

HOUR OF POWER OF 26.04.09

PROGRAM OPENING/TRUMPET FANFARE/V.O.

VO: Today on the Hour of Power: Immaculee Ilibagiza lost her family along with one million other people during the tragic genocide in Rwanda, and personally spent three months in hiding in a three by four foot room with eight other women to save her own life.

GRETCHEN: How much did you weigh when you went into hiding?

IMMACULEE: When I went in, I was 115 pounds.

GRETCHEN: When you came out?

IMMACULEE: I was 65 pounds. Every bone was out.

VO: Also today, the Crystal Cathedral Choir brings us a magnificent anthem.

CHOIR: (SINGING) Let Thy holy spirit, Thy holy spirit; let Thy holy spirit, Thy holy spirit..

VO: Then Dr. Robert Schuller returns with a challenge that will shape your tomorrows. Stay tuned for his special message, "How Positive Thinkers Manage Change."

RHS: What your life amounts to, how you handle the hurts of the past, how you handle the opportunities of today, how you set your goals for the future. It's all up to you.

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 - ORTIZ

ORTIZ: Good morning and welcome from the deepest of our heart. And why don't you turn around and you welcome each other, but you know we are an international ministry. People come from all around the world. I was greeting people from Europe, from Asia this morning. So ask them where are you from and give a hug: God loves you and so do I. I'm from Argentina.

This is the day that God has made! Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Dear Lord thank You, thank You for bringing us together today. We are going to sing, we are going to praise, we are going to adore, we are going to enjoy Your presence in our lives. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, amen.

HYMN - "O Bless the Lord, My Soul"

O bless the Lord, my soul! His grace to me proclaim! And all that is within me join to bless His holy name.

O bless the Lord, my soul! His mercies keep in mind! Forget not all His benefits! The Lord to me is kind.

He clothes me with His love; Upholds me with His truth; And like the eagle, He renews the vigor of my youth!

Then bless His holy name, Whose grace has made me whole; Whose loving kindness crowns my days! O bless the Lord, my soul!

SCRIPTURE – Romans 5:1-5 - ORTIZ

ORTIZ: Thank you, you may be seated. Let us open our ears, our mind and our hearts for the word of God. This is Paul:

Now that we have been put right with God through faith; what a wonderful experience; we have been put right with God since we believe. We have peace with Him through our Lord Jesus Christ. He has brought us by faith into this experience of God's grace in which we now live and rejoice in the hope of sharing God's glory. We are wonderfully pleased to live in grace and we are hoping to see Him forever in glory. We also rejoice in our troubles because we know that trouble produces endurance. Endurance brings God's approval and His approval creates hope. This hope does not disappoint us because God has poured out His love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit who is God's gift to us. This is the word of the Lord, amen.

ANTHEM - "Let Thy Holy Spirit"

Let Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Holy Spirit. Let Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Holy Spirit come upon us on earth. Thy Holy, Thy Holy Spirit.

Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Holy Spirit come upon us, come upon us, come upon us, come upon us on earth.

Let Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Holy Spirit. Let Thy Holy Spirit, Thy Holy Spirit come upon us on earth. Thy Holy, Thy Holy Spirit come upon us. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

GSP THANK YOU TO DON & CHOIR

GSP: Wow, thank you Crystal Cathedral and Don Neuen.

INTERVIEW – IMMACULEE ILIBAGIZA

GSP: GRETCHEN SCHULLER PENNER II: IMMACULEE ILIBAGIZA

GSP: For those of you who don't know my name is Gretchen Schuller Penner and I have had the sincere privilege and honor of growing up in this church. And not only was I baptized and did I meet my Lord and Savior here, I also met my husband here, we baptized our children here and have also raised them up here so this is really my church and I just thank you for allowing me to be a part of it and for being a part of my church.

I've also had the honor of being on staff. For the last twenty years I've worked with the interview guests and the music guests and I've had so much joy in that because so many of the interview guests have touched my life and helped me grow and learn. And this guest we have today is particularly special. When her book and her information came to our office we were moved and we knew we had to have her come here and share her testimony with you.

Our guest today is Immaculee Ilibagiza she is a survivor of the Rwanda genocide. Just a little less than fifteen years ago over one million people were viciously murdered in her area in Rwanda. But the Lord had a special plan for Immaculee. She hid for three months in a small bathroom only three feet by five foot with about eight other women. God protected her time and time again and during that

time He touched her heart and grew her in a way she never expected. She has written two books; her newest book is *Led by Faith: Rising from the ashes of Rwanda genocide*. Please welcome with me, Immaculee Ilibagiza.

When I look at you I see this beautiful, beautiful woman both inside and out and it's really hard for me to imagine what you went through in 1994. Tell us about it.

II: In 1994 I was a student in college and I just happened to be home for Easter holiday. I remember I didn't even want to come because I had an exam that followed that week.

GSP: Where was college at?

II: It was about two hundred miles away from home.

GSP: Okay.

II: And I lived in a school.

GSP: So you came home for Easter vacation.

II: Easter vacation because my parents insisted that we have to be home all for Easter and for the holidays.

GSP: It was a Christian home you were living in.

II: A Christian home, yes. So we went home, my parents were all educators, teachers. One brother had just finished his master's degree; the younger one was finishing high school. So we were just a happy family, never had any disaster in the family and I remember everything changed on one day, it was Wednesday April 7th. My brother come to my room in the morning and he pushed the door and he told me that the president of the country died. I knew by that time that if something like that happened, like a president dies, they will kill people of my tribe.

GSP: Now he was killed in a..

II: In a plane crash.

GSP: In a plane crash.

II: Yeah, and as Tutsis; in my country we have two main tribes, Hutus and Tutsis and Tutsis were about twenty percent of the country, but somehow from the time of colonization in 1800, somehow they created this hatred between the two people, Tutsis and Hutus. Like really they thought that they were different, and to me we are all the same, of course. And so there used to be a radio that used to say how they would kill Tutsis one time. And when my brother told me that the president of the country died I just knew that, that was the beginning.

GSP: Now they were taught that there was a difference between Hutus and Tutsis but in your household your parents taught you to love everybody. You didn't know that there was this turmoil going on, did you?

II: No, I knew a little bit just to hear on radio, but in my home we never talked about anything like that. I remember actually I got to know about who I was as a tribe when I was my fourth grade and every week we used to stand up in school: who was Tutsis, who was Hutus but somehow I happened to have a good teacher who didn't mind if I stand up with Hutus or Tutsis and one time my teacher sent me out who was really extremist and he told me that I have to ask my parents about my tribe. And my parents later they talked to him and he told me to stand up with Tutsis. I was like okay, sounds good.

GSP: But your parents taught you to love everybody.

II: Everybody, yeah.

GSP: Your neighbors, I mean, the two tribes lived together.

II: They were together and I remember in my home we always cooked for like ten people more. We don't even know where they were coming from. And the concern of my parents, my mom and my dad was always about somebody in the neighborhood who didn't have school fees; somebody who was sick, who

needed medication, the poor person who doesn't have food or who doesn't have a home and my dad would go home by home asking people to help. So it was really like people just loved them. And I remember when the genocide just started. I came outside, my brother we were just like worried about what is going on and when we met my parents outside everyone was again asking themselves what is going to happen to us. But instantly everything shut down in the country. The leaders of the country went on radio and said that nothing should move on anymore, no work, no bank, no market opens, everyone should stay home.

GSP: Now how did you know the genocide had started? Did you see it?

II: Just by that, my brother telling me that the president had died, knowing..

GSP: The president?

II: Yeah, the president of the country died. We heard on radio right away when I came outside the leaders, the people, the government administrators saying on radio that we should all stay home and no one should go to work. So we know, we think nothing's going on. I mean we knew there was a tension by already the president dying and we knew they talked before. But I remember two hours after I got to know that the president died, BBC reported eighteen families that had just been killed.

GSP: Wow.

II: And I remember they were not reporting anymore like before sometimes, like my mom and dad or a command who, in the family who was in politics, they were reporting about mom and dad and five children have just been killed by the police, by the military. And then my parents were like what is going on? Why are they killing the children? So about two days after we are still sitting there, we can't even call it a genocide or even really a war, you know in my home we had about ten thousand people. In the soccer field of the school where my mom used to teach and it was just fear. And they told us that there was a small group that was burning their homes. So people trusted my parents. I really thank God to have known them even if I don't have them now but for them to have shown so much love to the neighbors, I never knew the impact it had on people until the time we had those troubles and everyone asking them what to do, what to do.

And I remember one time my dad stood up in front of everyone on the stone and really spoke loud. And he spoke to everyone, he said it doesn't matter if a small group that is trying to kill us we will defeat them, we are strong people, don't be scared, don't fear. But he said but it is the government that is behind killing our tribe they are going to do it because we are the minority and they have the police and the military. They have all the tanks and they blocked our borders. And he said so if we think we might die why don't you take this advantage, this time and ask for forgiveness for our sins so that we can die clean. And he's talking to ten thousand people. You are facing death and you are preparing people. And I remember in that moment everyone went quiet and we were just talking, you know, really painting in a sense. And I was in the same God forgive me if anything of everything I've ever done in case we die. So after that my father came to me. I was one girl among three boys. One boy was outside of the country; thank God he's still alive. And everyone wanted to protect me so everyone was like go to hide, go somewhere. So my father came to me and he said look you have to go to hide. I can't worry about everyone and worry about you. And he told me your mom can't listen to me, but you have to go. And he sent me to a neighbor who was from another tribe.

GSP: Was that the last time that you saw your mom and dad alive?

II: That was the last time I saw my mom and my dad. And then he told me to go to a Hutus neighbor and I remember my brother came and he said dad you are sending her to a Hutus. If things really go bad they will kill her.

GSP: He was sending you to the enemy.

II: To the enemy supposedly.

GSP: But he was a pastor.

II: He was a pastor but sometimes even during the genocide some priests, some pastors will turn against people even if they are many pastors and priests also who hid people. So it was really a matter of individual faith you have in God. It wasn't any more about the group where you belonged to this and that.

GSP: Well when you got to the pastor's house there was a small bathroom. How big was it?

II: It was three by four feet.

GSP: So if we were standing here in the bathroom it would be about..

II: It would be from here to here. Like this.

GSP: And does that include the toilet and the shower stall?

II: And the sink, yeah the shower and the toilet without the sink actually and just like a place.

GSP: And how many other people were you hiding in that bathroom with?

II: We were eight people. I went to this man and he put me to sit in that bathroom. I didn't even know that he had more people. He went.. I thought the place was small for me alone. He went and brought five more women. He went back, brought two more women. We were eight people. The youngest was seven years old.

GSP: Wow.

II: And she had to sit in our lap because she couldn't have a space. We were sitting in every corner of the bathroom.

GSP: How long were you in that bathroom hiding?

II: We stayed in that bathroom for three months.

GSP: Three months.

II: Without talking.

GSP: You ate there?

II: We ate there, we slept there, we kept quiet. We look at each other, we don't even know each other but the funny thing is when you are really facing a challenge you just know you are one person. When you are one human being you laugh for the same reason, you cry for the same reason and that is all that matters. We didn't even care about asking what is your name; we just had to be quiet. We thought it was going to be one week and it did three months from April to July.

GSP: How much did you weigh when you went into hiding?

II: When I went in I was 115 pounds.

GSP: When you came out?

II: I was 65 pounds. Every bone was out. I mean from here to here I was like oh it gets small here. Its funny how you know when we're in school they used to tell us that we have two bones here and all of the sudden you see them outside completely separated.

GSP: You could see all the bones in your body.

II: You could see all the bones. There are two and two here separated and where they meet here. I'm like oh my God that was true, the biologists were right.

GSP: Well during that time you experienced multiple miracles of God. What was the greatest miracle you experienced?

II: The greatest miracle was forgiveness. To experience the moment I was able to live without anger. You know those things that really hurt us? And you

think that there's no reason ever that would ever convince me to forgive because it's too bad and that way was. I went through rage when I thought if I ever come out I would just kill. I used to fantasize that I would be a soldier and I would shoot every Hutus. I mean I thought everything and it would come out of my anger sweating out of anger. Everything is really done here in our hearts without even going outside. And that was painful because that was in my head every second of the day and then one time, when the people came to search for us, the killers, three hundred people came into the house and I begged God to blind them not to find the door of the bathroom. I have, I knew, I knew before, I mean I used to go to church and I remember the story of Daniel and the den of lions.

GSP: Daniel and the den of lions, yes.

II: Yes, and I begged God, please, You can do it, if You are there give me a sign that You exist. Because in a challenge like that you tend to feel like maybe God doesn't even exist. And I remember I said if You are there, if You listen please don't let them find the door. Three hundred people came in, searched every single place. When they reached the door they told the pastor they are like you know what we trust you and they left and they didn't go in.

After that when he told us what happened I grabbed him and I was like give me the bible because I thought this is the only way I can read now and know about God. I never knew how personal He was. How friendly He can get, really, with individual and I started to read and I embraced everything. I still didn't understand forgiveness. I'm like no, no I don't want to hear about forgiveness but it's so good to know You. You know, okay heaven exists I see. You know it was so good, but throughout I remember I start to pray from morning until night and one time I said our Lord's Prayer, our Lord's Prayer.

GSP: The Lords Prayer, powerful.

II: The Lord's Prayer about two hundred times a day. One time when I was going through this part; forgive us our trespasses as forgive those who trespass against us and I realized that I am lying to God. And that came to me like why don't I just skip those words and go to the next part? And I started to do that.

GSP: So you would do the Lord's Prayer but you would skip the forgiveness.

II: The forgiveness and go to the second part. But you know that prayer has the power to change us.

GSP: Amen.

II: When I was saying that prayer another time and skipping that thinking that I don't want to lie to God, I remember an idea came to me almost like an angel: I hope you know our Lord's Prayer is not man made. It's our Lord's prayer so you can't change it.

GSP: The Lord said pray this way.

II: Pray this way and if you trust Him as God almighty you can't change His prayer. So it was the first time I understood what it is to surrender. I remember I put my hands up and I said okay God I give up. Help me to forgive to say this prayer because I need to pray to You. I know now that You exist but how do I say that. Help me to forgive. It was so painful not to pray, it was painful to go through the anger. It was that time after a few times I was praying again, I remember I was meditating on Christ when He was on the cross and I remember when He was dying the words that He said. It was almost like I was there on the cross with Him. I can remember His blood falling over me and I'm putting it around my body and then when He said forgive them Father, they don't know what they do.

And all of the sudden especially that second part became like mine. The people who are killing you they don't get it. They don't know your innocence, they don't the wrong they've been doing, they don't even know the consequences they will

face after and you hating them is not helping Me. My child, pray for them for them to change. And that time, you know, when you start to pray for your enemy truly praying for them sincerely, you know you have forgiven. For them to really change and to be people. It was that time I realized that the people who are doing this are not evil. It is evil that they have embraced and that can come out. And then they can be good people. I started to pray for them. But the greatest thing that happened to me, that bitterness I was feeling, the anger it was almost like the whole baggage on my shoulder fell off.

GSP: The weight was lifted.

II: The weight was lifted and I started to feel so beautiful. And I was decaying, I was becoming a skeleton, but I felt like oh I am so beautiful. I feel so good inside my heart and I was still in the bathroom. I can almost feel like I have moved from hell to paradise because I can now think and really feel God's love.

GSP: Wow that is amazing. Now you did escape, the Lord protected you. When you got out, you found out what happened to your parents and your family. Tell us about that.

II: When I came out the first night, the people who have killed have run away the country, from the country and I was in a refugee camp. The first night I found out that everyone in my family I left behind was killed. My mom, my dad, my two brothers, my grandpa, my grandma, my uncles, aunts, neighbors, friends, schoolmates; it was almost like the end of the world.

GSP: You had nothing.. you had one brother left.

II: One brother who was outside of the country. Everything in the house was destroyed. And it was like end of the world. A million people was killed in a country small as maybe land state, in a period of three months. The only thing I had though, I tried to cry and feel like this I can't take it, this is, I mean what do you do when you lose so much? You die.

GSP: I can't imagine.

II: But somehow I felt like there was a hand of God in my head, in my heart that was holding me strong and telling me don't crush, do you remember Me? We were together. The One you read in the bible, the One you prayed to. I will be with you no matter how things can be so bad, just make baby steps and continue to talk to Me. And I wrote a lot in my books how everything came back slowly. Someone who gave me a home just praying like a child, God I need a bed because for three weeks after that we were sleeping on the ground.

But you know it was the first time I also understood what it is to be grateful, to be grateful for the sun, for the moon, for the breeze because I didn't have that before. And I realized how much we have sometimes and we ignore and I would tell anyone no matter what you go through there is always love.

GSP: Amen.

II: There is always hope.

GSP: Amen.

II: And if I can forgive anyone can forgive.

GSP: Absolutely. And you had the opportunity to forgive face to face the man who brutally murdered your mother.

II: Yeah, I did. I met him, he was in prison and someone who brought me was a friend of my family who was also a survivor and who was the head of the jail and he thought he was doing me a favor. He thought come and do whatever you want to him. I won't say anything. What can I, you know, just come and ease up your pain. I'm like okay; I'm going to meet him. I know in my heart I've forgiven but I'm not sure how I will react when I see him in person. But it took me by surprise. I remember this man he was a father of some of my friends and he used

to be a man we respected like a father but he killed during the genocide and he was in prison. I remember when he came his hair was long and bad shape, he had lost weight; his foot was swelling, bad teeth. I know I have been in prison for three months and when I saw him the first thing that came out was I just cried. I couldn't believe that somebody we respected so much can choose to be there by doing wrong by killing. It was more to me like a confirmation like don't go there. Don't hate. Do you see the consequences of the sin?

And I touched that man. I really feel like he was confused in his heart, he had this hatred that completely blinded his soul and I really wish he could see the truth, which he could. And I touched him and I said I forgive you. Because I really wanted him not to have me as an excuse not to grow, to say I came back angry for me because they would kill me anyway. I just wanted him to look inside and grow and be able to regret what he had done. And really what made me share my story in my book, the man who had brought me to really beat him, he was there and I have forgot he was there because I was so emotional and then he came, he was like how dare you forgive a killer. You don't like your parents? How can you do this? And he was mad.

GSP: So your friend thought you were betraying your parents for forgiving.

II: Betraying my parents for forgiving and then he said I can't believe this but a year after the same man who had lost his children and his wife, who was beating the prisoners every day, he came to me when I was working at the United Nations and he told me, he said I have to see you. You don't know what happened that time. I said what? I know you were angry with me. He said no you changed my life. I'm like what? That day it was the first time I even realized that it was possible to forgive. And he told me it have changed him. He was able now to think of his future. Maybe get married again, have children again because by that time he said he have given his life to just beat and really give back and revenge his family. So at the time I said oh my God, the miracle that happened to me in the bathroom has happened to the man and that's why I shared my story.

GSP: Wow, unbelievable. You accepted the gift of grace and forgiveness, ironically during the Easter season, that the gift of forgiveness from the Lord in that bathroom and then you passed it on and you're continuing, your ministry is continuing to pass it on. I know you are working hard and your heart is to teach Rwanda now to forgive and to continue to work towards forgiveness and peace; that is your heart and I just thank you and bless you and I know God is going to bless and is blessing your ministry.

II: Thank you.

GSP: He is. We have what's called a Sparrow's Club and this is a gift we give to everybody who joins and it's based on the song "His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches me." And Christ was watching you and still is. And on the bottom it reads: "Bloom where you're planted. The seed falling on good soil refers to people who hear the word and understand it" and you did. "They produce a crop yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown." You are sowing the seed of forgiveness and faith that was sown into you and for that I want to give this to you as a thank you for all you are doing for this country and the world.

INTRODUCTION TO CCA CHORUS - GSP

GSP: And now it is my honor to welcome the Crystal Cathedral Academy Chorus. They are singing a song in French and Swahili and the words mean peace and freedom.

ANTHEM – CCA CHILDREN’S CHORUS – “Amani” (Sung in French)

Chante, chante fort, ce chant de liberte. Chante, chante fort pour la liberte. Chante, chante fort, ce chant de liberte. Chante, chante fort pour la liberte.

Chante pour la liberte. Chante pour la liberte. Chante pour la paix pour tout le monde. Chante pour la paix pour tout le monde.

Imbene wote n'sauti moja, Amani, Amani, Amani, Amani, Amani umoja. Amani, Amani, Amani, Amani, Amani umoja.

Chante, chante fort, ce chant de liberte. Chante, chante fort pour la liberte. Chante, chante fort, ce chant de liberte. Chante, chante fort pour la liberte.

Chante pour la liberte. Chante pour la liberte. Chante pour la paix pour tout le monde. Chante pour la paix pour tout le monde.

Imbene wote n'sauti moja, Amani, Amani, Amani, Amani, Amani umoja. Amani, Amani, Amani, Amani, Amani umoja.

Chante, chante fort, ce chant de liberte. Chante, chante fort, pour la liberte!

(ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

Chante fort ce chant de liberte = Sing strongly this song of peace. Chante pour la paix pour tout le monde = Sing for peace throughout the world. Imbene wote n'sauti moja = With one voice, we all sing together. Amani = Peace.

RHS THANK YOU TO CCA CHORUS/CAROL ASPLING

RHS: Thank you Carol, thank you choir.

MESSAGE/PRAYER – ROBERT H. SCHULLER

"How Positive Thinkers Manage Change"

RHS: Why do we go to church every Sunday? Well some of you are saying we don't. Glad you reminded me. You should. We come to church every Sunday if we're Christians to have our faith revitalized, re-energized and built up again. It's nothing new that we invented. It's been the tradition of great historic religions. The Jewish people once a week following the commandment of God who said that the seventh day should be the Lord Gods. And that's because God knows we need one day in seven to come alive with excitement, enthusiasm, to be re-strengthened and redirected and if we stopped going to church regularly there will be a difference in our lives and I've seen that happening more in my current times of living. When I was a little boy everybody went to church every Sunday; Catholic, Protestant it was wonderful. So I encourage you to change some of your schedules.

It's interesting I use the word change because change is the title of my morning message. What your life amounts to, how you handle the hurts of the past, how you handle the opportunities of today, how you set your goals for the future. It's all up to you. There probably is not a more important verb than the verb change. And it's really used a lot in today's world because with businesses that are running into problems and with cultures that are in conflict and with denominations that are going down hill and churches that are emptying out in

many, many places. We're looking at the word change. What's changing? Why is it changing? Is it good or is it fearful? Where does the change come from? A lot of good change happens in our life, I can say in mine because people pray for us. And our mother's prayers never die.

Now that's one of the more recent insights I've had on the subject of prayer that is prayer does not have a life span. The bible doesn't say if you pray and God will keep that prayer in front of Him for a week a month or a year or until you die. I am convinced a lot of great things that are happening in your life and surely that's happened in my life happened because people prayed for me and the prayers are right still on the front desk of the Lord Almighty. Beautiful, wonderful.

Now look, it's all around us, you can't escape it. It's in culture, in the clothes you wear. I remember my first trip to Eastern Europe maybe forty, fifty years ago and I noticed, I think the first country was Romania all the women wore the same dress. It was always a black dress. There was no style. Arms for the arms, covering of the body, but that was the style. And I said why don't they change? Oh, I was told, some of these dresses are over a hundred years old. They were their mother's dress. When they die the dress will go to their daughter. They don't throw clothes away. If the clothing is damaged and can't be repaired that's something. And so all of the Eastern European countries that I visited black dresses, no colors, no style, permanent life span.

What makes these changes? Not wearing out, not becoming dysfunctional. The shape, the style, the color, there are a variety of factors that make it. I'm just saying change: we all live with it in one way or another. And it can be very dangerous of course especially in communications.

I remember attending a very important meeting of about twenty people in New York City in a very fashionable meeting room. And the people there were named people. All very sophisticated and this is only about four years ago. It was a contentious meeting and finally the one woman who held strong positions got upset and she jumped up and she said, I can't repeat the words, in that colony and that collection of people she used the "F" word more than once. I was just shocked. There was silence. She went to the front door, opened it to leave and used the word again. "You all" slammed the door.

There have been changes in our culture, changes in our society. I have tried to raise my children to use certain words and not to use other words. And I've been criticized by people saying what's in a word anyway? A word is an awfully lot to do with the self-image of the people who have to listen to it. Words have a lot to do with your self-image and your respect. And there are no rules against it. Most people don't have principles anymore. Boundaries have been set aside. What happens to us when the changes that come upon us affect our immediate environment?

This is an important sermon, very important because I don't have the answers. If I had the answers it would be pretty simple but I don't. I don't think Juan Carlos does either. Changes; how do you handle them? Evaluate them up front. They may be good changes, they may come to you today because a mother prayed for you or a father prayed for you or you prayed for yourself. It may have happened years ago, but when God catches a prayer, He doesn't read it and throw it in the basket. He puts it on the shelf and looks at it from time to time. And I've lived through times when I wondered what happened and I look back and I can spot the time in history when certain people prayed for me and their prayers were answered with positive changes. It's why this faith gives you hope. This faith gives you optimism. Wow. The faith today.

I have friends in the entertainment industry that had to watch their careers go down because entertainment changed and what was once considered absolutely impossible public entertainment was broken by new generations that came along and they got by with it. And pretty soon you have a new cultural change. In ethics, in morality. I don't need to preach to you to tell you look at the morals that are tolerated today in America and publicity personalities and celebrities in the entertainment and other businesses are doing what is considered immoral.

And what changes are going to happen in America's culture in the next twenty years? In the next forty years? In the next one hundred years? We are living in change and nothing is going to stop that, nothing. It will keep on going. How the changes are shaped is something else. How do we handle changes? Well first of all let's see if we can't make the changes instead of having to follow the changes. I'm giving everybody an assignment today. I've never done this before in my earthly life. When you get out of here, go home or an office or wherever, take a sheet of paper and title it "Changes I'd like to see made around my life" and be courageous. Dare to write it. Look at all of your life: The economics, the spiritual, the morals, the sexual, everything. Make a list of the changes you'd like to see made. You have the freedom to do that. You have the power to go home and get a paper and pen and write it down. Very important because in all of this thinking business, whether it's positive or negative, you do have the right to make the decision what changes you'd like to see made.

I can tell all of you should put one thing at the top of that list and with this I close. I'd like to see God more real in my life. And it should come from your heart, not from this pulpit. I really don't think I can change people except I think I'm changing people now when I'm asking you to make a list of the changes you'd like to see in the weeks, days, months and years to come. Our world is not going to be the same world in ten years, and surely not in twenty, and what will be the ideas that will take providence. Who will be the persons that make a difference? It may be you writing a letter to the editor. They have to make changes. It may be you coming to church and receiving a challenge to become a Christian of a kind and a type and a lifestyle and a depth that you never imagined you'd be there. And you're going there. I'm asking you to go there. And you can do it. The biggest changes in your life are yet to happen. Hallelujah, 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. Amen!

ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE - ORTIZ

ORTIZ: I believe we were challenged today. We are all experiencing changes and you know that my wife and I lately have decided not to watch television because it was harming us. We just bought a nice one, those big ones with the money the government sent us a few months ago.

But you know, we think that they are changing our culture. So what we have to do, I believe I heard, make a list of all the changes that you are experiencing and then make a decision. You are not going to allow you to be taken by any current; you will have to be in control of your life. And we have a tremendous personality

that tells us how we should be, which is Jesus Christ our Lord, He's our example. So please do that and let us see if we can become a counter culture in some ways of the saying enough is enough, no more, and change our lives and help your children and grandchildren to disobey what the television and radio and other people tells you to do. It would be nice, also, if you also make a list of the changes you would like see in your life and bring at the feet of the cross and say Lord I want to be more like You. Yes, we have a challenge. I'll do my list, I'll do my list.

NEXT WEEK ON THE HOUR OF POWER - ORTIZ

ORTIZ: And next week, my goodness; no arms, no legs, no problem. Nick Vujcic, he will be our guest speaker and he will talk with internationally renowned brain surgeon Ben Carson. So it's going to be a tremendous service next Sunday.

BENEDICTION - ORTIZ

ORTIZ: And now, open your heart for the benediction. May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face to shine upon you, be gracious unto you and grant you His peace in your going out and your coming in, your lying down and in your rising up, in your labor and in your leisure, in your laughter and in your tears until you come to stand before Jesus in that day in which there will be no sunset and no dawning, amen.

ANTHEM – CC Choir, CCHS, CCA Chorus - "All Creatures of our God and King"

All creatures of our God and King lift up your voice and with us sing, Alleluia, Alleluia! Alleluia! All creatures of our God and King lift up your voice and with us sing, Alleluia, Alleluia! Thou burning sun with golden beam, Thou silver moon with softer gleam, O praise Him, O praise Him, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Thou rushing wind that art so strong ye clouds that sail in heaven along, O, praise Him! Alleluia! Thou rising morn in praise rejoice ye lights of evening find a voice! O, praise Him! O, praise Him! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

All ye men of tender heart, forgiving others, take your part! O, sing ye! Alleluia! Alleluia! Ye who long pain and sorrow bear. Long pain and sorrow bear, praise God and on Him cast your care! O praise Him, O praise Him! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son! And praise the Spirit, three in one! O, praise Him! O, praise Him! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! All creatures of our God and King lift up your voice and with us sing, Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Amen!