

# Embracing Simplicity & Contentment in a Culture of FOMO

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 10 November 2024

Preacher: Rev. Andrew Ong

[ 0 : 00 ] We hope that you enjoy this teaching from Christ Church. This material is copyrighted and no unauthorized duplication, redistribution, or any other use of any part is permitted without prior consent from Christ Church.

Please consider donating to this work in the San Francisco Bay Area online at ChristChurchEastBay.org. Good morning.

I'm Ethan, and I'm one of the co-leaders of the Berkeley Thursday Night Community Group. Today's reading is Psalm 27, as printed in your liturgy.

For the director of music, of the Sons of Korah, a psalm. The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall.

[ 1 : 02 ] Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear. Though war break out against me, even then I will be confident. One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek.

That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. To gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. For in the day of trouble, he will keep me safe in his dwelling.

He will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock. Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me. At his sacred tent, I will sacrifice with shouts of joy.

I will sing and make music to the Lord. Hear my voice when I call, Lord. Be versatile to me and answer me. My heart says of you, seek his face.

Your face, Lord, I will seek. Do not hide your face from me. Do not turn your servant away in anger. You have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Savior.

[ 2 : 02 ] Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me. Teach me your way, Lord. Lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors. Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes.

For false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations. I will remain confident of this. I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Wait for the Lord. Be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. The grass withers and the flowers fall. The word of God stands forever.

Well, thank you, Ethan, for that scripture reading. Let's come before the Lord in prayer as we give our attention to his word. Oh, God, would you convince us by your Holy Spirit in the preaching of your word that the Lord is our light and our salvation, and that we've beheld him, Jesus, the light of the world, salvation for all peoples.

Would you fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith? Would he be the one thing that we seek? Change our hearts, oh God.

[ 3 : 19 ] Open our hearts. Open our hearts to obey, to submit to you, to be the kinds of people you've called us to be for the good of this world. We ask in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. All right. Well, Jonathan has said everything that needs to be said, I think, about what's going on this week. I'm just going to preach the word of God, if that's okay with you.

In case you are new to Christ Church, we have been going through this series on what we're calling the Holy Habits of Grace, these Christian spiritual disciplines that believers in Jesus have practiced for thousands of years in order to get into deeper communion with God.

And today, the Holy Habit that we're going to be talking about is the Holy Habit of simplicity. All right. Simplicity. And honestly, it was hard for me to prepare this talk this week on simplicity because, you know, the Holy Spirit really made me extra sensitive to that the whole week, to all the ways I fall short of this in my own life.

And I knew I had to especially practice what I was going to preach this week. So, like, I was at Costco this week, business Costco, and I wanted to buy these boxes of sun chips and migaring instant ramen that were on sale.

[ 4 : 29 ] And I didn't know when they were going to be on sale again, but no. Right? Preparing for the sermon reminded me that wanting something and it being on sale doesn't mean I have to buy it.

Doesn't mean I have to buy it. All right? Practicing simplicity this week also meant not monitoring my news feed like a hawk. Right? Simplicity of media intake.

Not clicking on every single appealing article title that caught my interest and attention. Not listening to every single podcast promising juicy commentary on everything that was happening this week, whether it be the markets, the election, or the Golden State Warriors.

This was a tough week for me to practice simplicity. All right? But, you know, another thing that made this talk difficult to prepare was that simplicity is quite unlike all the other unholy habits, I think.

Like, you can read the Bible. You can meditate on the Bible. Memorize it. You can observe the Sabbath. You can evangelize. You can practice a lot of these things. You can pray that we've been talking about. You can check that box. But when can we ever check the box and say, yes, I have lived simply in the way of Jesus.

[ 5 : 35 ] Right? When can we really check that box? I'm faithful in my simplicity. This is probably one of the most subjective and contextual of the holy habits that we're going to be talking about. And the truth is, it's not something that you can check a box on.

It's a lifelong process. It's a growth process. Like, to repent of our lack of simplicity and to pursue a simple life like Jesus's, it's not like other kinds of repentances.

You know, like, okay, I'm going to stop murdering now. Right? I'm going to stop lying now. I'm going to stop stealing. No. It's very different with simplicity. What act or acts could ever indicate our final repentance, right, of our excess and our binging and our consumerism and our hoarding?

Right? Repenting of all these things and living in simplicity demands the whole of our lives, the rest of our lives, right? The holy habit of simplicity is a 24-7 commitment that needs to be reflected in our every waking moment.

And honestly, it's something we fall short of all the time. We need continual growth. There's no one act, no one standard, just set it and forget it and I'm good with simplicity.

[ 6 : 42 ] Right? There's no clear-cut answer for how many sun chips or instant ramens I can have in my pantry, right, in order to be faithful to this lifestyle of simplicity that Jesus calls us to.

So for all these reasons, simplicity is a tricky topic. It's countercultural to so much of how we Western, modern, urban, and suburban people live. It's also so all-encompassing, right, touching on all our actions, all our decisions, all of our habits.

It doesn't come with clear-cut, standardized rules for determining when we are living simply and when we are not. And it's something in which none of us can ever say that we've arrived.

But I think we all do want to arrive, right, or we all do want to pursue this, right? Even those of us here who aren't Christians today, we all know we could be less consumeristic, right, less greedy, more generous, less wasteful, more environmentally sustainable.

But then thinking about this too much, it can be daunting, right? Like, are we supposed to monitor every single second of our lives? Most of us, you know, we try. We try to make these little changes in our lifestyles to be less consumeristic, to live more simply.

[ 7 : 49 ] And then, you know, with those other areas that we struggle with, we're just like, ah, I'll get to it. And we kind of numb ourselves to the guilt, right? And then we just let ourselves coast and drift along, too weary, too preoccupied to pay such close attention to our lifestyles and our consumer habits, right?

Today, I'm not calling you to perfect your lifestyles and your habits overnight. But as we like to say here, it's about direction more than it's about perfection.

And the question I think God would have us consider is, is my life trending in the direction of simplicity with Jesus? Think of today as a tune-up, an opportunity to do an audit on our lifestyles as we seek to conform our lives to the pattern of Jesus's.

And in case you're here today and you're thinking to yourself, well, I'm not even a Christian. I'm not even sold on the way of Jesus and the simplicity stuff. So why should I care about his model of living with simplicity? Well, whether or not you're convinced that Jesus's way of life, his simple way of life is compelling, wouldn't you agree that we in the West, we have a problem?

We have a problem that simplicity very much speaks to. Wouldn't you agree with Steve Howard? He was a former chief sustainability officer at IKEA. He said the West has reached peak stuff, right?

[ 9 : 06 ] We've reached peak stuff. Did you know that Americans in 2020 consumed 11 times as many material goods as Americans did in 1910, all right? Even though the population only grew by four times, all right?

Did you know that while America only has 3.1% of the children in the whole world, America consumes over 40% of all the world's toys?

Or that there are 50,000 public storage facilities here in the U.S., which is 10,000 more than all the Starbucks in the world, all right?

Right? We've reached peak stuff. As the Christian financial planner Dave Ramsey has said, we buy things we don't need with money we don't have to impress people we don't like that much, right?

Consumerism has become our default. Without even thinking, we Westerners assume that we should always be upgrading, right? That's just our default. Just always upgrade, always grow. Grow your talents, grow your treasures.

[ 10 : 06 ] We feel entitled to comfort and expect that our comfort will grow over time. Nicer homes, nicer cars, nicer neighborhoods, more luxuries, more conveniences, more vacations, as much as we can get, as far as we can go.

We believe the myth of more. We believe the myth of more. Like when Rockefeller was asked, how much money is enough? What did he say? Just a little bit more. Or we're insatiable. Now, some would blame our consumeristic default on the second industrial revolution, right?

That culminated around the time of World War I when greedy capitalists, they strategized to squeeze more money out of this post-war American population. So, for example, in the 20s, a leading banker at Lehman Brothers, he said, we must shift America from a needs to a desires culture.

People must be trained to desire, to want new things. Even before the old, have been entirely consumed. We must shape a new mentality. Man's desires must overshadow his needs.

And no doubt, they were quite successful. They were very successful in making this shift happen in American culture. But I think it would be naive of us to blame our consumerism primarily on these market shapers and economy influencers of the early 20th century.

[ 11 : 19 ] No, according to the Christian narrative of history, the Christian interpretation of history, our consumeristic tendencies, they go all the way back to the garden. They go all the way back to the fall when our ancestors first believed the myth of more.

That they could have more and that they could be more through consumption. Though they had everything they needed to be fruitful and to multiply and to rule, every tree on the face of the earth was theirs to consume except one.

They had no time pressure, no time restraints, no thistles or thorns, enemies or obstacles. Though they were already made in the image of God, they believed that they could be more like God.

That God was keeping something back from them. That God had plagued them with the scarcity that they could overcome by consuming a forbidden fruit. They believed that God was withholding a greater blessing and fuller blessedness from them by restricting them and restricting their consumption to countless numbers of trees minus one, right?

You see, outside the story of scripture, consumerism is just human nature. Or a problem of overproduction and a lack of foresight into sustainability, right? But according to the Christian tradition, according to the Christian interpretation of the world, consumerism isn't just a problem between humans and humans and the environment, no.

[ 12 : 44 ] It's a problem that entered in between humanity and God. As the theologian Richard Foster has written, consumerism is a rival religious philosophy about what constitutes blessedness.

It's two different stories. Blessed is the one who has the most time, the most talent, and the most treasures. Or blessed is the one who delights in what God says. And who meditates on it day and night.

And who is like a tree planted by the streams of God's living water. Whatever story we believe, it's hard to deny that while we Westerners live in an age where we have plenty to eat, plenty to entertain us, there's always more to read, more to watch, more to laugh at, more to take our minds off things, more to medicate us, more therapists to treat us, more possibilities of connection than ever before.

Just more to do, right, than ever before. We are still just as troubled and despairing, if not more, just as hopeless as any other generation. The myth of more is killing us.

So the author and teacher John Mark Homer asks, What if the formula, more stuff equals more happiness, is bad math? What if more stuff often just equals more stress, more hours at the office, more debt, more years working in a job I don't feel called to, more time wasted cleaning and maintaining and fixing and playing with and organizing and reorganizing and updating all that junk I don't even need?

[ 14 : 05 ] What if more stuff actually equals less of what matters most? Less time, less financial freedom, less generosity, which according to Jesus is where the real joy is, less peace as I hurry my way through the mall parking lot, less focus on what life is actually about, less mental real estate for creativity, less relationships, less margin, less prayer, less of what I actually ache for.

What if I were to reject my culture's messaging as a half-truth at best, if not a full-on lie, and live into another message, another gospel?

The way we live into Jesus' alternative to the gospel of more, the way we live out of Jesus' good news, is through a lifestyle of simplicity, the holy habit of simplicity.

Now, simplicity, it isn't simply decluttering, getting more organized, Marie Kondo-ing your life, okay? Nor is it a sanctified Christian version of, you know, the minimalist aesthetic, these techniques, you know, they can be helpful, but they're far from the main point of simplicity.

Simplicity also isn't starvation before God, this kind of mean God who doesn't want us to enjoy His gifts in creation. No, God's first words to humanity were to be fruitful, to flourish in abundance and in the context of His generosity.

[ 15 : 20 ] His ideal and goal for humanity is feast, not famine. We celebrate that every week here at this table. He wants our cups to overflow. He has set a table before us, and Jesus Himself enjoyed good meals and the hospitality and generous gifts given to Him.

He even had a treasurer to manage all the things that people were giving to Him. And that didn't end that well, but He had one, right? Another thing, simplicity isn't about being simplistic.

The opposite of simplicity isn't complexity, it's superficiality. It's a life that is trivial and vain and ephemeral. The choice is not between a simple life and a complex one, but between a deep life and a shallow one.

Or a life of focus versus a life of distraction. See, simplicity isn't just about your spending, your material possessions, and your consumer habits. Simplicity bears not just on your treasures, but on your time and your talents.

Are our calendars and time commitments marked by simplicity? Or do we try to cram as much into our 24-hour days as possible? And is the development of all our interests and our talents and our gifts and capabilities and strengths and careers, is that marked by simplicity?

[ 16 : 35 ] Or do we pursue growth and development and progress and excellence unceasingly and without any restriction or limitation? See, this is an all-encompassing holy habit.

To quote John Mark Homer again, the goal isn't just to declutter your closet or garage, but to declutter your life. To clear away the myriad of distractions that ratchet up our anxiety, feed us an endless stream of mind-numbing drivel, and anesthetize us to what really matters.

The goal here is to live with a high degree of intentionality around what matters most. Simplicity is the countercultural discipline that increases our contentment and decreases our FOMO.

Again, so much of what Bay Area culture preaches at us is that not only should we have as much as possible, but we should know as much as possible, and we should experience as much as possible, and we should achieve as much as possible.

How many of us find ourselves spending hours on YouTube, on Wikipedia, for no other reason than trying to satisfy our bottomless curiosities? How to cook a beef wellington? How much certain teams are over the salary cap in the NBA, right?

[ 17 : 46 ] How exactly does the Electoral College work again? What did David French have to say in response to the election results? Those are just my curiosities this week, all right? I'm not going to make that beef wellington.

That was too hard. You should see the clutter in my inbox, though, right? Updates and newsletters of all sorts of things that I'm interested in and want to keep up with, but I never can.

I have like, I have inboxed like 900. I know some of you guys are inbox zero people. I'm like inbox 900. I'm sorry. All these things I want to keep up with. How the warriors are doing. How to be a good pastor.

How to preach better. How to be better at apologetics. How to lead a church better. Personal finance, health, politics. I'm interested in everything. I want to know everything, right? How many of us always feel like we have to constantly check our Twitter and our news feeds and all our online sources so that we can be current on the happenings in this world and have an informed opinion on these happenings?

Since when did that become a necessity? I feel that pressure all the time. But somehow we are ruled not just by the fear of missing out, but we're also ruled by the fear of being ignorant, right?

[ 18 : 58 ] But when will we ever know enough? And it's not just a drive to know, but to experience as much as possible, right? Just this week I learned of a friend who is behind on his rent, who's lost his job, but for some reason he booked a trip to Thailand, okay?

Because, hey, I got time off now, and I have some friends that are going. It's a great opportunity to go, and I should take advantage of it and go experience the world while I can, right? Because I can.

And then some other friends of his at his church, they heard about his trip to Thailand. They said, yo, you got to go to Japan too. It's a great time to go to Japan. The dollar is strong right now.

It's so much cheaper to fly to Japan from Thailand than from California. So he booked another one-week trip on top of his two-week trip to Thailand to Japan. And maybe you were judging him right now, just like I was, all right?

But honestly, don't we all do this on different varying scales? Haven't we all said something like, oh, I might as well. I might as well.

[ 20 : 00 ] YOLO, right? Or have we not said to others, oh man, you have to go here. You have to try this. You got to go to Hawaii, Bali, Paris, Rome, or at least once you got to go before you die.

You have to eat here at this five-star Yelp-reviewed restaurant. You have to stay at this resort. Try this activity. You have to watch this Netflix series to fully experience all that life has to offer.

Or maybe for you, it's not so much about what you consume or learn or experience, but what you accomplish. Hey, you're smart. You're a great student. You should definitely try to be the top of your class. Get straight A's. Get into the best institutions.

Get the best programs at all costs. And if you're not, if you don't get into those, you're being lazy. Or hey, you know, you shouldn't just try to be healthy. You should try to have a body like Thor, all right?

That's what you should be going for, right? And if not, you're ugly. See, whether it's what we consume or what we know or what we experience or what we're trying to accomplish and achieve, everything around us is preaching to us the myth of more.

[ 21 : 00 ] And in this technological age, we're fed the lie that we can always be getting more if we just have the right technique, right? If we just have the right technological appliance, then we can get more of what we want, how we want, and when we want it.

We need to be careful. We need to be careful with what technology would tempt us to believe about our calling and our limitations as human beings. Sure, technology does give me access to more information than ever before.

But do I need to know all of it? Sure, technology does enable me to fly to Hawaii for so much cheaper now. But should I go? Sure, technology does enable me to get so much more done at work and take on so many more responsibilities.

But should I? People used to think that technology was going to shorten the work week, right? Actually, it just made us able to get even more done in 40-plus hours per week and hungrier to do even more, right?

The French philosopher, theologian, sociologist Jacques Ellul writing in the 60s on the technological society, he says that we were made to go six kilometers an hour and yet we now go a thousand.

[ 22 : 09 ] We were made to eat when we were hungry and sleep when we were sleepy. Instead, we now obey a clock. And this is a huge factor behind all of our depression and shame and our inability to get out of bed.

None of us feels like we can keep up. And yet technology is telling us that we can exceed our limitations and be awesome all the time. And not only that we can, but that we should because we have the technology to help us do so.

See, this is why we need simplicity. Simplicity isn't about depriving ourselves and restricting ourselves in empty homes with empty closets and empty pantries and a joyless life without freedom.

No, the goal of simplicity is exactly the opposite. It's more freedom. Not freedom to pursue anything and everything, but freedom to pursue the best and most ultimate thing.

Like, think about it. What if, counterintuitively, there was more freedom in our limitations? What if our limits actually defined rather than hindered our callings in life?

[ 23 : 14 ] What if our limits defined our callings? There's this psychologist, a professor at Swarthmore. He sometimes teaches here at Cal, Barry Schwartz. He wrote this book, The Paradox of Choice. Why more is less?

And he basically argues that, you know, having a ton of choices actually paralyzes us and makes us feel worse compared to having some meta rules that we live by and that order all of our choices.

So, for example, when I was in seminary, my classmates with spouses and children, they used to talk about being faithful to their spouses and kids by getting B's instead of A's, right?

They didn't just take it for granted that you have to and you're supposed to go for A's all the time. They had a higher principle that they were living by. The same is with my dad, one of the most principled men I know.

He's a retired pharmacist. And throughout his career, he's had many opportunities to advance himself. He was a director of one of the Stanford hospitals. And he had many opportunities to get himself on the map, right?

[ 24 : 14 ] Get more pay, get more influence, get more esteem. But how did he choose to spend his summers? Doing a basketball camp for me and my friends, right? He committed to being a deacon, to teaching Sunday school, to singing in the choir, to visiting families at my school on Sunday nights to tell them about Jesus, to our senior citizen ministry in our church.

You know, what's ironic is me and my siblings, we always give my dad a hard time for being so simple, right? For not trying new things, but for being so content, right? So simple that, come on, try this new food.

Come on, try this new hobby. Enjoy it with us, right? But my dad has always had a higher principle. A higher principle than being the best pharmacist he could be or experiencing as much of the world as he could.

He gave himself limits in order to faithfully fulfill his primary calling as a child of God and as a father. So this is the question that Jesus' way of simplicity poses today to us.

What if God doesn't want you to have more stuff, know more things, experience more pleasures, or achieve more tasks all the time? What limits might you consider adding to your daily rhythms to experience greater freedom and clarity in your life?

[ 25 : 29 ] I want to suggest three concrete practices to help you live a life of simplicity. Fasting, generosity, and service. Now, if you've never fasted before, give it a try. Jesus assumed that his followers would be fasting.

He didn't say if you fast. He said when you fast, right? And maybe that's food for you or just something you normally thoughtlessly consume. For me, it's food. Okay, I try to fast once a week. I try to fast once a week.

I'll eat dinner. I won't have anything after that. I'll skip breakfast. And I'll skip lunch. And I'll wait all the way until the next dinner. So that's maybe 20 to 24 hours of fasting once a week.

And basically what I do with that time is I'll maybe spend extra time in prayer, extra time in the Word of God. Or at the very least, what I do is when I feel that hunger, and I always do, every week when I fast, I let that hunger draw me to God.

And I let that hunger be a prayer offered up to God saying, Lord, you are my portion. I will not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from your mouth. And I let my longings lift themselves up to God.

[ 26 : 32 ] And I express my longings for all the things that I hope he will do in my life and in my family's life and in the world. I pray for my family and my friends who I want to come to Jesus.

Every time I feel hungry, I remember them. It's like an alarm clock for me. Try fasting. Secondly, and thirdly, together, I want to also commend generosity and service to us.

We practice simplicity not just to limit ourselves, but to give of ourselves. And this means creating margin to give our time, talent, and treasure to others. Building that margin into our budgets, building that margin into our calendars.

Did you know that creating margin to share with others was even written into Israel's law? Leviticus chapter 23, verse 22 says, God says to the people, when you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of the fullness of your harvest.

Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you, because I am the Lord, your God. We've got to stop harvesting our time, talent, and treasures all the way out to the margins.

[ 27 : 42 ] We've got to create this margin in our budgets, in our calendars. All right? And if you're looking for opportunities to do that here at Christ Church, I really want to ask you to talk to me.

Talk to Catherine Lopez. Well, stay tuned. You're going to be hearing about a lot more opportunities around Thanksgiving and Christmas to give and to serve. And also, we have this ministry called Care Portal that I really want to get in front of you.

It's a great way for us to serve our community. It's this platform where social workers share the needs of their clients with churches. And it's a way for us to step up and support these families in need that are at risk of having their kids go into foster care because they don't have enough resources.

If you want to know more about our Care Portal ministry, please talk to me. Talk to Catherine about that. Well, those are the three. Fasting, generosity, and service. These are the ways we can step into and activate the lives of simplicity that God invites us into.

Okay? So I hope I've demonstrated to you the need for and the importance of simplicity and the limits and the need for limits and the need for saying no. Okay? It's so important to say no.

[ 28 : 49 ] On saying no, Steve Jobs once said, people think focus means saying yes to the thing you've got to focus on. But that's not what it means at all. It means saying no to the hundred other good ideas that there are.

You have to pick carefully. I'm actually as proud of the things we haven't done as the things I have done. He was right. We need both one yes and a bunch of no's.

So the question is, what should be that single, all-important yes to command all our other no's? The ultimate guiding principle. That single thing that can narrow our focus.

That's so worthy of the whole of our lives and all of our attention. That one thing that can truly satisfy us and make us content and secure forever and that's always worthy.

What's that one thing that's always worthy of our yes and amen? And this is where we finally open up the Bible, okay, to Psalm 27. Sorry, it's taken me a long time to get there. In Psalm 27 here, King David, he finds himself surrounded by wicked enemies who seek to devour him.

[ 29 : 52 ] War has broken out against him and he is being besieged by agents of falsehood. And ultimately, what he's up against are more threats and more opposition than he is able to handle and conquer on his own.

But the question is, what does he seek? What he seeks isn't more wealth and more riches to buy an even bigger army than his enemies. He doesn't seek more knowledge and wisdom to devise a strategy that will deliver him from their hands nor an escape plan to go far, far away.

No, verse four, one thing, one thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek. Not that I might escape to a well-defended fortress with tons of soldiers far from my enemies, but that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, that I may reside in the presence of God all the days of my life.

To do what? To tremble in fear until God just takes care of these problems and I can come back? No, to gaze, to enjoy, to behold, to enjoy beauty, the beauty of the Lord and to seek or inquire or reflect or consider who God is in his temple, in his presence.

While David is threatened on every side with enemies seeking to devour him, David is committed to simplicity. He even has margin to appreciate and gaze upon the beauty of the Lord to contemplate and to reflect upon his God.

[ 31 : 15 ] There is one thing on his heart, one thing on his mind that enables him to be a non-anxious presence. And his words are divinely inspired by God for us to be blessed by today.

He doesn't capitulate to the myth of more, but rests content in his one thing. This is all he asks for, verse seven. Hear my voice when I call, Lord, be merciful to me and answer me, verse eight.

All he asks for is the face of God. My heart says of you, seek his face, your face, Lord, I will seek. And with all his focus on this one thing, he is filled with confidence and hope and security.

Verse 13, I will remain confident of this. I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. King David kept it simple. This is his one thing.

This is his only thing. The only thing he knows he can bank on, right? The mercy and the goodness and the presence of God. And listen, this wasn't just some technique to manipulate God, to get God to help him or some kind of mind-calming trick, okay?

[ 32 : 15 ] He's pursuing God. In her book, *Abundant Simplicity, Discovering the Unhurried Rhythms of Grace*, the spiritual director, Jan Johnson, she writes, the point of simplicity is not efficiency, increased productivity, or even living a healthier, more relaxed life.

The point is making space for treasuring God's own self. And my question to you this morning is when you, like David, face threats all around and insecurity and assaults and the least favorable of circumstances, what is it that you desire this much?

Is there anything you seek this much with this much intensity, with this much single-mindedness and single-hearted devotion? What is your one thing, your single pursuit that controls everything else for you?

And is it worth it? Will it last? Can it hold? If it is not the very presence and beauty of David's God, if you do not know this God, what is it?

Will it last? If you haven't met this God, if you're here today and you haven't met this God, if you haven't gazed upon His beauty as David did, and for us, we can gaze upon it even more so now in the face of Christ.

[ 33 : 29 ] Whatever your one thing is other than this God, I'm going to tell you, it cannot compare. It will not compare. God has come in the person of Christ, in the flesh, and when we fix our eyes on Him who lived and died and rose again, we can have every confidence that we have seen and that one day we will see more fully the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

And the good news is that this God, He invites you today into His simplicity, to say no to everything else and to say yes to Him, to make Him your one thing with all the passion and devotion of Psalm 27.

And He invites you to make Him your one thing, wanting you to know that in Christ, He, with an even greater intensity, has made you His one thing.

The writer of Hebrews says that for the joy set before Him, Jesus endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God, and implores us to consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Do you know what this means? It means that Christ committed Himself to simplicity of life for you, to bring you into glory, into His glory, seated at the right hand of God, the Father in heaven with Him.

[ 34 : 57 ] Enduring the cross, stripped naked, He lost it all, gave it all up, even to His last undergarment, everything He had, even His last breath, into your hands, I commit my spirit.

When He had the power and the right and the authority as the Son of God to determine before the foundations of the earth not to rescue His greedy, gluttonous, arrogant, always binging, discontent, consumeristic people, the people who rejected His very presence and abundance in the beginning in the garden, He had the right not to save us, not to serve us, not to suffer for us, but He did.

Why? Why? For the joy set before Him, and that joy was you in the presence of God with Him. So don't you see?

Simplicity isn't about your deprivation and frugality. It's about your ultimate delight and fullness in God as He's been revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

So ask yourselves this, are we filling our lives with so many good things that we've crowded out the one ultimate thing from whom all blessings flow?

[ 36 : 05 ] Are we so focused on filling our lives with as many good things as possible that we've crowded out the giver of every good and perfect gift? The one who made it His one thing to lead us into glory with Him and His Father forever.

The one who made us His one thing. Listen, it was simple for Him. And my prayer is that it will be simple for us as a people of God as well.

Let's pray. God, one thing we desire. To be in Your presence.

To dwell in Your house. To gaze upon Your beauty. And thank You that You promised to fulfill that desire for everyone who seeks it.

Make that our deepest desire. Be our one thing, O God. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[ 37 : 07 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.