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Transcription

Good morning, good morning. As you can see, Joe Barlow is not here, but Joe Barlow is online. Everybody say good morning, Joe. Do you hear that? All right, good morning, everybody else on Zoom. Good morning to you guys. What about this weather? Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. I forgot my phone. I got to read something real quick and we'll get started. I won't take too much time. The series we're on is unshaken. And I looked up a psalm, a psalm. What is a psalm? What does David say about being

unshaken? He says this. He has a gift of writing and poetry. Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup. You make my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. Surely I have a delightful inheritance. I will praise the Lord who counsels me. Even at night, my heart instructs me. I will keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Not be shaken. I will not be shaken. Men, that's Psalm 16. Psalm 16. Psalm 16. So, man, as we set the Lord before us, we know that he is at our right hand. He blesses everything we do. We can't bless things, but God can. And God says, put me first and let me do what you cannot do because you're a mere human. And so we ask him to bless this day. Bless Phil. Continue to bless Phil. Continue to bless all of us and what we're doing after we leave here today. We put God first every day. And then his right hand, his right hand will bless what we bless with our right hand. All right. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for today. We thank you for all the gifts you give us. We thank you for being available to us. Lord, stay with us. Continue to teach us. Continue to humble us with your blessing. We thank you for this time together. We thank you for this gift of this place where we can gather. Bless this time. Bless us today. Bless Phil. In your son's name we pray. Amen. Amen. Thank you, Jeff. Morning, gentlemen. I am so glad that I don't have to talk about Lane Kiffin this morning. I'm not going to bring it up. I'm not going to mention it. There's no need to talk about Lane Kiffin. So I'm not bringing it up this morning. but I want to congratulate my Ole Miss brothers and even my state brothers went into Gamecock land and got a big win and just want you to be praying for our volunteers this weekend as we've got that other orange team coming up and Carla's going to be wearing orange you know she's a Texas grad I'm a Tennessee grad and the orange doesn't match at our house we have a lot of that So we will be enjoying that this weekend. I want to remind you, my friend David Hamilton, our Ebenezer Place caretaker, is going to be leading Workday. And the worst thing to happen at worst day, at Workday, is that David Hamilton would be up there by himself. That would suck, wouldn't it, David? That would suck real bad. So please keep that in mind. Next Saturday, 8 to 4, something like that, show up, and David will have assignments for you. Bring your garden tools, yard tools, and be ready to get us ready for deer camp in two weeks. So again, October the 9th through the 11th is our men's coaching weekend, a.k.a. Deer Camp. Many of you in this room, of course, have been. And if you haven't been, please sign up. It'll be the best weekend of your life for sure. So we're excited about that. So gentlemen, this morning, our session is going to be a little bit different in that I'm going to kind of guide us in our teaching piece, and then we're going to have a special presentation kind of in the middle. So we're going to have a halftime show today. So I'm going to start us out in the first quarter, second quarter, and then we'll have halftime. The band is not playing, but we will have a halftime. So follow with me, and I don't have a song for you this morning, but let's read our introductory paragraph, and let's dig in here. Unshaken, the experience of love and grace is our title. Freedom is

where the journey begins. Courage is how you fight the battle, and resilience is how you finish the race. every man gets hit life ambushes us with failure fear shame disappointment loss and exhaustion this roundtable series is a call to get off the x live as a free man in christ and build a resilient heart that can stand back up move forward and finish strong set free get off the x Stay resilient and finish strong is our mission. So be on the alert, gentlemen. Act like men. Be strong. 1 Corinthians 16, 13. So I would start this morning by asking you this question. What has God given you? I don't want you to answer that question. Just put pen to paper. What has God given you? What comes to your mind? And I would just write this. God is a giver. You ever been around people who seem to be takers? Takers have no limits. Takers have no limits, as Jeff says. God is a giver. God is a giver. What has he given you? And, you know, the title of our session this morning is The Experience of Love and Grace. I don't so much want to teach you about love and grace, but I want to invite you into the experience of love and grace. You know, I love my friend Ricky Davis. Now, Ricky thinks I love him because of who he is, but I love him because of his apple pie. You know, I just have to confess that. Now, I could stand up here and I could tell you about Ricky's apple pie. Now, my grandma made a great apple pie, but the best apple pie I've ever had in my life has been made by Ricky Davis. And again, I like Ricky, but I really, really like his apple pie. Yeah, yep. That's best bread pudding up there. Well, his mother's bread pudding. That's right, Marty. That's right. His mother's bread pudding is really good. I've had that as well. But guys, you know, I could talk about Ricky's apple pie all day. But if you've never experienced it, it would just not fly. You need to come to deer camp because on Saturday night you get Ricky's apple pie. This past weekend, I made a healthy carrot cake. And Carl was pretty proud of me. You know, the only sugar that was in it was the fruit that was in it, apples and dates and carrots. Of course, you can't make carrot cake without carrots. And then it was sweetened with maple syrup. You know, no refined sugar. Wouldn't you love to experience my carrot cake? Yeah. Well, that's kind of what I'm talking about this morning is that we are too academic oftentimes in our faith. We talk about apple pie and never eat it. We talk about carrot cake and never eat it. We can pass a test, a trivia contest on the things of our faith, and yet we don't live it out. We don't feel it. I'm a counselor. And what we say in counseling, Raymond, you say this, is the healing is in the feeling. When I was at the Minersmeyer Clinic, and Blair and I were talking about this, and I helped to make Henry Cloud famous. Henry Cloud was nobody until I came along. Henry Cloud was over the clinic, and I was a patient, and I was really lost. I needed help. I mean, I love Jesus and I knew Jesus, but I had a lot of emotional work to do. And I remember sitting with my counselor, Dan, and I write about this in my book. And, you know, we're kind of at a, you know, a thoughtful point in the counseling session. And I didn't know what to say, where to go. and I looked at Dan and I said, man, where do we go from here, Dan? And I'll never forget, as I say, I write about this in my book. Dan looked at me and he said, well, Phil, we just go back to your feelings and

your feelings will lead us to the right place. Now, at that point in my life, I thought feelings was just an annoyance. It was my feelings that were giving me the problems. You know, if I could just quit feeling, I'd be a lot better off. But man, that was a bad, bad frame. Because where would we be without the feeling of joy, without the feeling of peace, without the experience of eating a piece of Ricky's apple pie. I mean, what if you really had a bad case of COVID, like some people had, and you lost your taste and smell? That was a part of the symptoms of COVID. I want to experience the love and grace that God tells us about. Don't you? Don't you? So what has God given you? Now, this whole series is built around these four pillars. Set free, get off of the X, stay resilient, and finish strong. So the idea is I am free, and if I'm free, if I really am experiencing freedom, then it's going to inspire me to be courageous, and as I face those shakable experiences, I can be resilient, and I can persevere. And the scripture there, I want you to embrace and memorize through this whole series. Galatians 5.1, no slavery. I'm not a slave any longer. I'm free. Joshua 1.9, no fear. Be courageous. I'm not afraid. Isaiah 40, 31, wait on the Lord and mount up with eagle's wings. And then Hebrews 12, 1 and 2, keep your eyes on Jesus. That's quite a path to walk. I mean, that right there will fuel you and get you into a great experience of the love and grace that God offers us. Now, I want you to look at your outline there. You've got your handout, your AI handout, now known as, as Donald Trump has announced this week, SI. It's no longer AI, it's SI, you know, super intelligence. So, but freedom, questions about freedom. So let's dig a little deeper in these questions. So I want you to consider the gospel of freedom, the gospel of Christ through these questions. And as a mentor of mine helped me with years ago, he said this, Phil, you'll never grow beyond your questions. When we stop asking questions, then we either arrogantly feel like that we have all the answers, or we've just stopped growing. So let's ask some questions. First of all, does being free mean that if I don't do what God says, he will still love me? Yes. Yes. Now, there would be people that would push back on that. I would illustrate it this way. I love my daughters. Both of them. And there is nothing that my daughters could do, nothing, that would cause me not to love them. There's things that I wish my daughters would do. And I have been heartbroken by my daughters. But there is no way. that they would somehow do anything that would cause me not to love them. Isn't that the way you feel about your sons and daughters? Why don't we understand that about Father God? Nothing, nothing. So, you know, if I'm going to be free and I'm going to experience love, I really do want to understand that God loves me no matter what. I wish my daughters understood that better, both of them. Question number two. Does being free mean that God is pleased with whatever I do, no matter what it is? No. No. No. Of course not. But it doesn't mean that he turns his back on me. I want you to turn over to Romans chapter 4. And this is a passage about God declaring his love for me. And yet, and accepting me regardless of what I'm doing. And the one word that I want you to write down just on your page there, just to kind of anchor this in, is the word

declaration. God declares, he declares his love for me and his acceptance of me, even when I am doing wrong. Now, Romans chapter four says this, this is verse nine or so. And Jeff, I think that I'm starting a little earlier than what you've got on your PowerPoint there. It's this. Do you think for a minute that this blessing is only pronounced or declared over those of us who keep our religious ways and are circumcised? Now, he's talking to the Jews. It's just, okay, we keep the law and we've been circumcised and the gospel is only for those guys. No. Or do you think if it's possible that the blessing could be given to those who never even heard of our ways, who were not Jews, who were never brought up in the disciplines of God. They didn't go to church like we went to church. we all agree don't we that it was here this is the this is the gospel right here it was by embracing what god did for him that abraham was declared fit before god it's what God did God is a giver and God gave Abraham the declaration of being accepted it wasn't because he was a Jew it wasn't because he was circumcised it wasn't because he did everything right it was a declaration Now think, was that declaration made before or after he was marked by the covenant rite of circumcision? This is very important, you know? Are you saved because you were baptized? No, you were saved before you were baptized. Circumcision and baptism are synonyms, in a sense. That's right, before he was marked. That means that he underwent circumcision as evidence and confirmation of what God had done long before to bring him into this, now listen to this, into this acceptable standing with himself as an act of God he had embraced with his whole life. Acceptable standing was done by God, by Abraham just embracing God's promises. We call that by faith, by faith. How do you experience the daily love and grace of God? It's by faith. I trust God. I trust God. And I begin to feel his presence. I experience his presence. Now jump down to verse 19 in Romans 4. Abraham didn't focus on his own impotence and say it's hopeless. You know again I can never be good enough might be a way to say that. I can't make a baby happen. That's the metaphor here. I mean it was reality, but it can also be seen as a metaphor that Adam could not make it happen in making a baby any more than you and I can make our salvation happen by our performance. Does that make sense? It's hopeless. This hundred-year-old body could never father a child, nor did he survey Sarah's decades of infertility and give up. He didn't tiptoe around God's promises, asking cautiously skeptical questions. He plunged into the promise and came up strong, ready for God, sure that God would make good on what he had said. That's why it is said Abraham was declared fit before God by trusting God to set him right. That's the gospel, guys. We trust God's promises, and God declares us righteous. That's why we're free, not by our performance, but we are free. We're no longer slaves. But it's not just Abraham, it's also us. The same thing gets said about us when we embrace and believe the one who brought Jesus to life, when the were equally hopeless. The sacrifice Jesus made us fit for God and set us right for God. So guys, we are accepted based on the declaration of God. So question number three, does being free mean that when Christians are really

upset with me, God isn't? Yes. You know, I have people mad at me all the time because they come into my counseling room and I can't fix what they've messed up for over 20 years. You know, they give me 45 minutes. It don't work. You know? Number four, does being free mean that his love and grace are without condition? Totally. Yes, that's exactly what it means. Unconditional love. And then number five, what if I do something bad? Would God still bless me and answer my prayers? Yes, He will. And Psalm 73 talks about the perplexion of the psalmist on why good things happen to bad people. And so it's not about performance. If it was all about performance, then we would say bad people have bad things happen. And some of the lousiest people I know are very successful. And it's so perplexing. And what we see in the world all the time, it's not about performance. It's not. I am free because God has declared me free. I want you to experience that, not just know that in your head. I want you to feel free. I feel free. Don't you? I want to invite my team to come up and they want to share this idea of God's giving grace. What I would say as the team comes up is what God gives is grace, and what we feel is gratitude so that we can be generous to share that experience with others. God's a giver. He's given us grace. He allows us the freedom of gratitude, and we can be generous. And my team is going to help you understand how that can happen practically. Gentlemen. Good morning, guys. My name is Lad Bratcher. And the team here is we got Steve Grantham on your far right, my far left, and Rick Garraway. You know, this is not your typical halftime show, what I'm going to do. It's not the band. Right. But I think it's crucial to, you know, what BPO is all about and us finishing the game strong in our mission. And Jeff, if you'll put up the first slide, you know, I look back on my journey with BPO and it's been almost 20 years. I had gone through an ugly divorce and somehow got connected with Phil Harden. And he helped me through that and through this journey of surrounding myself with godly men in this group and deer camp. Now I'm happily married 18 years. So God's good. You know, and what we want to talk about is will you invest in the work behind what's going on here? The mission that I feel challenged me with and the team is to raise \$48,000 for the ministry support. And what we're talking about with that is, you know, our outreach, our discipleship, our leadership to men to help them get on the right path in their journey. You know, there's a lot that goes on behind this ministry that people in this room probably are really not aware of. You know, you have contract labor. We had people that give, you know, selflessly to this ministry. There's communication expense, media expense, email, web, donor contact, stuff going on all the time. You can see accounting and our records keeping. We have tools that we use that are, you know, technology is expensive. So this is an ongoing expense that is crucial to this ministry. and you can change the slide Jeff but as you can see I don't know if you can see that or not but kind of gives a little break out of what what these items cost you know office and supplies around 12,000 a year contract labor for Allison around 12,000 accounting around 10,000 contract labor, Bridget, who helps a lot with Allison, and then media and tech

and communications. These all add up to roughly \$48,000 a year. So what, you know, we've kind of piecemealed it together through the years, and we've been coming up short. And I think, you know, what I want you to think about is, you know, I don't think it's fair for a few people to carry the weight of that number every year. I think every man in here gets something out of this every Thursday morning. And that's a question, you know, what's coming here every Thursday morning? worth to you, to me. And, you know, if we had 50 guys, they would give \$20 a week. That's what we're looking for. If you can give more, great. Let me make one very important comment that, you know, if you're giving now to BPO, please don't stop giving that. Don't diminish that value. Don't pull from one account, say you're giving to men's coaching weekend. Don't take from that to give to this. This is an additional ask that we're asking. And all I'm asking is \$20 a week. And I think every man in this room can do that. So there's a handout on the table. You can sign up there for automatic draft on your account. And also on the last slide, it's on the handout as well, the QR code. It will fill up what you need to do to sign up to give. And I hope you'll pray about it. I hope you'll think about it and support this ministry. God bless you.

Rick. hey there rick garroway and i think they asked me to be part of this because i have not participated in deer camp i have not done the rafting trips i only come here on thursday mornings and i find a lot of value and coming here on thursday mornings and i've been part of other Bible studies where 10 guys get together and g-haul around and read a little scripture and send each other off in their jolly way and it makes you feel better about yourself but I don't know really sometimes what you're getting out of it but I really feel like you get something out of this Bible study. I go to church a lot. My family loves to go to church a lot of Sundays I get something, but I'd say every week I come here, I come away with something, some nugget that helps my life be easier, better, and hopefully makes me a better person. And I think back, my spills aren't going to be nearly as long as it lasts, but I think back to a couple of weeks ago when Phil said, we don't stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stopped playing. And I think that's really appropriate. And all I can say is hopefully you'll find some worth in this. As we grow together, we'll continue to support this, and we'll be here for the rest of, as I look around the room, our aging people's time. Thank you. Good morning. I'm Steve Grantham. I've been coming to Deer Camp about six years now, pre-COVID, and even during COVID when we're out at Vertical Church, I remember coming to men's group, but my first incursion into this family, if you will, was that I had a counselor that I was working with. He goes, you got to go to deer camp. You got to go to deer camp. You got to go to deer camp. And I was like, hell no. I don't know what it is. I'm not going. I don't need it. And I'm scared to death and I'm not going. And finally, it got to the point to where I had to go. That's the best thing I ever did in my life. It changed my life. And immediately coming out of deer camp, I got involved with this. And I rarely miss a Thursday morning unless I'm out of town traveling with my business. It's part of my life. And I was thinking about this yesterday when I was talking to Rick and

Ladd. I started thinking, what did I do on Thursday mornings before I started doing this? what was i doing i wasn't getting up reading the bible i was going about my day just methodically struggling and now i've got somewhere to be i get a message every day and have friends and have relationships and business contacts and people that i can call and acquaintances acquaintances that are renewed that i've lost touch with over time so for me this is a lot more than just a men's group on a Bible study. It is a community that we've all grown together. We continue to grow and I get a lot out of it. So when Phil asked us to do this, I was like, what's the value? What value am I getting out of this? Well, hell, it changed my life. Changed my life for myself personally. Changed my relationship with my family. It changed my relationship with my people that I work with and my friends and it expanded my friendship base and my business base all at the same time just because I got out of my own way all right I started being real you know what's your struggle tell your story and be real about it and try and walk through Christ every day and give to others as God's given to you so when we look at the value what's it worth to you to have something that impacts your life every Thursday. And not only does it impact your life every Thursday, it impacts it for the next seven days until the next Thursday and the next Thursday and the next Thursday. And it really has had a dramatic impression on me and my family, my relationship with my wife's better, my relationship with my kids are better because they know on Thursday morning, I'm going to call them at 8.10 or 8 o'clock, Say, man, I saw Tommy and I saw Lad and I saw Bob and I saw all these other guys, Scott, whoever else, Mr. Creepmore. At Bible study, everybody's there. Man, y'all got a great group. Y'all got a good group. There's 70 people here this morning. And at \$20 a piece, we're \$1,400. That's \$5,600 a month. We're already to our goal. So I ask you just in closing, what's it worth to you to do something of value that impacts your life every day? Thank you. Thank you, team. Thank you, team. Thank you, team. Thank you, team. There we go. Best halftime show ever. Thank you, guys. And again, what we're talking about this morning is the experience of love and grace, not in a theoretical term. And what the guys just shared with you is their experience. And we want you to experience the love and grace of God. And where we experience that is when we're together with other men, whether it's at deer camp or here on Thursday morning. And the reality of being free sets us up then to go into the world and be courageous and be resilient and persevere through whatever circumstance and whatever relationship is challenging us. This idea of not only grace, but being attracted to the love of God. This idea, get that next slide, Jeff, the love attraction. Guys, I truly experience every day love without condition through the gospel. I don't stand before you offering you my performance. I fail every day and every week. But I know that God loves me and I feel that. It's like, I want to please God. I want to trust God because I've experienced his love. When somebody really loves you, what happens inside of you? I want to trust that person. I, my obedience then comes out of receiving his love, not out of a desire to gain his love. That's really, really critical.

Romans chapter 2 verse 4 is one of the most critical verses in all of Scripture, and it is the kindness of God, not the niceness of God. I've written a blog on the difference between nice and kind. Nowhere in the Bible are we called to be nice. Nobody. But many of us grew up as I did. My mama telling me, now you need to be nice. You need to be nice. But verse 4 of Romans chapter 2 says, It is the kindness of God. God expressing acceptance and grace to me that makes me do a 180. The kindness of God leads me to repentance. And when I start experiencing kindness and that I don't have to feel shame and fear over my failures, That I actually have another man look me in the eye and say, you know, I hear you. Me too. Me too. Me too. And that's what the kindness of God is getting at. It's like he moves toward us when we are at our worst place. Not after you clean it up. And then God says, okay, glad you cleaned up. now I will move toward you. No, it is the kindness of God, his moving toward me, even when I'm at my worst place, that changes. Especially, thank you, Jeff, especially when I'm at my worst place, he moves toward me. It is the power of experience that changes everything. Guys, I don't want to be theoretical about this. I don't want to be academic about this. I want you to feel, as a counselor would say, I want you to feel the love and the grace of God. And I believe that when you start to experience it from man to man in an incarnational way, It changes everything. Guys, we're not talking about some sort of academic exercise. We are talking about a life-changing experience that brings freedom, real life to our soul. May you be free as you experience and feel the love and grace of God every day, all day. Let's close in prayer. Father, thank you for our time this morning. Grateful Lord, help us to be attuned to your giving to us. And as you have given to us, that we would be grateful and then generous in our giving to others. In Jesus' name, amen. Have a great day. And guys, please respond to the team's request, to our request. Thank you.