

True Happiness

Let's pray. Father, thank you for reminding us of who do we have the privilege to be in the presence of this morning. Thank you for reminding us that You're a good and gracious King who's shown His grace over us over and over again. Lord, thank you for this reminder. We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for Your mercy and grace. There are people here today who don't know you as Lord and Savior I pray that you would show yourself to them as a gracious, loving King. And for the rest of us who have been following You, remind us the fact that we serve a good and gracious King. Speak to us through Your Word. Encourage our hearts. We pray this in Jesus name and all God's listening people said Amen. Amen.

Good morning and Happy New Year again to you. I'm glad you're here. I'm not sure if you've seen this, but we have a couple of pianos here. You wonder if we're collecting pianos. We're not. This one was actually from Friday evening. We had a concert here. Fernando Ortega. Some of you probably heard that name. And maybe if you missed that Sunday when we announced it. We're so sorry. The tickets were out like three days into it. So we are hoping to have Fernando come back later maybe this year. Next year we'll see. We're going to have hopefully in the new building. We're going to have more space and people don't have to fight for tickets. But the piano stayed here. It's a pretty fancy piano and, well, it's gonna. We'll have to take it back tomorrow. We're gonna go back to our cheaper version. And anyhow, we wanted you to see a glimpse of that.

If you're here with us. I met some of you who are here for the first time. Welcome. You came in a good time. We're starting a new series. And before I jump into it, I just want to tell you I love good questions. I love good questions and questions that probably help me to develop more interest in different areas of life or maybe make me think now. It's also because I have little kids at home and probably you remember those times where the kids ask you, dad, why do we call eggplants eggplants? It doesn't look like an egg or a plant of any sorts. I don't know. Or they asked me, why do we park in a driveway and drive in a parkway? I don't know that either. It's America. I tell them anything can happen here. Or at one point I was driving through the drive through at the bank and there's braille thing on the drive through and they asked me why do we have braille like language here for blinds on the drive thru. It's America, honey. I don't know. Everything can happen here. People go through all kinds of things.

But I remember a question that someone asked years ago and it just stuck in my head. I remember this question surprised me like no other question before or since then. It was a question that was asked by a speaker. Me and my wife, we were with some of our staff over 10 years ago in San Diego at a biblical counseling conference. And there was this breakout session and the short breakout session, it was led by a pastor, theologian, Steve Estes. And Steve is the one that actually shared the gospel with Joni Eareckson Tada. Some of you might know about Joni. She is known for her ministry for people with disabilities. When she was 17, she suffered a diving accident and broke her spine, became a quadriplegic. And this friend of hers, Steve, shared the gospel with him. She became a believer and he went on, became a pastor. And he started his breakout session asking this very pertinent question and I'm going to ask you this morning also. It might not surprise you, but it does surprise me.

He asked this question, he said, do you think that God is a happy God? That God right now in heaven is a happy God? That's a very interesting question. And he's asking this in the context of a lot of suffering and a lot of things that's going on in the world. He says, do you think right now God is frustrated or he's like a little bit sad and, or maybe disappointed? How is our God? Is God happy or is not a happy God?

And it really made me think, and it also changed actually a little bit the perspective I have on life. And he went to all these verses and I want to just pick up one verse. It's not from Matthew 5, but it's connected to Matthew 5 and it's in 1 Timothy 6:15. And Paul says this, "I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things and of Christ Jesus, to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who is the blessed and only sovereign, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords." Jesus is the blessed and the only sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of Lords.

Now the word used in this passage for the word blessed here is the same word that is used in the first part of the Sermon on the Mount under the Beatitudes, blessed. It can simply be translated with the words happy or privileged or favored. Happy and privileged or favored.

Now, if you put that next to God and you say, okay, I don't like the word happy because it seems so trivial. Let's put the word favored or privileged. That doesn't make sense either with God. No. What is God privileged to do? Or favored as opposed to what? That's actually more blasphemy than you might think. So the only option is the word happy or blissful, which is a very important thing to say. This might come to a shock to many of you, because doesn't the Bible present a God who is holy and just, who punishes evil? Yes, it does. But God is also presented as a happy, loving, joyful God.

And think about this. And I actually had to go deeper and think about my image of God, because if you think about what God was in eternity past, when there's the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, there's no creation. There's no need for Him to be wrathful, is it? Or for Him to be judgmental, or to Him to be have any justice, because there's true joy and peace and love. That's who God is at this at his core. Now, justice and wrath is part of who He is, but it's contingent on the creation, isn't it? Like they come in later on when God creates us and there's. There's disobedience and sin comes in. And as part of his love for His glory and for His. For His holiness, to make sure that He still preserves true blissfulness and true joy and true happiness, he has to punish evil.

But God does not take as much joy in punishing people as He takes joy in loving people and making them be actually joyful. That should change your mind, because some of us probably never experience true happiness. We think that being miserable is some sort of a spiritual virtue. And you let others know it.

This is why I think, for early on in my life, I remember being a Christian and it was always like, hey, don't smile in church. Don't say anything, like, funny. Always be serious. And don't just say anything that will ever bring laughter. Have this very mournful face of it. Always grievous. You do something happy immediately someone has to say, that's just for a little bit that you

remember that Jesus gonna take that away from you. Everything is gonna burn in fire, by the way, soon.

And Some of us live that life, our lives like that. That's the vision we have of God. And I pray that through the Sermon on the Mount, it will rock your world. Because after 400 years of silence, Jesus comes, this is the first sermon. And the first words out of His mouth are happy. Joyful. That's God's desire.

By the way He invented joy and happiness. He's not a joy killer. So if you're not a Christian here, and you think man becoming a Christian means no more than anything, actually becoming a Christian gives a total different perspective on life. And it brings you joy that you never, ever experienced in your world. It's gonna rock your world like nothing before.

It's so critical for us to understand this. Now you might say, Andrei, how is God happy and joyful when there's things down south happening right now and other situational suffering? Because God allows things that He hates to happen so that He can accomplish things He loves. God allows things to happen that he hates so that he can accomplish things He loves. That's so important for us to remember and think through. Jesus is in the happiness business. He's a happy God, and He wants us to be like Him.

And as I said, some of us never experience that. It's always a life of feeling like you need to be more mournful, more sorrowful. And yes, there's a place for that we're going to talk about it in weeks to come, but do that with joy in your heart. And we're going to also talk about the deep meaning of the word happy is different than what we probably even understand it to be.

So with that in mind, let's read together. Matthew, chapter 5, verses 1 to 12. This is the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. But it's interesting that God and His providence allowed these verses to be the first words that are recorded for us as the part of the Sermon on the mount.

Matthew 5:1 "Seeing the crowds, He," meaning Jesus, "went up on a mountain. And when He sat down, His disciples came to Him, and He opened His mouth and taught them, saying, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall become comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you, and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in Heaven. For so they have persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Now, Jesus Sermon on the Mount is so famous and so powerful that we can hardly overstate its influence. St. Augustine, one of the early church fathers, he described the sermon as being the perfect standard for the Christian life. Probably a lot of, you know, unbelievers, people who never have been in touch with Christianity that know a lot of quotes from this Sermon on the

Mount. That's because it's so popular. For the Christian believer. It is probably the greatest sermon ever preached because it came directly from the lips of Jesus.

And the original sermon was quite long, we think, but probably several hours. But what we have in Matthew 5, 7, which takes like 10 minutes to read, is a condensed version, most likely of what Jesus has shared. But as Sam was mentioning, this is the quintessential summary of Jesus teachings in this sermon.

Someone else said no other section of Scripture makes us face ourselves like the Sermon on the Mount. It is the antidote to the pretense and sham that plagues Christianity. And this sermon, during this series, you're going to not only rejoice into what the Lord is doing in your life and has done, but some of you might be a little bit convicted because the Sermon on the Mount has a way to just expose sham and pretense. But I hope that he, we will do that as in a way to bring you actually hope and salvation.

If you're one of those who pretends to be a Christian and you're playing very well the role, I hope that the next few weeks and months, God will actually bring you to the end of yourself and bring you true salvation. My heart and desire for us studying the sermon of Jesus is that we will be encouraged in our walk with Christ and we will want to live more dedicated lives for Jesus and that we will try at Trinity to build a culture of Christ that is countercultural to the secular culture that we live in.

Another thing that you'll see in the Sermon on the Mount is that it's a lot of distinctives, a lot of countries. This is God's people and this is the world. You'll see that very obvious. And I feel like, especially in the Western world, there's not so many differences between Christians and non-Christians. And I think this sermon, it's reminding us we need to be different, we're called to be different, we should be different.

But a few common misunderstandings that I want to tackle before we jump into it. Common misunderstandings of the Sermon on the Mount or approaches to the Sermon on the Mount that are not helpful. One is the Social Gospel movement, by the way, this movement hasn't started now. It actually started in 20th century, earlier on in Germany. And it tried to promote this idea that you can take the, the ethics of Jesus and apply them to a culture, regardless of whether people are Christians or not. Because there's all this great line, say love your neighbor like yourself, take care of the poor, don't judge, and let's apply this ethics to our society. The problem with that is that it's very misplaced because this sermon is meant to be not only experienced and get convicted, but it's meant to be transforming to our lives. Realize we cannot apply this if we don't have the spirit of Christ in us. So the Social Gospel movement does, even though there's some practical applications of it, is that they wrongly feel like you can apply this or you can do these things in the Sermon on the Mount on your own power. You cannot. You cannot.

A second misunderstanding is for people who take it as a legalistic way of getting right with God, they see it as a checkbox. Oh, the, the things I need to do to be right with God is to not be angry anymore, or I, I need to be more kind to the poor. And then, or not invest so much in the

things of this world. You see it as a ladder to be climbed, as a some boxes to be checked off. Which is totally the anti-purpose of this, of this text.

The purpose of the Sermon on the Mount is to bring people to their wit's ends, to recognize that there's nothing you can do to be right with God. Actually, at the end of the first section, Jesus says, if you want to see God who is perfect, you need to be perfect. So it's meant to discourage you in thinking that somehow you can get right with God. You cannot. Only God can make a way for you to be right with Him.

Now, on the opposite extreme, you have people who are becoming Christian and say, yes, you're right. This is meant to draw me to Jesus. It's meant to take me to Him and I put all my trust in Jesus Christ. And then I look at the sermon and none of that it's applicable to me because I cannot do anything anyhow. So it's all Jesus. So you read this as if like, oh, thank God, that He accomplished all, but it's not for me.

Well, that's the other extreme. That's anti-nominism, meaning you're an anti-law. The law has a place in our lives. Jesus says, if you say you love Me, you're gonna what, Obey My commandments? If you're truly a Christian and you see this set of things that God is presenting for us here, you'll be like, yes, thank God that I have Jesus who mediates this for me. But I want to be like Him. I want to do these things. Even though I know I'll be always falling short, Nevertheless, I want to be more like Him.

So I take this sermon as being both encouraging and also convictional, saying, Lord, how can I do more? Again, not because I can get any favor with you. Jesus already took care of that, but because I want to please You, because I love You.

And fourthly, another misunderstanding in regards to the sermon is that somehow the ethics of the sermon is meant for some time in the future for the millennial kingdom in the dispensationalist world. If you don't know that term, don't bother too much about it. But there's these people who would think, no, there's going to be another part of dispensation, of time in the future when Christ will come. And I believe about that Christ will come and reign on earth.

And He said, no, these ethics are for that time. It's not for us. So early on, and for example, the Scofield Study Bible, they had a note under there under the Sermon on the Mount, saying, this is not for us now and for the church. Thankfully, they changed that in the new editions. They took that out. There are still people out there. They say, no, no, this is not for us. This is for something in the future that totally doesn't make sense.

So why should we study the Sermon on the Mount? I give four reasons. And as I look at the reasons and I worked and read different commentators, I realized, man, my grid that I came up with in the Ten Commandments actually still works here today. So I kind of went back to my grid because I think it does work. And if you were here with us for the series on the Ten Commandments, you remember that grid, and I told you that there are four reasons why I think God gave the law to Moses to show his characters, to show our sinfulness, to point us to Christ and to show us how to live freely.

It's the same thing with this one. I think every text, by the way, you can probably follow that grid in the scripture. What does this text tell us about God?

First, what is it? Teach us about Jesus's character. Who's God incarnate? All of these things we're going to talk in the Sermon on the Mount speak about His character. For example, when He says that He cherishes the ones who are meek and poor in spirit and humble, that tells you something about His character, that God is a humble God or God who cherishes humility.

Later on the Sermon on the Mount, you hear things about, hey, love your enemies, don't take revenge on them. That means that God loves human life. He cherishes human life. You see that He's cherishing marriage, cherishes the way you look at the poor people. He wants to tell you that He has a regard for every person, regardless of social status or race or gender. That's God. That is His character.

By the way, every law we have in this world is a testimony to the Law Givers character. Let me give an example. When I was in Romania growing up, there were very few laws that were helpful for people with disability. Very few. Like, I didn't even know many places where you can go with a person with disability because there was no means for them to get transportation or get an elevator or this or that. That kind of tells you a little bit about the society that the government, the people in the politics, they don't value people with disability. I came to America, that was totally different. That's because in this country people are valued regardless of their ability or disability. So laws are telling you something about the law givers.

Same with this, the sermon, the exhortations of God, the standards that He produces, tells us something about who He is.

Second, it shows our sinfulness. The fact that He has to reiterate that He has to make the contrast is because we actually have a problem. We are sinful in our nature. When we are born, we're born with a sinful nature. And God says, that's not what I want to promote.

Someone says, show me a man who claims that he is living up to the standards of the Sermon on the Mount, and I will show you a man who either has never read it or doesn't understand what it teaches or is lying. That's exactly right.

Thirdly, because of that, you're on point where you're like, okay, now this is God's character. This is where I am. What else? Because I'm doomed. This is why the third thing, it points us to Christ and the need for we have for Him. The need we have for regeneration, for new birth, we need transformation. And all of these points of the Sermon on the Mount cries out to Christ. Not only that, Jesus comes and He actually embodies what we should be doing. He is the ultimate man, not just ultimate God, but His ultimate man. But not only does that, he's actually fulfilling those in our place. He dies on our behalf. He lives on our behalf and then dies on our behalf, resurrects on our behalf. It points us to the need we have for Him.

And fourthly, it teaches us how to be truly happy and fulfilled. Now think about that. Shouldn't the God who invented life be listened to in terms of how we become happy? Do we need Dr. Phil or other shows you watch to get your ideas or you go to psychologists here? Psychologist.

Why don't we trust the God of the Bible who gave us the instruction and said, hey, do you want to enjoy life? I hope your answer is, yeah, okay, why don't you listen to him? He came up with a plan. He knows what joy is. He knows what true happiness is. He came up with ideas how to make that happen, how to make you happy. You like watching a nice sunset. You like watching maybe the Grand Canyon, or if you travel to Hawaii or other places of the world where you're just mesmerized of the beauty around it. That's because God created it. And He's a business blowing your mind away. Why not listen to Him? He's pretty good at that. And we pay a ton of money to painters to just capture a little bit of His glorious creation. Why not go to the source?

Jesus says, I came to give, to bring life to my sheep. And He I love the next statement and to give them life, a big, abundantly. Super-duper life. He wants you to actually live life, not to mop around. We're waiting for Jesus to come back.

This is the picture that a lot of people have of Christians. This kind of like, misery. You cannot wait for Jesus to come back instead of enjoying life to how God created it to be. Yes, there's an eternity in joy there with Him, but He also made life here and He wants you to enjoy it. That's my heart for you.

So let's go back to the text here and just talk a little bit about the context here. The context is chapters one to four. Obviously, Matthew's Gospel in chapter three talks about the beginning of Jesus public ministry. And immediately after His baptism and temptation, He starts beginning to announce that the kingdom of God is here.

Actually, Mark records the first words of Jesus mouth as being. In chapter 1:15 it says repent, for the kingdom of God is here. The word repent is a change of mindsets. Stop doing what you're doing. Turn around, set your minds on God, on God's creation, on God's world. I have something better for you.

Matthew says that Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom in chapter 4, verse 23. So the sermon on the Mount is to be seen in this context. It portrays the repentance, the changing of mind and the righteousness which belong to the kingdom. And as it describes what human life and human community look like when they come under the gracious rule of God.

And Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, as I said is contrasting. He says, here's how you're used with life. But I want to tell you I have different principles for you. The kingdom's principles are different than the world's principles.

And He goes on all the Sermon on the Mount is all this contrasting things. You should be this way because the world is this way, the world is this way, hence you should be this way. It's always go back and forth, back and forth.

But there's a huge contrast between light and darkness, salt and unsalted parts of the world. Again, that's a spiritual way of talking about it.

John Stott, a famous British theologian, believes that the key text of the Sermon on the Mount is Matthew 6:8. And the verse says, do not be like them. That's one of the key verses. He thinks that's actually the verse that should be the theme of it.

And God's pointing out that the people are part of His kingdom. They should have characters that are completely distinctive from the ones who are admired by the world. So the followers of Jesus are to be different, different from both the nominal church and the secular world, different both from the religious and the irreligious.

The Sermon on the Mount is the most complete delineation anywhere in the New Testament of the Christian counterculture. In the Sermon on the Mouth we have a Christian value system. Ethical standard, religious devotion, attitude to money, ambition, lifestyle, network of relationships, all of which are totally at odds with those who are non-Christians.

Chapter 5, verse 1 says here, seeing the crowds, He went up on the mountain. And when He sat down, His disciples came to Him. Now He saw the crowds are coming, and they were coming from all over Israel. And He was in the region of Galilee. And it says here the crowds came up and He was seeing the crowds. It's interesting. He's talking to his disciples even though the crowds are there. So the sermon, if you see, is actually kind of a both and type of sermon. He's talking to his disciples, but the crowds are listening as well.

And then He says he went up on a mountain. Now if you've been in Galilee region, you know that they're not like big mountains. We're not talking here about the Sierras, we're just talking about like Prather type of mountains, you know. So if it were Iowa, you think, man, that's a big mountain for us. It's not a big mountain. That's type of like thing that there's hilly type of area, but nevertheless a pretty nice place where everyone could hear Him. And you can, if you've been there again, you can probably picture Jesus speaking to the crowds and to His disciples.

Bible says He sat down. This is what the most rabbis would do. They, they would have this position of sitting. Just because also it's about to, He's about to go into a long lecture.

That's why, for example, verse 2, it says he opened His mouth. Why didn't He simply say He just started speaking? Because this phrase opened his mouth is a phrase that was used in preparation or explaining someone who's about to give a lecture, a passionate presentation.

That's why He's sitting down. Get ready. Two hours or three hours of sermon. Don't worry, I won't preach as long. But Jesus did that, and He did that with people wanting to listen to Him.

He opened His mouth and taught them, saying, blessed are the poor in spirit. Now a key word is the word blessed. And He goes into this eighth actually section of blessed or eight Blessedness. Beatitudes. And we're going to study this Beatitude. Someone called the Beatitudes as being beautiful attitudes of the kingdom of God because they give us the character of those who are true children of God.

Others suggested titles like the character of the kingdom. In this first 12 verses, the manifesto of the Kingdom, the norms of the Kingdom, you kind of get the picture of this beautiful attitudes. The Beatitudes.

The first four Beatitudes focus on our relationship to God and the second four on our relationship with the people around us. Each of the eight builds upon the other so that there's an amazing, beautiful and compelling progression.

In the same time, there's profound unity. The first beatitude, verse 3, and the last beatitude, verse 10, end with the same reward, the kingdom of heaven. And many theologians think that this is kind of makes made to like a package like, a sandwich thing, that is meant to actually point to the same thing. They all deal with the same very theme of the character of God's citizens in his kingdom.

Now, as I said, the key word is the word blessed. It comes from the Greek word makarios, Makarios. Which means basically happy or blissful. It comes from the root word makar, which means to be happy, but not in the usual sense of happiness based on positive circumstances. And now, the word beatitude that we use quite often comes from the Latin word beatus, which means happy or blessed as well.

Now, ancient Greek writers, for example, Homer and Hesiod, spoke of the Greek gods as being happy makarios, which within themselves, because they were unaffected by the world of men who are subject to poverty, disease, weakness, misfortune and death.

Now, the fullest meaning of the term, therefore, had to do with this inward contentness that is not affected by circumstances. A joy which is completely independent of all the circumstances of life. That's what I mean when I talk the word or use the word happy.

Now, unfortunately, the English word happiness is not very helpful. And there's no other way words to be used in English to kind of describe this.

But here's why it's not so helpful, because it contains the root hap, hap, which means chance. Haphazardly it happened by chance. So the same thing. Human happiness is something which is dependent on the chances on or on the changes of life. Something which life may give and which life may destroy.

So that's why it's so hard, because we're using a word that in Greek and even Latin goes deeper than what we use. And in English there's no other word. And we use the word happy, which is such a trivial word sometimes.

William Berkeley was a famous Bible commentator. He says, I thought that it's actually a good quote to consider reading or listening to, "The Beatitudes speak of that joy which seeks us through our pain, that joy which sorrow and loss and pain and grief are powerless to touch. That joy which shines through tears and which nothing in life or death can take away. The world can win its joys, and the world can equally lose its joys. A change in fortune, a collapse in health, the failure of a plan, the disappointment of an ambition, even a change in the weather." We just saw that this last week. "It can take away the fickle joy that the world can give. But the Christian has the serene and untouchable joy which comes from the walking forever in the company and in the presence of Jesus Christ."

Do you see the difference here, what he's talking about, like, there's this deep, untouchable, unassailable joy that you feel because God is in control. God is in control of your life and every detail of life. In other words, you know that if God can take care of the or could take care of your greatest problem, which is sin, if God can take care of that, wouldn't He take care of everything else in your life? Even if your life is very hard, even if your circumstances are tragic. You know, and you trust that you are in the mighty hands of God. A God who is loving and caring and who takes care of you. Who says that all things that happen to you happen for the good of the one who love Him.

There's no shadow of evil in Him. There's nothing to mistrust Him because He's proven himself trustworthy. That's why you have this deep joy and peace.

That's why probably if you've traveled in other parts of the world, especially in persecuted areas, you see Christians that are more at peace, even though they have way less than you and I have. And you'd be like, excuse me, but why are you so happy when you have nothing in the world and your kids are dying? People are persecuted left and right. And you don't have material blessings, you don't have physical blessings. Why are you so serene? Why are you so joyful? And they would tell you, because we have Jesus. And because I have Jesus, everything else is taken care of. Even if in this world we might have tribulation and sorrows. I trust my Father. I know He always works well for my good. There's no shadow of evil in Him.

I pray. I look over you and I know some of you are in really deep, hard situations of life. Whether it's cancer you're dealing with, whether it's just chronic pain, whether they're just really hard situation with family relationships. Whether workplace or any other things you're going through. I pray that you will feel this deep happiness and joy that only the Lord Jesus Christ can give. Because you know that He's in control of your life. And whatever happens, happens with a purpose for your good. That's my prayer for you.

Billy Graham, in his study on the Beatitude, says "Jesus' happiness was not dependent on outward circumstances. He did not have to have an outward stimulus to make Him happy. He had learned a secret that allowed Him to live above the circumstances of life and fear of the future. He moved with calmness, certainty and serenity through the most trying circumstances, even death. Certainly if anyone had genuine happiness and blessedness, it was Jesus."

We are trying to model Him. And Jesus was not stoic. He wasn't emotionless. He had emotions. He had times when He cried. He had times when He cried deeply, even though He knew God's plan. So the fact that you know that God is in control doesn't deter or take away your emotions and your feelings. You shouldn't be stoic. Jesus cried with tears of blood even though He knew exactly what's going to happen. He prepared for that day all his life, if you will.

So that doesn't take it away. It just gives you this ultimate peace, knowing that it's His will, not your will. And you're ready to say, Lord, I release that.

But he was a happy man. He was a man that people want to be with. You have sinners who are the worst of sinners, who wanted to hang out with Jesus not because He was condoning their behavior, but because He was a man who seemed like have something different than the

Pharisees and the religious leaders. He had something about Himself that people saw Him as attractive and He was firm in the same time. That's how we want to be as Christians. We want to be like Him, like Jesus.

A few applications as we close this morning. If Jesus was happy in this deep spiritual sense, then it follows that we too can be happy. For Jesus became like us in all suffering and temptation, disappointment. In order that we may become like Him.

We must realize, however, that if we're to find happiness, we have to look to Him. Why? Because a lot of people look in the wrong places. The world looks for happiness in money, for example, or material possessions. But there's no real happiness there by the way.

A man thinks that he will be happy if he can save \$10,000. You get to 10,000 and say, I think I need 50, gets to 50, I think I need a hundred thousand. Oh, maybe a million. A million would truly make me happy. And then he goes on and on and on.

I remember Rockefeller, one point was asked by someone said, "Hey, Mr. Rockefeller, what's your goal? What do you think is going to make you satisfied and happy in life with how much you earn?" And he said, one word. "More." More.

And probably that's going to be your experience as well. Happiness is not brought by your material possessions. Actually, I want to challenge you to encourage, find people who have a lot of money. They will tell you, man, I'm so happy because of the money I have. I challenge you. I exhort you to find those. I still find trying to find them.

Actually, people who have a lot of money and they are Christians, they will tell you, hey, it comes to a lot, with a lot of trouble, with a lot of responsibility. And they will be the first one to tell you they don't bring you happiness. Now, it can help you be a blessing to many others if you use them for the right reasons. But you need to have a lot of wisdom. It takes a steady hand to keep a whole, to hold a full cup. And not many people know how to have a steady hand to keep a full cup.

Some men try to find happiness through fame. They think that that's going to bring them that feel of belonging, of achieving something. I think you should probably look into the world, for example, of fame and famous. Look, look at the ones and see whether it's Hollywood or other people in life or famous. I'm still trying to find people who have kept their same spouse for entire life, who haven't been married three, four times. Who their kids are not into drugs and other things that this fame brought to them. As much as we want to be like someone famous, on the other hand, we realize, man, it's not so easy. And they will tell you is not something that necessarily brings them happiness.

Other people think that they'll be happy if they have power. So they run for offices and they. They're getting into high places thinking that maybe that will do it. They won't. They won't give you that.

True happiness and fulfillment is found only in Christ. In the book of Ecclesiastes chapter two, you have Solomon, who was one of the greatest kings of the world. And at one point he says in Ecclesiastes chapter two, I tried everything I wanted to give my heart anything it desires. And he talks about how he partied for 150 days, how he tried to find happiness and fulfillment in building buildings. And he bought, he built himself a palace. And he built himself like a coastal palace. He had all these fancy places. He said it didn't work. I tried to have women. And he had a thousand women, A thousand women. He done all of that, trying to find happiness, find that fulfillment.

And at the end of it, he says in verse 11, everything is vanity. And if you don't know what that word means because we don't use it as much, there's a comma in there, kind of a help for us. It's like chasing after the wind.

If you see a guy in the parking lot here with his bandana on and all his running gears on, and you see him running like crazy around the parking lot and you stop him and you say, hey, buddy, where are you running? He says, I'm gonna chase the wind. Wouldn't you be a fool to say, hey, that guy doesn't know how to do it. I have some apps here. There's new technology here. I better sneakers at home. I have all these strategies. I'm gonna do it better than he does. And you're gonna join him too. You'd be a fool, wouldn't you, to do the same thing as he does.

But that's exactly what we're doing. Instead of listening to Solomon and say, no, you know what? It's true. Probably that feel that we have of unease and unfulfillment can never be ever fed or fulfilled by the things of this world. And only Christ can do that. We should listen to that.

If we are to find true happiness, we must not seek it in the world's way. We must look for it in the way outlined by Jesus. And according to Jesus, the way to happiness is found by trusting in him and pursuing Him. And once He's gonna. Once you will trust in Him, He's gonna change your life, transform your life. And you're gonna feel that peace that surpasses any peace. You're gonna know what I'm talking about.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for Your Word. Thank you, Lord, for this reminder that you're in the business of helping us enjoy life and enjoy to the fullest. Help us, Lord, to be Christians that truly enjoy the life. I know that some of us are limited by because of our financial abilities or maybe because of chronic pain or other things. But Lord, there's a deep joy and a deep peace and a deep happiness that you can give us that surpasses all circumstances. I pray that you bless every Christian with that type of peace, that type of joy this morning. And if there are people here who don't know you, I pray that they would give their lives to You. They'd come to you the joy giver. In Christ's name, we pray. And all God's thankful people said, amen.