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## HOUR OF POWER FROM AUGUST 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2010

**‘Facts of Life?’ or ‘Acts of God?’ (Robert H. Schuller)**

### GOOD MORNING/OPENING SENTENCE/INVOCATION

RHS: Wow! What a great place to be on a Sunday morning. Fantastic! Turn around, shake hands with somebody behind you, give them the blessing ‘God loves you and so do I.’

Well this is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it and all God’s people said, Wow!

### SCRIPTURE – Psalm 21 - RHS

RHS: You may be seated. People who come to church week after week after week come to meet new people, welcome old friends, we come to sing, we come to laugh, we come to an environment where the positive emotions fill the structure with energy that is healthy and hope giving. And we come to read from the book that outsells all other books in human history. It’s called the Holy Bible and I’m reading from Psalm. This is written by David, believed to have been written when he was crowned king of Israel. David affirms the greatness and goodness of God to his people. Listen:

We shall have joy in Your strength, O Lord. And in Your salvation how greatly shall we rejoice. God, You’ve given us our heart’s desire. You have not withheld the request of our lips for You meet us with the blessings of goodness. You set a crown of pure gold upon our heads. We asked life from You and You gave it to us, length of days forever and ever. Our glory is great in Your salvation. Honor (Whew!) and majesty (Whew!) You have placed upon us for You have made us blessed forever more. You have made us exceedingly glad with Your presence for we trust in the Lord. Be exalted, O God, in Your own strength. We will sing and praise Your power.

As David walked with God you and I can experience God in our daily walk and hear the choir singing this stirring spiritual, “I Want Jesus to Walk with Me.”

### INTERVIEW – LIBBY GILL

RHS: Well after working in the Hollywood industry for years, my guest this morning realized she was living a life full of old baggage rather than living a new life to its fullest. Dr. Phil was here and he said she’s a person you should have as a guest and she’s helped me. She has a new book “Traveling Hopefully,” so here we are. Libby Gill, thank you for coming.

LG: Thank you. Thank you for having me here.

RHS: Well. Why do you suppose Dr. Phil said I should have you as a guest?

LG: Well, Dr. Phil asked me to come help him with his show because he had a message to share and a way of doing television, as you well know, for the good of people.

RHS: Yes.

LG: And then when he found out what my story was, he offered to write the forward to my book and to help me share my message.

RHS: What’s your story?

LG: My story is that I was so caught up in my struggles and, like a lot of people, living with so much noise of the outside world that I was talking to

God all the time, talking at God, but I never knew that I could stop and listen and I could turn down all that noise and hear that voice of God. And I learned that one day when I had gone to visit my father who was at the end of his life and I sat at his bedside and I took his hand. And my father had abandoned my family and it was a very strained relationship for many years.

RHS: How can a psychiatrist do that?

LG: You know, my father.. I was one of six kids and grew up in the south and there was this point when I was 10 years old and came down the stairs on Christmas day and you know with six kids you got to get there first because we weren't thinking about Jesus. We were thinking about opening some presents.

RHS: Yes.

LG: And I went into the kitchen and instead of my parents there was a neighbor there who told us that my oldest brother, who was home from college on a break, had been in a car accident on Christmas Eve, the night before, and he died that Christmas morning. And my family, instead of turning to one another and turning to God, fell apart and just four months after that my father left my mother and he actually married a former patient and moved to another country. So there were all of these struggles and at that point I learned to believe that my life was pain and loneliness and misery and once I believed that I made that my reality and I got really good at making it better and better and better over the years until that moment that I sat by my father and I just stopped and I heard that voice tell me, 'this is your chance. This is the time to declare your truth and say what you have to say.' And I held his hand and without blame and without bitterness I just unburdened everything that I had held back for 40 years. And at that moment I discovered this enormous power in vulnerability and since then there was no going back. I have this call, I never thought I would say that in a million years but, God told me to get out there and tell my story in a practical, step-by-step way so that I could deliver a message of hope and a manual change for other people that are going through the struggles of self healing. And then once you learn that, you just surrender to God and all that baggage just starts to float away.

RHS: Wouldn't you say, if I get you message, that how we deal with our memory system is crucial and critical?

LG: Yes, what I learned from that moment, from the time I was 10 on, was that I had built this system of self beliefs that weren't really true. And what I tell people now is to challenge those beliefs.

RHS: And they were negative self beliefs.

LG: Right.

RHS: Like #1 – I'm no good.

LG: I'm no good. I don't deserve. I'm meant to suffer. I'm meant to struggle. I'm meant to be alone.

RHS: How do these negative thoughts come to possess us and you were on your Masters Degree for psychology and you dropped out of it?

LG: I did. I did. I just..

RHS: Well you learned a lot, that's obvious from the book.

LG: I did learn a lot. And now I had no idea how prophetic that title was, "Traveling Hopefully," because I'm all over the country now talking to people, not just in the corporate world but in churches and spiritual centers and really sharing this message. And I feel like, for the first time, I had discovered my purpose and at age 50, better now than never at all. I wasn't supposed to say that?

RHS: You're in a church and you don't exaggerate in a church. Now you're only 40 so just scratch the 50.

LG: No, I'm 50.  
 RHS: Where?  
 LG: August 23rd, 1954.  
 RHS: I don't see.. where is that 50? I don't see it.  
 LG: I'm telling you, when I started this journey it was like..  
 RHS: You got a grey hair.  
 LG: I got a.. well you know there's something called..  
 RHS: You know I had..  
 LG: ..highlighting that you don't..  
 RHS: Okay..  
 LG: ..know about, Dr. Schuller, but the rest of us do.  
 RHS: Let me tell you, I had an insight last week. I'm seventy.. I had an insight last week; the first grey hair is the mark of wisdom coming into your life. That's really true and so welcome those first grey hairs.  
 LG: I believe that.  
 RHS: Because you paid a price for it. More than you, but you're wiser than you were when you didn't have a grey hair in your head. And the greyer you get.. well let's move away from that one, okay? I want to thank you for coming today.  
 LG: Thank you.  
 RHS: And for everything you did for Dr. Phil.  
 LG: Thank you.  
 RHS: And I haven't read the whole book but I'm anxious to do so.  
 LG: Thank you.  
 RHS: You have a final word for these good people? If they can take one sentence away, what would it be?  
 LG: That once we can surrender our struggles and stop all the noise and just turn down the volume on the outside world and the noise inside our own heads, that's when, in the stillness, we can find that voice of guidance. Well one of my favorite scriptures that I think that sums up all of this is Revelation 3:8 and that is that "I have set before you an open door that no one can shut."  
 RHS: Wow. That's fantastic. Look, dear God I thank You for the person I see through these eyes. Dear God I thank You that You came to her at a time and You made her receptive and responsive and thank You that Your spirit keeps coming to her in her inner chamber, guiding and leading her. And I thank You that You're using her. Amen.  
 LG: Thank you. Thank you very much.

MESSAGE/PRAYER – ROBERT H. SCHULLER "'Facts of Life?' or 'Acts of God?'"

RHS: My goodness, you're good looking people. Aren't they good looking, Bruce? Man. Thank you, for coming. Hasn't it been a wonderful service? Well, I'm alive, so are you and we're having all kinds of experiences, aren't we?

How many of you ever felt that you were the victim of something that was unfair? Let me see your hand. Okay, and if you didn't raise your hand, you either have a bad memory or you don't dare admit it, one. Isn't that right, Bruce? Did you raise your hand?

BL: I did. I did.

RHS: Okay.

BL: Both hands.

RHS: A year ago, I was writing this book. This year, I'm living it. It's kind of fun. It really is. Something happens in life, you know. And part of it is I've learned a little. I think I'm smarter today than I was a year ago.

All my life, I kind of had the feeling that all things that work together for good to those that love God and keep His commandments. And I kind of had the feeling that anything and everything that happened to me, happened to me because God loved me and He made it happen. Well, I don't think I believe that anymore. I was beginning to see the light a year ago and I wrote on page 14, "Don't confuse the facts of life with the acts of God."

You know, I have observed that people, a lot of people just live by the first half of this title. And that's their philosophy of life – "Life's not fair." If you find people who don't have a positive faith in God and they don't have a dynamic faith in Jesus Christ, they tend to live by the philosophy – "Life's not fair."

And you know what kind of people they turn out to be. Cynical. I don't believe him. Or they're not sincere. Or have you got that covered in a good contract? Everybody that's been the victim of unfairness has to watch out that he doesn't fall and live the rest of his life just by the first three words – Life's not fair. If you just live by those three words, you'll become paranoiac, insecure, fearful, suspicious and suspicion is the most unreliable form of mental activity and the most difficult to uproot once it's established, its malignant tentacles in the human brain.

Life's not fair – is that your faith? I feel sorry for you? You're going to miss out on a lot of good stuff that's going to be handed to you sincerely, by wonderful people who don't have a hook. And they're not looking for anything. They're just nice folks. Then there are other people that get converted out of a kind of a bad life and they become Christians and God's so good to forgive their sins that they switch their philosophy of life and from now on they just live by the philosophy – God is good. And they just can't imagine God allowing anything to happen to their life, unless God wants it to happen. Unless it's really good. And if people just live piously, unrealistically, with the God is good philosophy, I'll tell you something – they become disillusioned. Or down the road, when they're all alone, they'll have some secret doubts about their own faith, which means they're in trouble.

And I submit that the whole title of this book is going to give you a well balanced emotional prevention to emotional unbalanced living. You've got to live with an awareness that life's not fair – that's reality. But, God is good. 'All things work together for good to those that love God and keep His commandments' doesn't mean that God allows everything to happen to you including, probably, cancer or God knows what. Or a terrible accident where your loved ones are killed.

Those are the facts of life. Let me read a paragraph. Life's not Fair, but God is Good. Don't get the two mixed up or you'll become a confused atheist or a confirmed agnostic. Life is made up of everything that happens to us, or hits us and life is the business of living in a sinful world where evil, injustice and wickedness is very much alive. Place the blame where it belongs on the facts of life and not on the acts of God.

But the good news is this – God can redeem the facts of life. Keep the faith that God will guide us through these negative experiences – that may be negative or sinful. They may even be demonic. But the horrible hurt gets thrown upon you. God will redeem it if you keep the faith.

You know, the reason we need to live by the whole title – Life's not Fair, But God is Good is very simple. If we don't live by that, then we will want to take

things in our own hands. We'll want to get even. That's dangerous. Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. Life's not fair. The next time you get hit, if you don't realize that God can move in and help redeem the situation and bring something good out of it, you are going to try to get even in your own hands, and then like the Mercedes driver. You know, Paul Harvey, tells this story in his latest book. Here's this wonderful old woman. Wonderful. And she's riding through the parking lot. There's a sale on in the store and she can't find an empty space and she goes round and round and about to give up, when she sees someone come out of the store with their hands full of things and she knows this person's going to leave. So she follows that person slowly and that person goes into a car. Opens the door. Puts the stuff in and she waits a little behind. And then she watches that person and she sees the tail lights go on and then she sees the exhaust puff and she knows that guy's leaving.

And then she sees the car slowly move outward and she's parked far enough away so that car can get out and the car gets out and it starts to move and she looks at the nice empty space and she says I finally got an empty space. But she waits too long, because from behind, comes some fast speeder, some young guy driving a hot shot, expensive, Italian sports car. And he zips around her and he parks in the empty space.

Now that's not fair. Right? And she opens her window and she says, 'that's not fair. I have been waiting for this space. It's mine.' He looked at her and said, 'sorry ma'am, but that's the way it is if you're young and quick.' Then he takes off and runs toward the store. As he's running toward the store, he hears a horrendous crash. He turns around to see that the lady in the Mercedes has deliberately smashed into the rear end of his expensive sports car, wiping out the trunk and the right rear fender. And he's horrified. He said 'you can't do that!' screaming at her. She says, 'Well, that's the way it is if you're old and rich.'

How often have you made trouble for yourself because you tried to compensate or balance out or equalize an injustice and you were the innocent victim and you made matters worse? And you said something you wished you hadn't said. And you wrote a letter that you wish you could pull back. Unless you realize the reality is we live in a world with human beings and among these human beings, some are nice and some aren't nice. Don't tell me everybody's nice. Some people are greedy. Some people are selfish. Right?

How do you handle an injustice? If you believe, with a reality - Life's not fair, so I'm not going to expect everybody's going to treat me fair. I don't expect that. And when people don't treat me fair and I'm the victim of an injustice or a bad criticism - I've had that in the press. The facts of life are the acts of God, but every time God moves in, He makes something good out of it.

Magic Johnson. I sent this telegram to him.

"Dear Magic, I join with millions of others who are keeping you and your family in our prayers. I've learned firsthand that life's not fair, but God is good. And you are certainly experiencing that. Your positive attitude, your commitment to make your life a tool to help others will see you through and God will bless you in ways you never imagined. Keep close to God. Renew and strengthen your faith in Him and He will give you victory through Jesus Christ. God loves you, Magic, and so does Robert Schuller."

And now, I hope that as he tells young people about the dangers of sex, I hope that he'll also find some audiences which will allow him to share that the safest sex was advocated by the Bible. Two thousand, five hundred years ago, when there was really only one religion, it was the Jewish religion. Jesus Christ hadn't been born yet; neither had Mohammed or Buddha. And Moses saw the

problems that there were in sex and the dangers that God said to Moses, “You teach people what safe sex is all about. Teach them.” That’s pretty loaded emotion. And kids should wait with it till they get married. It’s only a few years and they’re married. Some things are meant for adults. Active sex life: that’s meant for adults. Kids, you wait.

And Jesus came along, He taught the same thing. Of course, He was a good Jew. And then I was raised in Christianity and I was taught that. So was my wife. The safest sex is not the sex where you put your whole life and gamble it on a piece of plastic, but you base it on the promises of God. So my wife and I never had sex with anybody till we were married. Then we had fun. And have had it, fun for 41 years. And don’t let this fool you, we still do. That’s really safe sex. Can’t beat it. It’s so safe, you don’t need condoms. I hope there will be a revival in this country. They we’ll begin to see that the safest sex advocacy was what was advocated in the Holy Bible and we’ll begin to listen to the Bible more than Playboy Magazine.

The facts of life or acts of God. Some things that happen to us are pretty bad. Don’t blame God for it. He told you what to do. He told you what not to do and if you don’t listen to that, you’re in trouble. It can be fatal trouble. Life’s not fair, but God is good. Even if you messed your own life up because you didn’t know His commands or you didn’t listen to His advice or you just said ‘I’ll do what I want to do’ even then God will move in to these negative situations and He can redeem the horrible thing that may have happened to you.

I have some friends who have AIDS. They didn’t get it through a blood transfusion. They got it because they just did things that the Bible told them they shouldn’t do. And I’m thinking of one of these persons right now and he’s redeeming the situation by telling people he did a bad thing. That he was kind of loose once in awhile, not often. And now it’s killing him. But he’s using this to teach young people to live by the old fashioned law that was good for 2,500 years. So God is in it.

When God’s goodness comes in, it redeems the situation. How is God’s goodness felt? Well, maybe through courage. My what courage Magic Johnson had to come out and admit it right away. I admire him for that. I think you all do. Or the courage to try to accept what’s happened to you. And you’ve lost an arm, okay; now, I’ll get by without arms. Or the challenge to do and be something with what you’ve got left.

My sister sent me a wonderful story. My sister lives in Iowa and here’s the story of a teenager in Shenandoah. How many people here have heard of Shenandoah, Iowa? My goodness, I didn’t know Shenandoah was, they have, they sell seeds, I think. The Almay seed companies in Shenandoah. Isn’t it? Used to be.

Anyway, Brent Foster, Shenandoah. Brent, I don’t know you, wish I did, 18 years old. Boy is he good looking. He just graduated a senior from high school there; 3.9 average, not bad. Wow. But he wasn’t quite in high school, when they found out he had cancer in the leg and they amputated the leg and pretty tough. And one of the reasons he makes the story and a big picture in the paper is because he graduated at the top of his class and also they recently took a couple of things off a lung. But he wrote an essay about his life situation, his health and his physical condition. Here’s the headline in the paper: “I almost feel I owe a debt of gratitude to my handicap.”

It’s absolutely true. All things work together for good to those that love God and keep His commandments. What does this mean? Well when something happens to you and it was bad and it was destructive to your health don’t assume

that God had anything to do with it. I don't think God had a thing to do with my needing brain surgery in Amsterdam.

I found out this week, something I didn't know until Thursday, and that was the statement that the doctor made that the reason he shaved my hair off as soon as he could was when he saw a CAT scan, he could see that, he said, I had only 20 or 30 minutes left. The blood was still flowing out of the ruptured vein and had been flowing out of that ruptured vein for ten hours. For ten hours, I was in a coma asleep. And he told my colleagues and my wife that he figured I had 20 or 30 minutes left and by that time it would have been too late.

Wow. How is God's goodness felt? Well, that's a miracle. I think that is. God was in the action of getting me to the hospital in the nick of time. But I don't think God had a thing to do with my clumsiness and throwing myself in the car and banging my head on the roof.

Then how does God make His goodness felt when the facts of life, or your sins, or my sins, or my clumsiness or somebody else's bad behavior causes us to have grief? How does God move in to redeem the situation? He gives us the courage to face life differently. Differently.

You need to respond to every negative situation where you are the innocent victim of an injustice and treated unfairly and you didn't get the promotion and they didn't accept you and your work was rejected and they didn't take you in the graduating department. Or you were the victim of a rejection in a relationship and you didn't deserve that. Or you didn't get the raise or the bonus that you should have. Every time that happens and you're innocent and you are the victim, pray for God to help you. Don't drive a Mercedes in somebody's trunk. Ask the good Lord to give you wisdom and patience and to face the challenge creatively and constructively. Then if you pray that way, all things work together for good to those that love God and keep His commandments. You'll be challenged. You'll be given courage. You'll be made more compassionate. Or probably you'll take the situation that you're in and amazingly, you turn it into something very creative and the problem becomes a possibility. Somebody said, I heard this when I was growing up, when you're mad enough to swear, it's time to invent something. Be compassionate, be creative.

Take a good look at me. I'm not the same guy I was two months ago. I'm different. I don't even know how I've changed. But I feel an awful lot of compassion. I don't think I ever was driven by anger. But I know now I'm so full of love. I have a job to keep from crying because the love wants to leak out. You know, it's true. Trouble never leaves you where it found you. It always changes you. I'm a different guy than I was two months ago because of your prayers. I have to tell you something: I'm a better person than I was. You just stick around, it'll show because life's not fair, but God is good. Thank you.

Let us pray: Lord, it's a beautiful life. We love it. We love the valleys, we love the mountains. We love the challenges and the opportunities. We marvel at how You take situations that really on the face look quite pathetic and You turn them into fantastic possibilities. We sense Your goodness. We feel You within us. When the spirit of courage comes, we recognize this is You. When the Spirit of love rises within us, we recognize this is You. When we are faced with a tremendous challenge to do, or to try, or to achieve, we recognize this is You, Your Holy Spirit in us. You are alive in me. You are alive in these people. Thank You, Lord, Amen.

BENEDICTION - RHS

RHS: And now may the Lord bless you and keep you in your going out and in your coming in, 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 is no sunset and no dawning, amen.