. Who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies. Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagles. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in mercy. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him, as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, and His righteousness to children's children. Bless the Lord, oh my soul.

This is the word of the Lord.

DON NEUEN INTRODUCES CHOIR ANTHEM/DVD OFFER

DON: This choir loves to sing for you. They just love to sing. Some sing opera, some sing in a big men's barbershop quartet chorus, they just love to sing and they love to sing the great music of the church. But more than all of that, we talk among ourselves on Thursday night rehearsals and Sunday morning before the services, we love to sing for you. And to bring the message of God, our heavenly Father in Jesus Christ, to you whether you're in this congregation, possibly in assisted living or nursing home, in a hospital, in our armed services or all over the world in the Hour of Power, we're singing for individuals.

And it seems that you love us about as much we love you because we get letters that are so kind and gracious, and in those letters they frequently say would you make, please, a DVD of choir anthems that we can put on our television and just see a dozen anthems. Well, we've done that. One of those that we're going to sing this morning, "Love Divine, Love All Excelling."

ANTHEM - "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of Heav'n, to earth come down. Fix in us Your humble dwelling, all Your faithful mercies crown! Jesus, You are all Compassion, Pure, unbounded Love You are; Visit us with Your salvation, enter every trembling heart.

Come, Almighty, to deliver, let us all Your life receive; Suddenly return and never, nevermore Your temples leave. You we would be always blessing serve You as Your hosts above; Pray and praise You without ceasing, glory in Your perfect love.

Finish, then, Your new creation; Pure and spotless in all we do; Let us see Your great salvation perfectly restored in You; Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place; Till we cast our crowns before You, lost in wonder, love, and praise. Till we cast our crowns before You, lost in wonder, love, and praise. Amen!

RHS THANK YOU TO CHOIR

RHS: Wow! All God's people said Wow! Thank you choir.

INTERVIEW – CATHLEEN LEWIS & REX LEWIS-CLACK

RHS: ROBERT H. SCHULLER

CL: CATHLEEN LEWIS

REX: REX LEWIS-CLACK

RHS: My guest today is Cathleen Lewis. I never met her till a few minutes ago but was a part of inviting her because she has a great story to tell. You may or may not have noticed this church is different than many churches in that we focus on witnessing where some churches focus on preaching. We don't try to preach sermons from up here to down there. We do try to bring people who can come here and tell us what God has done in their life. We tell them don't preach us a sermon. Just tell us the true story of how you have been blessed and saved.

And that's the great story about Cathleen Lewis and her beautiful son Rex. Their story has been featured on the CBS famous program 60 Minutes. Rex was born with a large cyst on his brain which led to blindness and crippling autism. Despite being born with these great challenges, Rex is a musical savant. He has perfect pitch. He is capable of hearing any song and playing it back immediately by ear. Cathleen is here to share her story of entrusting Rex to God and finding her faith in the process. Welcome with me that great, great mother, Cathleen Lewis.

CL: Thank you. Thank you Dr. Schuller.

RHS: You radiate. I have a gift for sensing it. Some people have a gift of singing, talking, hearing; I have a gift of discerning.

CL: It's an important gift.

RHS: It sure is. And I see the fruits of Christ in your life. But start at the beginning about Rex. That's what we're going to talk mostly about.

CL: And that is the beginning of my life, in a way.

RHS: Yes. Tell us the story.

CL: When Rex was born, well I was expecting a child and I had a lot of dreams for him, like we all do when we give birth. But when Rex was born, it was more like a death to me.

RHS: At the birth day?

CL: Not right at the birth day, when I began learning what was going on with him, more and more. On the birth day, I fell in love with my child, absolutely forever in love with this little baby. It was a feeling stronger than any I'd ever felt before. But I did know that he had a cyst in his brain that had to be operated on and after it was operated on, we thought that that was it, that we'd go on with our lives and our dreams for this beautiful child. But there were complications. We then learned that he was blind and that was shattering. That felt like death and I was heartbroken for my baby. And I was full..

RHS: How old was he when you discovered he was blind?

CL: He was 4 ½ months.

RHS: You didn't know it until then?

CL: No because of his brain operation and it looked like he was focusing on me but his eyes were wavering. I thought it was maybe wandering eye, something correctable, so I wasn't really prepared for a diagnosis of blindness so that was an utter shock to me. It sort of, like I fell out of the world. It was almost too big to even grasp and the idea of bringing a child into the world without the equipment as I saw it, to deal with the world, was overwhelming to me. But blindness, Dr. Schuller, was just the beginning because it soon became apparent that he wasn't developing in other ways so the cyst apparently had affected the brain as well and he wasn't learning to walk, he didn't learn to walk or talk and he began to become very sensitive, like his whole body was a raw nerve ending and his hands, he'd ball them up in fists so he wouldn't have to touch anything because they were too sensitive. And his ears, it was like he'd hear just the slightest sound and it would overwhelm him. And his brain was completely dysfunctional. I was heartbroken for him and that I'd brought him into this world and he was having such a hard time of it.

RHS: Did you have guilt?

CL: Overwhelming guilt.

RHS: Did you really?

CL: Guilt, I thought I'd never get past. It was eating away at me that I blamed myself that this was my fault. How could I bring, as a mother, a child into the world in that state and I was so scared.

RHS: Were you a Christian at the time?

CL: No, no I wasn't. I wasn't. Through that experience with Rex, that is what brought me to my knees, brought me to know Christ, living life with my son, I was like I was walking on egg shells all the time and just overwhelmed and also my marriage broke up in the midst of all that, so I found..

RHS: Which often happens, yes.

CL: ..often does and I found myself utterly alone, scared, before that I thought I could solve my own problems. I couldn't solve that. And I began searching. God stepped in. Stopped into our lives, my life; drew me to Him and two miracles. As I began going to church in desperation, really, to plead for my son, there were two immediate miracles. One was a little keyboard for Rex that showed up in our house as a gift for his second birthday, right after I began going to church. And that was a gift of grace from God. When Rex laid his fingers on those keys for the first time, I think he knew it himself that this was directly from God because there was something in those keys that drew him out of his sensitivities. He uncoiled his own hands and it was like those keys, it made sense. The keys, the notes, the order, it was like God was giving him music whereas the world was giving him chaos and dysfunction.

RHS: Now what in his private life released to you the awareness that he was different?

CL: Musically?

RHS: Yes.

CL: Well I knew in the beginning when he was dealing with those sensitivities, the one thing that wasn't overwhelming to him was music, classical music.

RHS: Interesting.

CL: And there was a look on his face that was at peace when he'd hear Mozart and it was because of that that we got him this little keyboard. And he'd begin to play little melodies and I wanted to hear his voice. He still wasn't walking or talking. Specialists thought he'd never walk or talk, but he began playing his keyboard every day and finding life, creativity, working out sounds

and one day I played Beethoven's Ode to Joy in our living room for him and he sat down at his keyboard and he played it back, Dr. Schuller, at three years old. And I wanted to hear him say mama. But I knew then that music; he would get his voice if I'd be patient. That was God's miracle growing faith in me in the beginning. And his music did develop from there.

RHS: Did he take lessons?

CL: He took lessons. He only started when he was about five and a half, and his first teacher called his music, his piano a touch of the divine because he didn't have to teach Rex the basics of music, the theory. He showed Rex one scale, one time and Rex played all the other twelve scales that same day.

RHS: So he is a true savant.

CL: He's been called a savant, and he's also been said his music, as I said to be a touch of the divine. And that's why I wrote the book I wrote about Rex to talk about that faith because God has given me a powerful story in Rex, I think, to tell.

RHS: Beautiful picture of Rex on the cover. And we'll have a chance to meet him briefly. He's going to play for us? Can we meet him and say hello to him before he plays?

CL: Absolutely. Here we go, Rex. Here's Dr. Schuller.

RHS: Rex, I'm Robert Schuller, one of the ministers here.

REX: Hi Dr. Schuller.

RHS: And how did you come to play the piano? Do you believe in God?

REX: Yes.

RHS: And in Jesus?

REX: Yes. Yes I do love Jesus, Dr. Schuller. And He loves me, too.

RHS: You're going to play a song for us today. What is it?

REX: I want to play my Brahms's Waltz medley. Its three Brahms's waltzes I picked up from Opus 30. And I love because part of its powerful and part of its soft and sweet so its fun, Dr. Schuller.

RHS: Good.

CL: All right.

RHS: While he makes his way to the piano, his book "Rex," it's all about him, written by his mother. It's available at the hourofpower.org.

PIANO SOLO – REX LEWIS-CLACK – "Brahm's Waltzes, Op. 39

RHS THANK YOU TO REX LEWIS-CLACK

RHS: Thank you Rex!

RHS INTRODUCES MIROSLAV VOLF

RHS: My guest preacher today is somebody here because you asked for him. He was a guest on a Sunday morning and you were so moved that for the first time, I had many, many people say can't we get him back to preach a sermon? He's Miroslav Volf, he is professor of Systematic Theology at Yale University where he's the founder and director of the Yale Center for faith in culture. He is a native of Croatia where he was intensely persecuted for his faith during the devastating violence in Serbia and Croatia in the 1990's. And I'm asking if he can share more of that with us today.

Miroslav is a published author of multiple books and over 70 scholarly articles. Recently his prominent work to bring peaceful discussion between Christians, Jews and Muslims was featured in the New York Times. He's published a new book called, "Free of Charge." Today he's here to share a very

special message with us. His title is “Behold, I Make All Things New.” Here we are, great messages on the way from Miroslav Volf.

MV: Thank you Bob.

RHS: We’re so honored to have you.

MESSAGE/PRAYER – MIROSLAV VOLF

"Behold, I Make All Things New"

MV: What a delight for me it is to be here. I want to thank Dr. Schuller in particular. By his ministry, I have been very much encouraged and blessed. It’s wonderful to be in this beautiful sanctuary, one of a kind in the world.

“Behold, I make all things new.” Now if you’re like me, you like new things. You like new clothes, you like new cars. I love a new car. Shiny on the outside, you open the door and it smells like a new car, nothing like it. You like all sorts of new things and people throughout the ages everywhere have loved new things. I live in the town of New Haven. In 17th century, there’s some band of folks who came to the shores of the new world and they wanted to establish a new city, because they liked new things.

And the text from which the title of my message comes “Behold, I make all things new” is the text about New Jerusalem, a new city of great hope. We love new things.

Not only that today we love new things, we are obsessed by new things. We love new adventures, we love new gadgets, we love new, new, new and new things. We love new and new things and then we love next things and everything’s got to be new. The trouble with new things, you know, is that newness lasts very short time. Pretty soon every new thing becomes an old thing, just consult your closets, your garages, your chest of your son’s and daughter’s toys for toys, junk yards and you see that everything new soon becomes old. And kind of old, always wins over the new. But we long for new and as I was thinking about that, I thought what is it that we long for when we long for new things? What is it that we long for that will not disappoint us?

Let me tell you a little bit of my story. And I’ll weave the answer to that question into that story. I’ll tell you in advance what we long for is new identity, new self. What we long for and the possibility of new future. What we long for and now you might be surprised, what we long for is a new past.

New identity. Now if you met me somewhere on the street and you kind of tried to figure out who I am, what you would do is you would one way or another ask me to tell you my story. I will tell you that I was born in the communist Yugoslavia in the 50’s, that I was son of a Pentecostal minister, that when I was growing up in school it was terrible thing to be a son of a Pentecostal minister because nobody wanted to be son of any kind of minister, let alone Pentecostal minister. I remember, I had to say in front of my whole class, give information about who I was and they indicate there in front of the whole class that my father was a minister. Okay that’s okay, what’s a minister? They knew what priests were but they didn’t know what ministers were so I had to explain that and now I’m ten years old, I’m wishing that I would disappear from the face of the planet and then comes the question where does your father work? He works in Christ’ Pentecostal church of Yugoslavia. Christ expletive what church? Never heard the word Pentecostal, right? And I swore to God that I’ll never do to my dad what he did to me by being a minister. Watch what you swear. That you’re not going to do. And this was part of my experience as growing up, and it was always a sense of oppression, sense of not being able to breath and have open space.

I was conscripted to a military. I had to go and there I was interrogated for months because they tried to figure out what it is that I was after, whether I was undermining somehow the pillars of the great socialist state. This is who I am, in a sense, right? This is part of my story. But should I tell the story about myself as the one who was oppressed? If I tell that, wouldn't I be depressed? Should I tell the story of myself as one who was interrogated? Simply? Is there a larger story that I can tell of myself. I think most fundamentally, especially for those of us who have suffered a great deal, our identity often ends up wrapped up in our own suffering. We need a ray of light to come straight through that story and tell us something else about ourselves. Who are you? I think at the foundation of everything of our lives, the answer to this question is this: I'm not what others have done to me. I'm not even what I have done to myself. I am how God relates to me. I am the beloved child of God, not withstanding what has happened in my life.

A friend of mine, when he talks about the dignity of us as human beings, he recalls the experience that many children have had, of having a little teddy bear and with that teddy bear going to bed, going through playground with the teddy bear, going to do all sorts of other things and pretty soon after awhile, the teddy bear gets all frayed, one eye is missing, a few buttons are missing, the arm on the side is kind of cracked open, things are falling out, you know if you were to show that teddy bear in some kind of a contest for the beautiful teddy, most beautiful teddy bear in the world, maybe not last place but next to the last, right? Not the particularly attractive teddy bear. You ask that child which teddy bear would he want or she want; that teddy bear or some new teddy bear that you would want to buy to that child, even if that new teddy bear were to get all the prizes in the world for the best teddy bear in the world. The response would be very clear. I want my teddy bear.

No matter what happens to us, which buttons are missing, where cracks have appeared, we are beloved by God. God loves us and that gives us our sense of identity. That's what gave me a sense of courage, sense of strength, sense of if you want special-ness, not withstanding the experiences to which I have gone. You know when you are loved you are always new. When you love everything is always fresh. And this is the life that God invites us to, being loved and loving and then we are new. New identity. "Behold, I make all things new."

But you know we don't need just new identity, we also need a new future. When you have suffered a lot, if you have been abused, if something terrible has happened to you, that tends to occupy all of your attention. That tends to nail you back to your past. You look back and then you think about the future as if this past is going to somehow come and pull the arm through the present, into the future and be right there for you. It's driving your car but always driving only through the rear mirror, right? You see and fear in the future what you have experienced in the past.

We need new future. I felt I needed a new future. I felt I needed to be freed from that past so that that past doesn't determine how it is that I'm going to live today, so that I don't have to fear behind every bush that another interrogator is going to pop up and oppress me. I needed a new future. How is it that future comes to us? There are two theories about that. One theory says well future grows out of the past and the present. What you have sown, that's what you will reap. Causes produce their effects. That's one account of the future. The other account of the future is that future comes to us, not from the past or the present; the future comes to us from God's eternity. Then future can be new. It comes to us from God's promise.

The best story that I know in the New Testament about that comes from the Old Testament but it's written in the New Testament. It's the story of Abraham and Sarah. You recall their story. They're trying to have an offspring of their own. And years and years of futile trying have not produced an offspring. Those stubborn bodies wouldn't do what bodies are supposed to do. And then at the old age of Abraham, God comes to him and says 'next year at this time, you will have a child.' It's a promise and how Abraham believed and because there was this divine promise, lo and behold, the law that said the past will determine the future was broken. And Abraham had a son. There was a child. There was Isaac. There was new hope and there was new future.

Promise of God, spoken into our lives, creates new future for us. Past doesn't need to oppress us. We can be free for new possibilities. "Behold, I make all things new." New identity, new future, I think what also we need is a new past. Now some of you philosophically minded will scratch your heads and you say well wait a second, you can't give me a new past, that doesn't work. I can have a new and better future, I can have a different present, but how can I have a different, a new past? You'd have to undo what was done for me to have a new past. You know what kids sometimes play one insults the other and the one who has been insulted says to him 'take it back!' And even if that child was to take it back, sorry, you can't. You can try and do whatever you want, but you won't be able to take that back.

You know as I was being interrogated by my interrogator, often I would feel angry. I would be filled with hatred toward him. Often later, as I was thought about him, I would feel surge of ill feelings toward him. And sometimes when I'm really very kind to myself, I said but that's normal, Miroslav. He has abused you, right? It's normal for you not to feel particularly warm toward him. And other times, when I open my bible, when I read what the scripture says about loving ones enemies, about Christ dying for the ungodly, I think Miroslav that's not what you're supposed to do. You're supposed to act and feel differently. You're not forgiving injury that somebody has done to you. You know, we need to be forgiven for not forgiving. Forgiveness is not at our pleasure and disposal, whether you're going to forgive or not. Some people say what kind of right do you have to forgive? I say what kind of right do you have not to forgive? You know why? Because Christ died on the cross for every individual being. For every sin that was ever committed. You have no right, I have no right not to forgive. It's difficult. And you forgive past, I think, when we think about what it is that God has done forgiving us. Then we are able to create a new past. This is what I was supposed to give also to my tormentor. What kind of a new past?

So what does God do when God forgives? Many things are said in the bible, one of them says well when God forgives, God doesn't reckon our sins to us. We've incurred debt but God doesn't write anything in the debit column, right? Zero there. We owe but we don't have to pay. Or, it says God covers our sin. We have sinned and it's plain to everyone that we have and there comes God and covers it. And it cannot be seen anymore. Or God removes our sin as we have read this morning from the Psalm 103, removes our sin as far as the east is from the west. It sticks to us, that sin, right? And that's the problem with sin; it sticks to us and is glued to us and we can't free ourselves from it. But God removes it. Or, I love this one: it says in the scripture that God puts sins behind God's back. Think about it a little bit. God takes our sins, puts it behind God's back. That means when God sees you, He can't see the sin because He can't see what's behind His back, right? And the best of all, God doesn't remember our sins. We've committed them but they're gone. Gone from reality because He has blotted them out and gone from

God's memory. New past. You see your past now has been changed. Your past is new just like your presence is new and just like your future can be new. "Behold, I make all things new."

You know when we long for these little gadgets, whether that's I-phone or something else, or something new that comes after that, and when after we long for them, we play with them for about a week or maybe two and then they become obsolete and we look for another thing after that, and we are going in a circle like a little squirrel in that wheel, right? All these new things and the wheel is turning faster and faster. What is it that we're longing for? We're longing for new identity. We're longing for new future. We're longing for new past. You know what we're longing for? We're longing for the one who makes all things new. "Behold, I make all things new." Amen.

HYMN - "To God be the Glory"

To God be the glory, great things He has done, so loved He the world that He gave us His Son, Who yielded His life an atonement for sin, and opened the life gate that all may go in.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear His voice! Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice! O come to the Father through Jesus the Son, and give Him the glory, great things He has done.

RHS THANK YOU TO MIROSLAV VOLF

RHS: Thank you Miroslav Volf! What a blessing you are.

MV: Thank you.

BENEDICTION - RHS

RHS: Now may the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord give you peace even when it's thundering and the lightening flashes. May the Lord be with you more than He's ever been with you in the past. And we're here to help make that connection between the almighty and your soul connect powerfully. Have a good week. See you next Sunday. Bye.