

Your Cup Runs Over

By Bobby Schuller

Well today, I'm going to talk about the importance of this idea of a life that overflows; a life that is so abundant, so enriched, so blessed by God that it spills. This image that is painted for Israel that your life will be so full, so blessed by the Lord, that it spills a little. Have you ever had a cup that's so full to the top and you have to walk super slow? If you walk even just a little bit it spills? That's the image that the scripture uses for Israel, that the scripture uses for you. And I want to make you a promise today that you might be in a rut, you might be in a tough time, but I just believe that a time is coming in your life; a time very soon where you'll be so full, you're not going to be filled to the top, you're going to be overflowing and you're going to be a blessing to your neighbors. You already are and we're thankful for you.

Someone I'm very, very thankful for is my beautiful and very intelligent daughter, Haven. Haven, would you come up here, please? Haven.. let's give her a hand. It's been fun that we've been able to.. with children's ministry closed during COVID, Haven's been helping our family ministry a little bit by doing a little bit here and there and just encouraging us.

But one thing I found out is that Haven memorized Psalm 23. I didn't even know you did that. That's so awesome. Would you be so kind as to recite this beautiful Psalm for our church today?

HS: Sure.

BS: Okay.

HS: Psalm 23 verses 1 – 6: The Lord is my shepherd I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters. He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right path for His name sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valleys, I will fear no evil for He is with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all of the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

BS: Amen. Wow. Great! Flawless! That's great, Haven. So I don't know about you Haven, but for me sometimes when I start to memorize a scripture, its different than just reading it because it feels like you notice little things you wouldn't have noticed if you're just reading it because you say it over and over and over. Did you feel that way a little bit?

HS: Yes.

BS: Like one verse that I wanted to ask you about today because we're preaching about it is there's the line where David, who wrote that Psalm, he says "my cup overflows." Did that stand out to you at all?

HS: Yes. When I think of my cup overflows, I think of like love from the Lord going in and it overflows. You ask for just a little and He gives you a lot. And I feel like He uses that love, when it overflows, it spreads to other people and He uses you to spread His love to other people.

BS: That's awesome. Can you think of like maybe a time in your life where you felt like God overflowed your cup, or like maybe a time when you felt like you were kind of experiencing that love and it affected other people, or maybe somehow that happened to you or something like that.

HS: Yes. So my grandma and I, there's an Operation Christmas Child event that's going on right now where you can pack shoeboxes, and the shoeboxes go to kids who need them right now.

BS: They're full of toys and stuff like that for kids who don't get presents.

HS: Yes. And I was asking her if we wanted to pack a box, and she said that we could get a lot of toys. So we went there and we got tons of toys.

BS: Where'd you go?

HS: We went to the Dollar Store.

BS: Yes, nice.

HS: And we got so many toys and things. And she's like you can use these for boxes, you don't have to, but you can, and that inspired me to pack millions of boxes for using those toys.

BS: Millions is not an exaggeration.

HS: It's not an exaggeration.

BS: Well, that's awesome, Haven. So you felt like God blessed you and you were able to bless these kids through Operation Christmas Child.

HS: Yes!

BS: That's awesome. Haven, thank you so much. We appreciate you. Thanks for all you do. We love you and you're such an important part of our family and church, so..

HS: Thank you.

BS: ..all right thank you, Haven! Give her a hand! Very nice. That is a great picture, right? A picture of the kingdom of God. See the kingdom of the world is take, take, take. Get out there. Get what you can. And of course there's some of that in life that you have to do. But the kingdom of God is about receiving an abundance from the Lord in a patient, relaxed, yes there's times of hardship, times of hard work, times of effort and we ought to go for it a hundred percent and all that stuff, but at the same time, Christians have a posture of receiving from the Lord so that when we are blessed, when God pours out goodness, our life kind of just spills. It's like a joyful spilling experience like Haven

experienced with Nana, and Haven gave to these kids in other countries. And I think that is the image that God has for me, it's the image He has for you.

I remember when I was in seminary, I was fortunate enough to have mentors in my life who warned me about the hardships and the difficulties of especially modern pastoral ministry. There is so much, especially when you're a pastor of a smaller church, a pastor of a church that's struggling, that you have to do so much. You have to be the accountant. You have to file paperwork with the government. You have to write sermons. You have to organize worship services and visit people in hospitals and do weddings and funerals, and you have to be people's counselors. And all of this, while people make jokes about how small your church is or about how little work you do. Most pastors get paid next to nothing but are criticized that they're in for the money.

And all of these things compiled together show that the statistics for pastors, especially new pastors in ministry who are going through all of that for the first time. Who are going in with big visions, exciting dreams, and then they have to face this onslaught of little things. It's not really one big thing, it's usually little taxing things that compiled together just make ministry; can feel like swimming upstream.

And I knew that. I knew that going in because I was fortunate enough to have a couple of pastor veterans in my life who warned me about the statistics: the rates of depression and suicide and medication

and quitting. Like I think the average time of ministry for someone out of Bible school or seminary is five years. When you go into ministry, most people go into it thinking this is something I want to do with the rest of my life. So I was worried about that, and I started paying attention to how a lot of pastors did ministry, and I saw that a lot of pastors, the image I got in my mind was a thirsty man or woman with a hose spraying down people as they walked down the sidewalk saying anybody thirsty?! This is not what I wanted to be.

One day when I was praying in ministry, I felt like the Holy Spirit spoke to me. I spend a lot of time and retreat at my dad's old ranch, Rancho Capistrano in San Juan, and it's an old ranch and San Juan is full of fountains like this, but there's a fountain like this. This isn't the one, but beautiful fountain where you have this image of the water kind of flowing through this small but beautiful nozzle at the top, and it overflows and continues to pour over into rings around it. And I felt that the Holy Spirit said to me this is the life of a disciple in the kingdom of God. This is what ministry is supposed to be. Not a thirsty man shooting down people, but someone who is spilling, someone who is so enriched by life that they're overflowing. And I said Lord, let that be me. Let that be my life. I don't want to be a thirsty man. Let me be someone who is so full of life, so full of joy that it's almost accidental in the way that maybe my life in the kingdom of God could be a blessing to my neighbor.

And that is the image God has for you. You will be like that fountain: overflowing with joy and life and refreshing. It's coming. Maybe you feel empty now, you feel broken or bummed or maybe you went through a hard breakup or lost your job or maybe you're sick or whatever it is, believe me, this is a promise – a time is coming if you seek after His kingdom, if you choose today to follow Christ with all your heart, if you commit to do what you need to do to be closer to Him, to turn your back on the world and to face the kingdom of God and to seek it with all your heart, your life will be one that overflows in abundance; in abundance in every way possible. That you'll be so full of God's life and joy that when you die, you'll keep on living. That's what eternal life is, and you'll continue to live with Him, and I pray that for you and I proclaim it over you in Jesus' name.

This is the image for Israel. The image that Israel would be blessed to be a blessing. That the nation of Israel will be a land flowing with milk and honey. Abundance so that Israel in righteousness, goodness, kindness, love to the stranger, love to the alien and the enemy, love to the widow and to the poor, and love for family and for God's law and God's word; a world like that that it would just overflow in abundance, and that's what Israel would be. There are pictures in the Old Testament where this is actually happening, where God's vision for Israel to be like Eden is happening.

One of my favorites is the one Hannah read where there was this.. what's that? Yes, you read it. Yes, you read it earlier, remember? Hannah read in Exodus chapter 36. Let me read it again. "So Bezalel and" I'm going to try this "Oholiab" so Bezalel and Oholiab "and every skilled person" so these are two guys that are mentioned in the Bible that are like.. it's basically saying Michelangelo and DaVinci.. wait is that the same person? No that's two. I'm getting them mixed up Ninja Turtles. You'll have to forgive me. So they're like two great artists. "And every skilled person to whom the Lord has given skill and ability to know how to carry out all the work of constructing the sanctuary are to do the work that the Lord has commanded." So they're going to build this tabernacle, which is a prototype for the temple, and it's supposed to look like and actually be like a reincarnation of Eden. That the tabernacle is going to hold the very real presence of the Lord, and from the tabernacle and later the temple, life is going to flow as the garden flowed from Eden, okay? And that's why the tabernacle and the temple have all this garden imagery. Okay.

"So Moses summoned these two great artists, Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the Lord had given ability, and who was willing to come and do the work." So they start putting it together. "And they received from Moses all the offerings the Israelites had brought to carry out the work of constructing the sanctuary. And the people continued to bring free will offerings morning after morning. So all the

skilled workers who were doing all the work on the sanctuary left what they were doing” like they’re so overwhelmed with gifts and supplies they go to Moses and they say “the people are bringing more than enough to do the work that the Lord commanded to be done. So Moses gave an order.” He put his foot down “and sent this word throughout the camp: no man or woman is to make anything else an offering for the sanctuary. And so the people were restrained from bringing more.”

That there is this point in Exodus, and Exodus isn’t all good, where the Israelites feel so blessed to have been brought out of Egypt, to be given the loot from Egypt. To be going to a promised land that when finally they get to build a sanctuary for the Lord, people won’t stop bringing stuff. They just feel so blessed and so overwhelmed with blessing from the Lord that they just want to keep giving back to God. That’s how I want my life to be, and that’s how God wants your life to be.

That’s God’s vision for Israel – just overflowing in abundance. A life that spills. A life that pours into the things next to it.

This actual image was painted in Leviticus when God commanded that the farmers.. so remember in Jesus’ day, most people were farmers, shepherds, they were agricultural type people. So the way you made a lot of your money was through land and when you harvested whatever it was: barley or grapes or whatever, if you were a farmer, you were supposed to leave the edges and corners unpicked and you were supposed to not go through and pick up all the extra stuff on the ground.

And the reason was that you could allow the foreigner, the immigrant, the poor or the widow to come to your fields and to pick up what they needed so that they would have some food or that they would have some supply, or they could even sell that. And this is called gleaning.

Everybody say gleaning. You guys already know this because these are some real veterans in here who have gone to church.

Maybe you haven't heard this before, this beautiful idea that God says I'm going to bless your farms in abundance, but you need to leave a little bit. You need to leave a little bit so that people can come to your farms and glean.

And one question I ask of myself living in Southern California, I mean most of us are not farmers anymore. In the U.S. in the early 20th century, a lot of Americans were farmers, and some of you still are, and God bless you. That's an awesome job. But for many of us, we have different ways that we make money. We have different ways that we lead our lives. And I think one question is good to ask ourselves, maybe you're an artist or maybe you're a builder, or maybe you're a teacher, or maybe you're a doctor, or you have some other profession. It's so good to ask yourself this question: how do I allow others to glean from my abundance? How do I do my work and pay my bills and invest and even prosper. I think prospering is a good and wonderful thing to have. How do I do that but still allow a little bit for the poor; allow a little bit for the immigrant. Allow a little bit for the child or for those who can't. And you

watch that if you leave a little bit in your fields for people to glean, whatever that means to you, but you listen and ask the Holy Spirit, Lord, how can people glean from my abundance? Watch as God continues to pour out even more abundance and more prosperity in your life.

I believe a Biblical and even kingdom universal principle is that you can't out give God. And that's not me, I mean that's a cliché, actually, but that when you give, where you sacrifice from is very often where you're going to receive from. If you give a little bit of grain, I believe that God's going to bless your grain fields. If you give a little bit of your art, God's probably going to bless your art. If you give a little bit of your labor, God's probably going to bless your labor. And I just think this is how the Lord is.

And more than that, you're going to find meaning in your labor, meaning in your fields that maybe you didn't have before. You're going to wake up a little more excited in the morning. You're going to feel like the life that you're leading is one that's leaving a mark. And friend, let me tell you, it is so easy, especially for gifted people like you, to look and compare yourself to others. And say I'm not like them, I'm not where they are, I'm not as good as they are. Friend, let me tell you, you have something to share. You have something to give and believe that as you start to give it to the people who can't pay you for it, or give it to the people who can't pay you back, God's going to continue to bless your

fields. He's going to bless you in abundance. This is a godly principle. Test it and see. God will show you. It's a blessing.

So when we talk about gleaning, I think of this amazing story that I'm going to share in the remainder of my sermon about Ruth. Ruth is one of the great heroes in the Bible.

Ruth begins like this. There is a family in Bethlehem and the Bible says its during the time of the judges. This is a way of saying it's a hard time. There's not a lot going around. The age of the judges was a bad time. There's a lot of war, there's a lot of fighting, pestilence, famine, drought, and in this time, there's an incredible famine, this family decides to leave Bethlehem and go to a faraway nation on the other side of the Dead Sea called Moab, the ancient enemies of Israel, in fact.

And this family goes and when they get there, the father, the mother and the two sons find a home and the two sons marry. The one marries a girl named.. I always want to say Oprah, but its Orpah. The letters are different. Orpah. And the other marries a woman named Ruth. They're both Moabites. And then in a very short period of time, all the men die, so the father dies, and the two husbands die and all that's left is Naomi, the mother, and Orpah and Ruth, the two daughters-in-law.

Now this already sounds horrible in the modern age, but back then, you remember they didn't have guns back then, right? I mean like everything was about muscle and might and so even if you had a sword, you had to be strong enough to fight. It was a lawless time in a lawless

world. Men were so key for the survival of women and children. Women needed to be protected by men from other men. And so for Naomi who was past child bearing years, it was not a death sentence but pretty close. It meant one: that she wouldn't marry ever again. No man would want to protect her because she wouldn't be able to bear him children. And so she's probably going to be a beggar and going to be poor and going to not live very long because the first time she's taken captive, whatever, she might be enslaved. So this is like the worst news ever for Naomi because she doesn't have a husband anymore, and she doesn't have any sons to protect her and care for her.

This is also very bad news for Ruth and Orpah who still have child bearing years, but this is still a dangerous thing. And Naomi says to them, because she loves them, leave me. You're still young, you're still pretty, you're still in your child bearing years. Go find a man of your own people. And this is honestly, an okay thing to do, even by today's measures, these young girls have their whole lives ahead of them.

And so Orpah says, okay, I love you Naomi, but I'm going to go find a husband. And Ruth says, when Naomi says I'm going back to Israel, back to Bethlehem, Ruth looks at Naomi and she says I'm going with you. I'm not going to leave you. And Naomi says to her, what are you talking about? You're young, you're beautiful, you're in your homeland. Go start a family. Go meet a nice boy. Go live a great life. And Ruth says

- think about this - Ruth says no, Naomi. Where you go, I go. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God.

This little act, this big act, I think is actually a key moment in human history, actually. We'll get to that in a moment by why. The oral tradition says, actually, that Ruth and Orpah were actually the daughters of the king of Moab. That they were sisters which highlights, if it's true, how even bigger of a sacrifice this is. That Ruth was, in fact, a princess in the land of her own people, a desirable prize, but decided to turn her back on being royalty to become a begging pauper with her mother-in-law because she loves her so much. Ruth's life was overflowing into Naomi's life. Ruth decided that this was someone she loves so much, she wasn't going to let Naomi suffer alone. I love this story.

So Ruth and Naomi go back to Bethlehem, they're hungry, Israel is prospering again, but of course Naomi and Ruth are hungry, they don't have anywhere to go, they don't know anybody, there's no food, and so they do this thing that I just talked about - gleaning the fields. Ruth goes to the fields of a man named Boaz, and Boaz has heard that Ruth, even though she could have gone off and started a family, decided to do this amazing thing for her mother-in-law, to not let her be alone, and so Boaz tells the guys who would already leave the fields to be gleaned, like drop a little extra. Leave a little extra for her and like make sure that there's a bunch in the fields she can get. And whenever Ruth is behind, let her

trail really close and just like keep dropping stuff so she can have it.

Boaz basically says like she's just a really good person and we need to like make sure she's okay.

So Ruth gathers all this stuff and she goes back and tells Naomi, her mother-in-law, she's like look at all this stuff I got! This guy Boaz left all this stuff. And Ruth, when she hears the name, Boaz, and hears that he's left all this stuff, she goes Boaz! Boaz is our Goel. Everyone say Goel. So Goel is a hard word to translate because depending on what they do, if you've gone to church your whole life, you've heard the phrase kinsman redeemer, or family redeemer. But Goel is usually a brother and they're going to do one of three very cool things. Either one: if you have been stupid and you're enslaved somehow, either through war or through debt, your brother or cousin or uncle is going to travel to whatever distant country you're in, he's going to buy you back. Goel. He's your kinsman, your family redeemer. He's going to redeem you back to the family.

Number two: if you are murdered, and I feel like this could be a great novel. If you are murdered, your brother, your cousin, your uncle, your dad, they are going to avenge your death. They're going to track down the guy and assassinate him and that's called a Goel Haddam – meaning a blood redeemer. They're like taking the blood back. That's the coolest one of all three, just to be honest with you. But actually this idea is used for Jesus, too, that He used His blood to buy us back.

And the third is in this case where Naomi's husband had an inheritance, but he's dead. And the only way she can claim this land that belongs to her family is if someone from her dead husband's family marries her, and in that case the Goel is someone who marries the brother, marries the cousin, and decides that he's going to take up the mantle of protecting the family.

When they find out about this, that Naomi tells Ruth, Ruth, take your morning clothes off, put on that Gucci and get your hair done and look nice, and go down there and it actually, the Hebrew word is Gucci. You have to go to seminary to learn that. I'm making that up. I'm making that up. Of course, I am.

But yes, go down there and look gorgeous. Put your best clothes on, and basically say I'm available. And so Ruth goes to Boaz and says effectively I'm available. Will you redeem our family? And he promises to redeem the family, and then there's this drama of this other guy who kind of is available first, and this whole negotiation, but in the end, Boaz marries Ruth, takes Naomi under his care, redeems the land, redeems the family, and Naomi and Ruth who went from abject poverty now are land owners and they're happy and they're in this family and I picture it like a venetian sunset. This is my imagination. It's a wonderful story.

And this land then, Ruth, becomes king David's great grandma. Princess Ruth then has a son who has a son who is Jesse, and so when Samuel goes to this land in Bethlehem to meet Jesse and his family,

they're on the land that Ruth the Moabite helped Naomi reclaim. This is what a generous, overflowing life looks like. That Ruth effectively gave up everything because she loved Naomi and didn't want to see her suffer.

Maybe you're doing that for someone right now. Maybe you're a caretaker or maybe there's a child, you have a child with special needs, or you have a grandson or someone that you're helping in this way, you just believe it's the right thing to do. I believe God's going to bless you for that. When we overflow into other people's lives the same way that Ruth blessed Naomi, God blessed Ruth with this land and this husband and this great future, and most of all paved the way for the line of David, which will eventually be one of the five women that are mentioned in Jesus' lineage.

Okay. It's a wonderful story. The main thing I want you to know is that a life that spills is the best kind of life to live. And I'll just finish with this. Especially in our suffering, when on an outward way it looks like we have nothing to give. If you pay attention to the inner life, you will see that there is so much that spills from life. I call this the piñata effect. You probably will hate this, but I love it. I decided.. you guys know what a piñata is. This is Haven again, and there's my son Cohen. This is our backyard. Our yard is really only about eight feet back from the wall. But look how fun it is to hit a piñata. This is my hands holding a broom because we don't have a tree. Okay, anyway.

So you know what a piñata is, right? A piñata is like you hit it and I want my life to be like a piñata. I want it to be that when I am hit, or when Satan comes after me. When Satan attacks you, it's because he wants you to stop blessing people. When Satan attacks you it's because he wants you to be exhausted. When Satan attacks you, it's because he wants you to give up. And so I just decided anytime I suffer, anytime Satan attacks me, I'm going to go like double. I'm going to do more. I'm going to make it the worst day for the enemy. I'm going to bless people more, I'm going to encourage people more, I'm going to serve my wife and my children more. I'm going to do the dishes. I'm going to take the trash out. I'm going to help the poor. I want it to be like pre-planned. That I will be a piñata. That if I get hit by the enemy, it's just going to be like candy. Like here you go, everybody! Here you go!

You are like a vein of God. It's interesting when you go in a gold mine, that you see rock, rock, rock, and then this is an actual vein of gold. But you know there's only one way to get that out, right? You have to hit it. You have to take an iron chisel and crack, crack, crack. I believe that your life in the kingdom of God is like a gold vein. You think you're being destroyed? You think you're being hurt? You think you're being ruined? What is happening is you are being drawn out from the rough. You are being drawn out of the granite to be who you're truly called to be. We are crafted in the crucible of suffering, my friend. Don't be afraid of the suffering that you're going for. Don't seek it out but trust that

whatever it is you're facing today God is going to use that to draw out of you the very best. I believe that's coming for you, and I'm happy for you. I know it's coming and I love you.

Friends, I'm so excited for what God's about to do in your life. Let's pray: Lord, we love you and we thank you. Help us, Lord, to live a life as the one that's talked about in Psalm 23 that Haven reminded us of, that our cup overflows. And we pray, God, that we would become the kind of people that in our suffering we open our cups to you and we say Lord, we just receive from you. We just receive from you. You give what the world cannot give. You give what the world cannot give. Lord, pour out your Holy Spirit, your life and your abundance, we pray, and it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.