

Joy in the Christian Life

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Preacher: Mike Wolski

[0:00] All right, so I got my proper introduction for the service. Good. Hey, if you have your Bible with you, and I trust you do, turn please to two places to start off.

Philippians chapter 4, and if you will also put a finger in John, the Gospel of John chapter 16. We will see some different verses this morning, but I will, we won't go everywhere.

We won't open to everywhere for time's sake, but Philippians chapter 4 will be there in a moment. I do count it a privilege to be here once again with you, and again, if you're, if myself, my wife are new to you, if you're even a first-time visitor to the church here, we, of course, as was said, welcome you this morning.

If you don't know Christ as your Savior, that's the most important decision you can ever make. My second most important decision was marrying Toby's mom, my wife.

And we're about 48 years married back in the end of March, and so we're happy for that. And if the Lord tarries, now, as far as I'm concerned, I don't need to celebrate our 50th anniversary on earth.

[1:23] I mean, I just assume the rapture takes place, and we'll all go home to glory. The moment, twinkling of an eye, and all that, and that would be happy.

I'd be happy. She is not my eternal wife, and we're not Mormons, but we're going to be saved, and we will be best friends, as we talked about just yesterday, in heaven for all eternity.

Glory to God. And you know what I'm not going to be in heaven? I'm not going to be a grandpa, old grandpa in heaven, or that type of thing, because we're going to be like Christ.

Glory to God. If you're over 33 and a half, then you appreciate that. If you're under 33 and a half, then you look up and say, well, I'm going to be older. Yeah, well, that's okay. You're going to be like Christ, whatever that exactly entails, but it's going to be there.

All right, so let's have a word of prayer, and then we'll look in the Word. Our Father and our God, we ask and pray that you'll commune with us this morning, that you'll reveal things to our hearts.

[2:29] Lord, put that searchlight on in our hearts today, in our lives. Lord, in Sunday school, for those that were here, we looked at some doctrinal issue of our standing and our state in Christ.

But today, Lord, I want to look at something very practical. I want to look at something that talks about our state and who we are in Christ, what we do for Christ, and how it resounds within our hearts and our lives.

I pray, Father, your blessing. May you guide. May your Holy Spirit empower me. And Lord, say things that I can't in and of myself say. Truth from the Word of God. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So I'm in Philippians chapter 4 to begin with, and I want you to look at verse 4. So Philippians 4, 4 says this, simple verse, rejoice in the Lord always.

And again, I say rejoice. That's the Christian life, is it not? Rejoicing in the Lord. It's a definite mark or characteristic of the Christian life, to be joyful, to enjoy things, to rejoice.

[3:34] When we think about the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, etc. It's the second fruit designated. I don't know if that's necessarily the most important, but we know love is the most important charity.

So maybe it is. But love, joy, peace. It's what marks you as a Christian. But you know, sometimes we tend to think that joy is exclusively a Christian trait.

You know, joy, that's something that only Christians can enjoy or experience. That's like as if the lost can't experience joy. But that's not the case at all.

And I want you to flip over back to John chapter 16 I asked you to turn to. And in John chapter 16, Jesus himself gives us a proof text that joy isn't necessarily something that's appreciated or lived out in the Christian life.

It's something the world can experience as well. John chapter 16, look at verse 21 with me. Jesus gives an example. A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow because her hour has come.

[4:51] She's going into delivery. But as soon as she is delivered of the child, she what? She remembereth no more the anguish. For what? For joy that a man is born into the world.

So childbearing should, or let me back up a little bit, pregnancy should bring joy. Sink in.

Let that sink in for a minute. That's not the way the world looks at it today. Pregnancy, for a lot of people, say that's not joy. We've got to get rid of that. That? No, pregnancy should bring joy.

It should bring a childbearing, a childbirth, and that should bring joy. And that doesn't matter whether the person was saved or lost. You know, the human experience is filled with joyful things. Whether you're saved or lost. That's not the issue. But listen, see, joy is not part of our, it's not an objective truth in the Christian life. It's not something that's a doctrinal issue.

[5:53] It's subjective. It's a practical issue. For instance, if you're saved, that's what God did for you. That's not what the world experiences. The world doesn't know it.

That's an objective truth, a doctrinal truth of the Christian life. If your sins are forgiven, that's a doctrinal truth. That's an objective truth in your life. It's what God has done for you.

If you have eternal life, if you've been reconciled with God, that's something very objective. And all of those things are not experienced by the lost world. But joy, that's a different thing.

You experience joy because of these things I've mentioned. And the world can't experience that joy because they don't know those things. But they can still, according to Jesus Christ, experience joy in their life.

The only thing is, we understand there is a difference. Now, we understand that there's a difference between the joy that a Christian has and the joy that the world has.

[6:58] For example, when I was a kid, grew up in a Catholic family. We celebrated Christmas and the Christmas tree and everything that goes with it.

And guess what? I enjoyed Christmas, okay? I enjoyed it. I was lost. I didn't get saved until I was 21 years old. But I enjoyed Christmas.

I mean, what's not to enjoy? You know, you've got just the anticipation of it, especially as a kid growing up. The family coming over or you going over to somebody else's house family-wise, being together.

The food, the treats, you know, Christmas cookies. Who doesn't like Christmas cookies? And all that kind of a thing. The presents that go with it. All that, the singing. Everything, the festivities.

All that joyfulness. I enjoyed it completely. But I tell you what. When I got saved at 21, and I got saved in January. So when that December swung around in that year that I got saved, 1972, all of a sudden, Christmas took on a whole new meaning.

[8:04] It wasn't just all the festivities, but now it was the reality of it. Now I was able to sing joy to the world. You know, for the reality of what took place in my life.

Joy to the world. The Lord is born. Let earth receive her king. And it will one day. All of a sudden, what I was thinking about or looking in and talking about and anticipating became a reality in my life.

And I knew my Lord and my Savior. He wasn't just that babe in a cradle anymore, was he? He was the one that died on the cross for my sins. And then the saying was, you know, the real meaning of Christmas, look to Easter.

I was a Christian. I understood. That's what the real meaning of Christmas was. Jesus came to die for our sins. So the world can experience joy, but it's a different type of joy. And usually, it's centered around things that happen down here.

And it's of a physical nature. And they can enjoy, you know, you can have an enjoyment amongst families. There can be the whole world. The human experience can be filled with a joy.

[9:13] And it can be hobbies. You know, it can be entertainment. It can be the job. Maybe you get joy out of your job. Joy out of a vacation or whatever the case is. But the world can enjoy those things.

But our joy has a different source. And it's far more than just the physical that's around us. It's far more than just being with family or having a hobby or looking at your, you know, 401K or whatever the case might be.

It has more to do than any of those things. Our joy emanates from a spiritual side. It emanates from the Lord. It emanates from heaven. And the fact that we're born again and we're a new creature in Christ.

The fact that we have a new security in Christ that can't be changed. That brings us a deep-seated joy. You know, Paul talks about it in 2 Corinthians chapter 4.

He says, you know, we look, we as Christians, we look not at things which are seen, but the things which are not seen. Well, we could apply that also to joy. We rejoice in the things, not just in the things that are seen, but in the things that are not seen.

[10:23] That's what we rejoice in, spiritual truths. And that's what buoys us in our Christian life. You know, when we got saved, when I got saved, that was a new, fresh, and exciting joy in my life.

I knew my sins were forgiven. I knew my Lord is my Savior. I knew I didn't fear death itself. I knew where I was going to be for all eternity.

It just brought a joy and excitement in my life. I got saved, you know, in relation to things about future things, about the rapture and all. And it was, you know, exciting anticipation that the rapture could take place in my life right now.

Now, that's 50 years ago. Hadn't happened. But guess what? It's going to happen. Hasn't doesn't mean it won't. It just hasn't. He's just holding back.

And hopefully more people will get saved. Hopefully people that I'm praying for and know will get saved. You know, because we have that type of a joy, then we can do what we say, you know, what we read in Philippians chapter 4.

[11:25] Rejoice in the Lord always. And again, I say rejoice. Rejoice. That's the Christian life. And salvation brings that to us. But, you know, as we grow in the Lord, that joy has a transition into more of a deep, settled peace.

You know, you're not necessarily up on the mountaintop shouting and whatever. Now you might be. That's great. But that's not where you live. We'll talk about in a second. But it kind of deepens.

We just had a funeral a week and a half or so ago at our church. I look at it as a young fellow. He was about 63. And younger than me, so he was a young fellow. But he had moved back.

He'd been part of that church years before, many years before. And he'd moved away and worked. And then he'd moved back into the area about two years ago. And then when he came back, everybody seemed to know him.

But we didn't know him. Because we'd been there for about four years almost this summer. And he was new to us. But I got to know him a little bit and met him. And a good character, just a nice guy.

[12:33] Rick Weston was his name. And he just loved the Lord. He was an amen kind of a guy. And he taught in the institute as well. I taught in the class after him. And so we'd connect there a little bit and whatever.

And he just passed away. He just had blood clots and whatever. It just went. And he just killed him. And they thought he was going to come out of it. And he didn't. And so it was a, I don't want to say a great funeral.

It's a sad time for the family. But everybody that was giving testimonies about him had just wonderful things to say. A little write-up that was there, kind of a bulletin sort of thing. Because of the funeral, they had a quote as far as the family.

And the family said, our sorrow is deep. But our peace is deeper. That's a great testimony to have. And you know, that's a joy.

That's why I call joy for the Christian life. It turns into from that exciting newness at the beginning to deep, settled peace. It's a joy. Why?

[13:31] Well, that wife that's left without a husband yet has a joy because she knows where he is. And she knows that he won't come back if

he could.

Why would you leave heaven to come back here? You just wouldn't do it. You know, this aspect of joy is kind of like marriage. You know, marriage at the beginning, you know, there's the excitement of the dating.

There's the excitement of an engagement. There's the excitement of getting married, the honeymoon. But that excitement doesn't stay all the way through the marriage life.

That kind of tingly excitement, it can't. I preached this one other time. I preached this one other time. And in the church, a fellow said, yes, you can. I said, how long you been married?

Five months. I said, you're proving my point, brother. You're proving my point. You're on that high. You're still in that.

[14:34] I mean, when we got married, we had a fellow that told us honeymoon lasts five years. Just stating that the honeymoon is not just for a week or two or whatever. It's just something that stretches out in those early years of being married and all.

Hey, that excitement of getting married is all great and good. But you're not going to be, life is not bubbly all the time, is it?

I mean, there are illnesses. There are, for instance, births of children that we already read about, you know, in John 16. There's sorrow and yet there's joy.

But there are ups and downs throughout the Christian life. But what happens is you end up having a greater understanding of your spouse in time. You have a greater appreciation and a greater value for your spouse in time.

So that bubbly excitement matures and develops into a different relationship. And it should.

[15:39] It's just that way in the Christian life. That's what the Christian life is about. You know, the excitement of getting saved and all. And that doesn't, we're not talking about you can't get excited all the time.

But it develops and matures into a greater understanding of your Savior, greater understanding. I didn't know what God did for me when I got saved.

I didn't know all those truths and I'm still learning about them. Bless God for that. But it's given me a greater appreciation of my salvation, a greater understanding and value for what God's.

It's a deep, settled peace. It's a joy that the world doesn't know. Now, on the other hand, in a marriage situation, just looking at that illustration, in a marriage, if you don't, if you start taking your spouse for granted, things can spoil.

If you start not, if you don't put the effort into a relationship, then it can grow cold and even disappear. That joy, that love, that understanding, appreciation, it can be gone and evaporate.

[16:47] And obviously we see that happening, unfortunately, all around us and unfortunately in Christian circles as well as in the world. And that, again, we can see in the Christian life.

The parallel is right there. If we don't, if we start taking the things of God for granted, if we start, if we don't put forth the effort that we need to in the Christian life, then again, our Christian life can grow stale too.

And it can grow just as cold. Listen, we understand that our life has full of peaks and valleys. I mentioned that. We drove down and we went by, you know, in Lone Pine and you've got Mount McKinley.

No, not Mount McKinley. You got Mount Whitney right there. You know, around 14,500 feet, something real close to that. And it's up there. But you know what? Even if you were to hike up there, guess what you're not going to do up there?

You're not going to live up there. You don't live on the mountaintop. You can visit the mountaintop. And even in your Christian life, you know, it's great when God gives you mountaintop experiences where you can see things and crystallize things in your mind and in your heart and just a great joy.

[17:56] But, hey, you got to get down and do something for God too. But, you know, on the other side, you don't want to live in the valley. You know, Mount Whitney is one area and not that far away is Death Valley.

Now, whereas you can't live on Mount Whitney, you don't want to live in Death Valley. You don't want to make that type of valley experience the new norm in your life. You can't stay up there, but

you don't want to stay down there.

So don't take your Christian life for granted. Don't take what God's done for you for granted. Go to the book of Joel. This is the, I want to look in the book of Joel, and I want to show you a verse that this is where, what God showed me here and what got me to thinking about the idea of joy in the Christian life.

I read a particular verse here. We're going to see it in just a moment. And that just got my mind thinking about joy. Look with me in verse 4. Joel chapter 1 and verse 4.

Joel talks about a judgment of God upon their crops. That which the palmer worm hath left hath the locust eaten. That which the locust hath left hath the palmer worm eaten.

[19:14] That which the canker worm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten. And then slip over to verse 10. As a result of that, verse 10. The field is wasted.

The land mourneth. For the corn is wasted. The new wine is dried up. The oil languisheth. Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen.

Howl, O ye vine dressers, for the wheat and for the barley. Because the harvest of the field is perished. The vine is dried up.

The fig tree languisheth. The pomegranate tree and the palm tree also. And the apple tree. Even all the trees of the field are withered. Because joy is withered away from the sons of men.

Joy is withered away. That which they put their hope in and their joy in. The fact that these crops that they planted. And these vineyards and all that they pruned and everything else.

[20:16] All the work and labor they put forth. And they were anticipating a crop. They were anticipating they could live off of the fruit of their labors. And it's gone.

God's judged them. And it says their joy is withered. And you know, it just got me thinking about that.

And going through our Christian lives and having our joy dried up. Having our joy languisheth. Wasted. Dried up as it said.

Perished. Joy withered. You know, I'm wondering whether sometimes we allow things of this life. To steal our joy.

We allow things that we get involved with. You know, the Bible talks. When the Lord was talking about the sower and the seed. And he talked about those. The seed that fell amongst the thorns and all.

[21:14] And it says about the cares of this life. Choking the word. And we allow. I wonder whether we allow the cares of this life. To cause our joy to wither away.

We become distracted and preoccupied by the things of life. And you know, I wouldn't doubt that. Any of us. All of us. At some point. If we're honest with ourselves. Would say, yeah.

I've gone through some dry times in my Christian life. My joy has taken a beating at different times. It's suffered. But my question is.

Are you getting used to living without joy? Are you getting used to living without a joyful life?

Without a deep-seated peace in your life?

Have you allowed a joyous life to become a norm in your life? That you can go through the routine without the joy that God wants you to have?

[22:12] Can you go through the motions of the Christian life? Can you go through, you know, reading your Bible? Prayer? Coming to church? And do those things, but not have any joy?

Listen, I'm not saying this, you know, 100% you're going to be excited every time you open your Bible. There's going to be dry times. That's just the way. It's just with life. But has that become the norm is my question.

So what causes your joy to wither? I want you to turn, please, back to Jeremiah. So we're going back to the front of the Bible, Jeremiah 15. Go through Daniel and Ezekiel and Jeremiah 15, please.

You know, the first thing, I thought about this, and I just, in thinking about this, developing this message this year, I was just, you know, what are some things that cause our joy to wither?

And an illustration that comes up is obviously thinking about plants. Now, we don't have any household plants. Maybe you like plants.

[23:11] I like plants on the outside, and I like to see them flower and different things and grow, and I love all that. We put some more stuff in this spring up there.

I like that. But the ones in the house, why? Because we kill them. We've had them in the past, and we've enjoyed them, but we end up killing them.

So we just decided, forget it. And I might, at Christmas time, I might buy a poinsettia or two. Well, I do. Not just might. I end up doing it. I like them. I like their pretty and whatever else.

They're Christmassy. But you know what? When you don't water those flowers, indoor flowers, well, outdoor for that matter too, around here especially, what happens? The leaves wither, don't they? And if you let it go, they'll dry up, and they'll fall off. Why? They need the water. The same thing goes with you and me. You know, the first thing that causes our joy to wither is deprivation.

[24:08] We deprive ourselves of the source of our joy. When you don't water that flower or those plants, the leaves are going to wither. They're just going to wither.

They're going to perish. That's all there is to it. They need that water to keep them going. And guess what, folks? We need this book. Look what it says in Jeremiah chapter 15.

Jeremiah 15. These are the words, a quote from Jeremiah. Jeremiah, thy words were found, and I did eat them. And thy word, what, was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

For I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts. Thy word was the joy and rejoicing of my heart. Listen, when we look into God's word, and as I've mentioned before, I mean, when we read God's word, when we put effort into reading God's word, we're looking for something from God.

We want God to speak to our hearts. There's a hunger, a thirst, a desire to get something from God. And when we do, God reminds us of what he's done for us.

[25:17] He reminds us of who we are in Christ. And you know what that does? That joy just percolates up. And I say, glory to God. I am saved.

Glory to God. I am going to be like Christ. Glory to God. And it's not dependent upon my goodness or my good works. It's because of who I am in Christ. And I can just shout and just glorify the Lord for what he's done for me.

And as I look into the word, I see, you know, I see examples of God's character and his holiness.

And it helps me and encourages me and emboldens me to resist temptation in my own life because I know who he is and what he wants and expects out of me.

And then I read about him and his might and his power, the glory of his strength. And I realize he's always there to help me out when I go through problems. He's always there to strengthen me through trials and troubles.

And as I continue to read and I read about his love and his mercy and his grace and that aspect of his character, I realize he's always there to be with me, to comfort me, to help me.

[26:31] I get it from his word. It's in his word. When you are in those situations, you need to dive into his word and let it be the joy and the rejoicing of your heart.

Amen. You know, when you read Psalm 119, I know it's the longest chapter in the Bible, but you've got at least 20 times. That's double that. I'm not going to take my shoes off so you can have 20 digits, but just 20 times.

Paul, or not Paul, David uses terms like, you know, he delights in the word, that he loves the word, that he goes on to say things like he rejoices in, he longs after, he stands in awe of God's word.

That was his attitude that he had. Go with me, if you will, back further to Psalm 1. Psalm 1. And if you know what I'm, you know the psalm, it probably comes right off to your mind, what I'm getting at, what I'm going to pull out of it.

But in Psalm 1, if you get there with me, and we'll ignore verse 1, but look at verse 2. Well, let's read verse 1. It's in the context. Blessed is the man that, number one, walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly.

[27:42] Number two, nor standeth in the way of sinners. Number three, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. So that's what we don't do on a negative basis. But on a positive basis, verse 2.

But his delight, his delight, his joy, his rejoicing, his love, his delight is in the law of the Lord. In his law doth he meditate, what? Day and night.

Why? Then look at the result of that, verse 3. Look how this applies to what we've already seen. And he should be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season, and his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

That's who you are if you delight in the word of God. If the joy and rejoicing of your heart comes out of this book, out of his word. God's words rejoice and give joy to your heart and your life.

And you're going to be like that one. You delight in it. Therefore, you examine it and you ruminate on it. You meditate on it. And if you're that person, you're going to be like that tree that's planted by the rivers of water.

[28:50] It's always got a source of water. It doesn't have to wait for me to go water it and forget to water it. It always has a source of water. And it's going to bring forth fruit and its leaves don't wither.

So you're going to be like that Christian that's always going to produce joy. There's always going to be a joy in your life and in your heart. Jesus said in John 15, 11, These things have I spoken unto you that my joy, his joy, my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full.

That's what God wants for us. A fullness of joy. So I'm going to ask you, how do you apply yourself to reading the book? How do you apply yourself to reading the book, having your devotions?

How you do affects your joy. How you apply yourself directly affects the joy that you're going to experience in your Christian life.

So has your Bible reading fallen off? I didn't say you miss a day. Things, life happened and you missed a day.

[30:03] But don't let that miss a day mean miss another day and become a habit. Has your Bible reading fallen off? Has it become habitual? Become a ritual and it doesn't have any life?

And guess what? Your joy suffers because of it. Go back with me to the book of Nehemiah. We keep going backwards. Somewhere we're going to go forward, but we keep going backwards here. So the book of Nehemiah, chapter 8.

So there's a second thing in regards to your joy. There's a second thing. So if you deny, if you deprive yourself, deprivation to deprive yourself of the source of your joy, then your joy is going to wither.

But another simple thing is distraction. You get distracted. You've placed something else here instead of what should produce joy. You've thought of something else can produce joy in your life. You know, this world has a different value system than we have. The world has a different set of priorities than we have. The world says, hey, do this and that'll make you happy. Do this and that'll make you happy.

[31:10] Do this and that'll just fill you up. You know, it's like commercials. Right? It's like commercials. You know, if you use this toothpaste, you get all the girls or the guys. Right?

This cologne, you get this, you get that. Well, but the world has a twisted value system. It doesn't have the value system that we should have as Christians. But when we allow ourselves to get distracted and look to other things to produce joy in our life, guess what happens to our real joy? It withers. It wilts. What does it say here in Nehemiah chapter 8? Nehemiah chapter 8 verse 10 says this.

Then he said unto them, go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared. For this day is holy unto our God.

Neither be ye sorrow, neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. You know, it's the joy of the Lord because it's a joy that comes down from the Lord.

[32:18] It's the fruit of the Spirit because it's the fruit that comes from the Spirit. It's the joy of the Lord. That's your strength. It's not the joy that the world can produce.

It's the joy of the Lord. That's what's going to enable you and strengthen you to live your life. Bible says in Matthew 6 21, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

What you value is where your heart's going to be going to be at. What you allow yourself to value or prioritize, that's where your heart's going to go.

Now listen, some of this stuff, as I mentioned before, the cares of this life. The cares of this life aren't necessarily bad things. When I said the world has a different value system, it does. But the

cares of life, family is a good thing.

But if you prioritize family over God, it becomes a negative thing in your life. It becomes something that pulls you away. There's nothing wrong with hobbies themselves, good, clean hobbies.

[33:25] But if you prioritize hobbies and you begin to think you're getting all your happiness and joy and fulfillment, satisfaction out of those things, then they pull you from the things of God.

Listen, I don't have much for anybody that says, I want to be out someplace else instead of being in church on Sunday morning or when the services are here. I mean, I understand sometimes things pull you away, pull us away.

We're not in our home church. But listen, I don't need to be out fishing on a Sunday morning. And I'm not saying anybody here goes fishing. You're not here fishing now. That's for sure.

But come on. There's other days of the week. You say, well, I'm working six days a week. Well, maybe you're working more than you should. Just saying. But come on. We have what?

How much time to serve the Lord? How much time do we have to show that we love the Lord, that we want to put the Lord first in our lives? There can be a lot of things out there.

[34:25] And I'm not saying they're bad things. But if we make those so important that they pull us away from our Bible, they pull us away from our relationship with the Lord, they pull us away from our church fellowship, our fellowship with other believers, then they become a negative and a distraction and pull us away from the things of God.

God says this in Psalm 16:11, In thy presence is fullness of joy. At thy right hand are pleasures forevermore. And I think to myself, you know, if I find joy in my life elsewhere, do I really know who God is?

Think about that. I mean, if I'm prioritizing something else in my life, whatever it is, family, finances, fun, anything you want to put in there.

If I'm prioritizing something else in my life besides the Lord, the joy of the Lord is my strength, not my 401k, not supporting a particular political party or whatever the case is.

It's the joy of the Lord, not, you know, rooting for a particular ball team of some sort. Lord, it's the joy of the Lord is my strength. And he says, in his presence is joy, fullness of joy.

[35:40] At his right hand are pleasures forevermore. Take a second. Look at your hand. Just look at your hand. Go ahead. Humor me, please. Look at your hand. Now just use your thumb and feel.

Look at that. You can feel. You know that they have, you have your fingerprints that are unique to you and to me. You can feel and touch. You can feel a hard surface.

You can feel different types of surfaces. All that's in there. And then you're moving them and you've got those muscles in there and you've got those joints in there and tendons and ligaments and moving.

All that, the marvel that the God of creation put here. And then as you're looking at it, think how you're seeing it. Your eye. What God created to allow you to see that and the miracle of your eye.

And you're going to tell me, well, living the Christian life is just not all that exciting. Guess what? Guess somebody. Somebody you don't know very well.

[36:42] And that's God. Because the God that created all these things and all the beauty that we see around us. He can't excite you and he can't give you joy that you have to look for joy someplace else and get distracted away from it.

But I have to wonder whether you really know the God of this book. I don't know. That means you're not saved or if you're saved and if you're just away from the Lord. I don't know what the case is.

But if somebody would say that, if somebody you know, somebody you care about, somebody in your family, a friend or whatever, and they're saved but they're not living for the Lord, and you say, how come their joy isn't coming from this book?

How come their joy isn't coming from their relationship with the Lord, fellowshiping with other saints? It ought to. It's the joy of the Lord. That's our strength. I want you to go to one other place.

Well, we're going to see two, but Psalm 51.

So go forward towards the back of your Bible this time finally again in Psalm 51. So there's a third thing. Not only, of course, is it our deprivation that we deprive ourselves of the source of joy, not

only that we become distracted and look at other things in life to fulfill and make that joy for us, but look at Psalm 51.

[37:54] We'll look there in a minute. But the third thing is disobedience. Disobey. And listen, if you deprive yourself of Bible reading and if you are distracted by things of this world, that typically takes time for your joy to dissipate and disappear.

It takes time. But I'll tell you what, disobedience can have immediate results. And you can cut off the source of your joy completely because you've cut the Lord out of your life by disobeying him. Doing what he doesn't want you to do, not doing what he wants you to do. And you say, well, brother, yeah, but, you know, joys can be pretty pleasurable. You know, the worst thing you can tell your kids is there's no fun in sin.

Don't tell them that. Don't tell them that. You say, you want me to tell my kids there's fun in sin? Well, it's the reality. There's pleasure of sin, the Bible says.

Ah, but for a season. See, if you tell them there's no fun in sin and then they end up sinning and having fun, they say, well, mom and dad don't know what they're talking about. There is fun in sin.

[39:02] But what the rest of it doesn't tell you is there are consequences for sin. There's consequences. There's pleasure of sin for a season.

And there is going to be consequences because of that. So David sinned. Here we're talking about David's repentance and getting right with God again in Psalm 51.

And look with me down in verse 12. He says this. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation. Uphold me with thy free spirit. He said, Lord, I messed up.

I really messed up. And I'm far from you. I know I'm still connected with you. I understand that doctrinally speaking.

But experientially, I'm cut off from you. I'm far from you. I've lost that joy. I don't have any excitement, any joy of being related to you. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.

[40:03] You know, I know Christians that are out of fellowship with God. They don't grace the doors of church. They don't read their Bibles. They don't rejoice in salvation anymore. And you say, oh, that wouldn't happen to me. Well, there they are.

And they never thought it would happen to them. It is what it is. I want you to turn to one other place before we close. Deuteronomy chapter 28.

Now we're going way back. Deuteronomy chapter 28. You know, if I may, in Colossians chapter 4, Paul refers to nine different people that were servants of the Lord.

Nine different people. And in that section, there's two fellas that were on different roads. Different roads. One was the name of Demas. And in the context of Colossians, Demas was still serving the Lord.

Saved guy. Philemon mentions him about being a servant of the Lord, fellow servant. But Demas was on a different direction. Because when you read about Demas in 2 Timothy chapter 4, Paul says, Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.

[41:14] So Demas either deprived himself of the joy that he can get out of Bible reading. He was distracted by the things that he saw about him. And he disobeyed and he took off.

But you have another fellow in there. And his name is John Mark. And he talks about John Mark in a favorable sense. But John Mark earlier went out with Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey.

And he turned back. And he left them. And we don't know why he left them for sure. It's not stated. But later on, when Barnabas and Paul are going to get ready to go back, Barnabas wants to take him with them.

Paul says, nothing to him. And so severe was their disagreement that they split up. And Barnabas takes John Mark.

And Paul takes Silas. But the thing is, John Mark got right with God. Evidently, he did mess up when he turned back.

[42:15] And Paul didn't, you know, man puts his hands in the plows. Not worthy. If he turns back, not worthy of the kingdom of God. So, but

somewhere, because in 2 Timothy 4 also, he said, bring Mark. He's profitable to me in the ministry.

He said, what's your point, Brother Wolski? My point is this. There's two guys in that same chapter of Colossians 4, and they're heading in different directions. One guy messed up, but he's on his way back, serving God.

The other guy was serving God, but he was on his way away. So I don't know where you are today. I don't know where you are. You're here. That's good. But remember, Colossians 4.

So maybe you were messed up or whatever, but you're on your way back. Praise God. You do the things that we've talked about here, and you can get that joy back in your life.

Or you could be here and say, well, I'm here, but maybe you're slipping away. And like Demas, you're still here, but maybe next month, next year, you won't be, because you're allowing your joy to wither.

[43:18] The last verse we're going to look at is in Deuteronomy chapter 28, and we're going to start in verse 45. God says this, Now, God's judging them.

Why? Look what he says in verse 47. Because thou servest not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things.

Wow. That's not in the New Testament. That's not rejoice in the Lord always. And again, I say rejoice. Philippians 4. This is in the Old Testament. This is in the book of Deuteronomy, the law. And God says, this judgment is going to come upon you because you had all of this available to you. You had all of this in front of you. You had all of these opportunities.

And all that I would have done to bless you. But you wouldn't serve me with joyfulness. And it became old and stagnant.

[44:41] And yes, you offered me sacrifices, but you offered me the lame instead of the unblemished. Oh, yes, you said these things, but you did it out of rote memory, and your heart wasn't in it.

They were dead spiritually. Hey, is your joy withered? I gave you three reasons why and how it can wither. Let's not let that happen to us.

Boy, the joy of the Lord is our strength. And this book should be the joy and rejoicing of our heart. Let's pray, and I'll turn the service over to your pastor. Our Father and our God, Lord, we love you. We really do. We know that we're flesh. We know that we're frail. We know that we can make mistakes. But, Lord, help us not to allow those mistakes to be the new norm in our Christian life. Help us to get right with you. Help us to turn the corner. Help us to get around back to where we need to be. And, Lord, if we are where we should be, help us, Lord, not to be that demas, that in time we let things crowd you out of our lives.

[45:49] I ask and pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.