

Great Expectations of Grace

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[0 : 00] All right, let's have a seat. Let's turn to our Lord God in prayer as we prepare to hear from his word.

Our God, our Father, we thank you that your word gives us great wisdom. We thank you that your word guides us, that your word gives us insight, and it tells us of the grace that we have through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are here by grace and by grace alone, and we know that we will continue by grace and by grace alone. So I pray, our God and Father, would you open our eyes to the grace that you have in store for us.

Give us great expectations of this grace. Lord God, give us expectations of the happiness that we can find in knowing you, in knowing your son Jesus Christ.

Lord, let us settle for nothing less than the good life that we have in him. Amen. Well, today's sermon is pulling triple duty. We are not only concluding our series in the biblical book of 1 Thessalonians today.

[1 : 27] We're also, to me this is not just a conclusion of 1 Thessalonians. To me this is a conclusion of a study that we began all the way back in June, when we began with the book of Ecclesiastes.

And the third part that we're doing is we're setting the stage for our Christmas celebration next weekend, in our Christmas Eve services, in our Christmas Day service in the morning.

The question that we have been asking since June, and it hasn't been explicitly brought up every week, but this underlying question that we've been tackling is, what is the good life?

What is the good life, and how do we find it? In a world full of counterfeit versions of the good life, how do we find a life of true happiness?

How do we find a life that we were meant to live as human beings created in the image of God?

Now, five years ago, I had an acquaintance, just a woman I met at a Thanksgiving party, and I don't think I ever saw her again, but she asked me the most awkward question I've ever been asked.

[2 : 39] And I told her a little bit of my background, you know, just making talk, getting to know you, you know, and I told her a little bit about my plans for the future. I just moved to Langley from Indiana about six months prior.

And what I expected her to do was I expect her to express interest in what's going on in my life and what my hopes for the future were, to congratulate me, to wish me well.

You know, things that polite people do. Instead, she responded to me with three words. Are you happy? Are you happy?

And that was it. That was the awkward question. I don't remember the answer. I remember I sort of fumbled out something or other.

I know the answer wasn't a yes. Because I wasn't. I wasn't happy. And really for years since that conversation, for years afterwards, I settled for being unhappy.

[3 : 44] I confess to you, I've settled for too long for being unhappy, for being dissatisfied with my life. And I grew comfortable in my unhappiness and my dissatisfaction.

They were familiar friends to me. It's the way I knew how to live. And I suspect it's not just me. You know, we live in one of the outdoor pleasure capitals of Canada, don't we?

We live in a town where people are frantically pursuing happiness in one form or another. And that means that we've got a problem here in our church.

And the problem is that we have settled for something less than the good life. We have settled for something less than knowing and enjoying God and his family in the here and now.

And we have settled for something less than our great expectations of knowing and enjoying God and his family forever and ever. However, we have settled for striving after wind.

[4 : 49] We have settled for the counterfeit joys of this world that are as hollow and fleeting as vapor. Because the truth is that our Father is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think.

The problem is not with him. The problem is with us. Our desires are too small. It is our expectations that are too low. Now we're going to finish our sermon series on 1 Thessalonians today.

And we're going to be looking at the close of the Apostle Paul's first letter to the first century church in Thessalonica. Today we'll be examining 1 Thessalonians 5, verses 16 through 28.

Now, if you're using one of the blue Bibles that our ushers have handed out, that's on page 988. In verses 16 through 28, we're going to find great expectations of God's grace.

Great expectations of God's grace. A grace that leads to happiness, to joy, to peace in his family.

Now, originally we were supposed to look at just verses 16 through 22 last week, and then this week we were going to end with verses 23 through 28.

[6 : 06] God has a way, I don't know about you guys, but for me anyway, God just has a way of disrupting my plans. My careful schedule that I laid out, that I've devised. We're going to do it all in one bite.

One big bite. And that's a good thing. God knows exactly what he's doing. I'll admit I was a little bit overwhelmed at first, because there's a lot of material to cover here.

I'm excited now, though. Because what that means is that we are going to end our series with a grand finale. With just a single massive dose of great expectations. Great expectations of God's grace.

So why don't you follow along with me in your own Bible. as I read 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, verses 16 through 28. Here's what the Apostle Paul writes.

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances. For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the spirit.

[7 : 10] Do not despise prophecies. But test everything. Hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Now, may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely.

And may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful. He will surely do it.

Brothers, pray for us. Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

This is the word of the Lord. Now, as you might have heard, you might have figured out, we have great expectations of God's grace. We have great expectations of God's grace.

And just in case you had any doubt, you're feeling, you know, sort of ornery and feel like putting up a fight. Well, guess what? We find this right at the end of Paul's letter in verse 28. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

[8 : 15] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. That's his blessing. And I know if you've read a lot of what the Apostle Paul's written, I know what you're thinking right now. Dave, that's the way that Paul ends all his letters, okay?

You know, don't make a big deal out of that. But that's exactly right. There's a reason he ends all of his letters that way. He ends them with this blessing because the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, it isn't just something that was given to us in the past.

Because we do know that Jesus Christ was born, that he lived a perfect life, that he died on the cross to free us, to liberate us from our sins, to pay the penalty for our sins.

That he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. And now those who believe in him, who have faith in Jesus Christ, are saved from the wrath, from the judgment of God.

And welcomed into his family. And we're like, okay, that's great. We had all that grace that was given to us in the past. But this grace is not confined to the past.

[9 : 20] We are given God's grace in the present. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. And we have great expectations of God's grace in our future.

Now if you were to look inside your bulletin, you'd find the word grace. There's a lot. It's such a difficult word to define because it's used in such a wide variety of ways. You know, here's just one definition I found helpful.

That grace is God's loving actions toward creation. And toward humankind in particular. Grace is the generous overflow of the love of God the Father. Toward the Son, Jesus Christ. And grace is something that is given to us that we don't deserve. It is the goodness of God the Father. It is the love that he has for his Son. The favor that his Son deserves. That overflows to us. To all human beings who have been created in the image of God. And especially to God's family.

[10:20] And welcomed by our Heavenly Father. And so through no merit of our own. You and I who are Christians.

We have been given grace upon grace. We have been given the goodness. The overflowing, unrelenting goodness. Of God the Father. That has been given through his Son who died for us. That has been given through his Holy Spirit who dwells in us. Our great expectations of grace. They are the source of the solid joy. The true happiness.

That are found in Christ Jesus. To possess these great expectations of grace. Is to live the good life. Now here's how the overflowing goodness.

Here's how the grace of God will come to us. We have great expectations of God's grace. Through communion with him. We have great expectations of God's grace.

[11:22] Through communion with him. Now this communion. What I mean by that is this experience of relationship with God. The experience and the benefits. Of a real vibrant relationship with God.

That's what Paul's talking about in verses 16 through 22. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances.

For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the spirit. Do not despise prophecies. But test everything. Hold fast what is good.

Abstain from every form of evil. I've got here a whole bunch of little bite-sized commandment nuggets. Right? These are just all these little commandments.

And they're held together by a common theme. That common theme is communion with God. And so Paul gives us three ways that we respond to our good, grace-giving God.

[12:23] And he lists them in verses 16 through 18. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances. Paul is commanding us to do these things throughout our daily life.

Always, without ceasing, in all circumstances. So what that tells us, first of all, is that we do not, Christians do not compartmentalize our lives.

That is not what we are meant to do. In other words, what we don't do is we don't take these things. This rejoicing, this praying, this giving thanks. We don't just sort of confine them, slot them in on Sunday mornings.

We don't just do them in this physical location, in this building, then we go out and just go out and live our lives the other way or however we want the rest of the week. We don't do that. They have to infiltrate, they have to permeate our lives throughout the week, wherever we are, whatever circumstances we are in.

That's the way of life. That's what leads to this good life. This communion with God. This abiding in Christ. It is, that is our way of life as sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father.

[13:36] So, in these verses, in verses 16 through 18, we learn that communion with God means always speaking to Him. Communion with God means always speaking to Him.

Now, if you're like me, you sure find it odd that the Holy Spirit is commanding us to be joyful and commanding us to be grateful and commanding us to ask God to do things for us.

I mean, aren't those things that we want? Why do we need to be commanded to do that stuff? The fact that He is commanding them, that implies that there are residual sinful tendencies that are inside of us that don't want those things.

That don't want joy. That don't want to make requests to God. That don't want to give thanks. That don't want to give thanks to our Father.

so to help guide us the holy spirit he's given us many things he's given us the psalms which model for us how to rejoice how to pray how to give thanks in all circumstances they give us the language the vocabulary to do that and the permission to do that the psalms also model how to do this without being phony or insincere that you can speak honestly and openly to your god and say things that you know sometimes we just don't have the boldness and courage to say and then even in first thessalonians the apostle paul he models this communion with god throughout this letter for

example in chapter 3 verses 9 through 10 very obvious example paul writes this what thanksgiving can we return to god for you for all the joy that we feel for your sake before god as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith i want to draw our attention to one feature from chapter 3 verses 9 through 10 from those verses that's that paul's thanksgiving his joy his prayer they are tied linked to his relationships with his brothers and sisters in god's family what that tells us is that my relationship with god and your relationship with god they cannot be separated from my relationship with each one of you in squamish baptist church and your relationship with one another we can't isolate these aspects of our christian life and like sort of relate to god in just a me and jesus sort of way and leave out the rest of our church impossible and we're going to find that over and over in verses 16 through 28 this is just going to keep coming up over and over and over let's get back to verse 16 specifically though paul writes here rejoice always this is a joy that can thrive and it can always thrive even in adverse circumstances even under pressure and suffering back in chapter 1 verse 6 paul reminded the thessalonians you received the word in much affliction with the joy of the holy spirit with the joy of the holy spirit last week we learned from john piper's sermon that vividly titled volcanic joy we learned that our god is a fundamentally happy god the father the son the holy spirit they find their joy in one another and they've invited us into their happiness into their communion with one another and so the message of the gospel is just as the angel said to the shepherds good news of great joy good news of great joy now this doesn't mean that we never experience sadness or grief or anger sometimes we hear that and we think oh that means that i should always have a fake smile on my face and pretend i'm happy all the time no that's not what we're talking about i mean after all jesus christ who is fully god showed sadness and grief and anger and he perfectly expressed the will of god he perfectly fulfilled this commandment to rejoice always but this means that underneath it all just like with jesus underneath it all you and i can know the fundamental happiness and joy of communing with god we find this happiness and joy in that communing with god who wants us to experience his happiness his joy and you know what he wants it even more than you do he wants it more than you do he wants you to know and experience the grace of god

[18:43] we follow paul's commandments in verse 17 to pray without ceasing pray without ceasing now if you read through first thessalonians you sit down and read through it all or read through second thessalonians or really any one of paul's letters what you're going to find is that paul weaves prayers he weaves appeals to god all throughout his writing he just keeps interrupting himself with prayers and the reason paul does that is because that's the way he thinks that's the way he naturally thinks he is and he's urging us here to imitate him imitate him first by becoming continual prayers continual prayers that means people who have woven prayer into the habits and rhythms of their daily life people who are persistent and people who are persistent coming back again and again to god throughout the day and paul is urging us to be not only continual prayers but continuing prayers continuing prayers that what that means is that people who are persistent in praying who don't give up or abandon the request they make to their father who keep coming back to him again and again and again with what's on their hearts day after day week after week month after month year after year who don't give up they choose to continue their communion with him as they pray to experience the grace of god and you see that modeled in the psalms even the darkest most bleak psalm psalm 88 they're the only light in that psalm is the line but i oh lord cry to you because he isn't giving up because he keeps coming back to god even the bleakest darkest times and we can do that we can come to god throughout our day and god wants us to talk to him you know i'm thinking about this how often do we carry on a conversation to ourselves inside of our heads throughout the day i do this all the time right you know it's like you know just last night driving down the highway and somebody you know some other driver drives like a maniac down the road i'm like oh you know what's wrong with this guy i should be talking with god about that guy maybe there's a reason i don't talk with god about that guy i'm afraid of what i'm what words are going to come out of my mouth but the point is that we this we need to not be having this conversation that's locked into our heads but we need to talk with god and open that conversation up and talk with god about what what thoughts are running through our head what's going on in our minds you can do that god wants you to be honest with him to open your life up to him verse 18 paul commands us to give thanks in all circumstances that giving thanks in all circumstances that's something that paul does in all of his letters as well you know even in absolutely the worst the most scandalous churches paul goes out of his way to thank god for them to affirm the work of the holy spirit among them paul looks for what's good he's on the lookout on the hunt for what is good and when he finds

it he vocalizes it to god he speaks it as gratitude and paul is urging us to do the same to choose communion with god as we give thanks as we look for find and experience the grace of god and in verses 16 through 18 we learn that communion with god means always speaking to him and in verses 19 through 22 we learn that communion with god means always listening for him communion with god means always listening for him now as individuals you and i have bible the bible we have scriptures that we can search to find the promises and commandments of god but in these verses paul doesn't emphasize the individual experience of learning from god he emphasizes the word of god as it comes through our brothers and sisters

in christ and so he writes in christ and so he writes in verse 19 do not quench the spirit and then in verse 20 he explains what he means by that do not despise prophecies so what paul is saying is that it is possible that the holy spirit might be communicating truth to you or to me by means of our brothers and sisters in christ and instead of listening to them we're shutting them out and when we do that we are throwing a wet blanket over the powerful fire of the holy spirit and we are trying to stamp out the joy-giving grace that the holy spirit wants to bring to us now i know there is an elephant in the room when it comes to this subject because some of us here this morning would argue that the holy spirit no longer gives this gift of prophecy to the church others would argue yes he does continue to do so um there is no my cop-out answer to that is there's no way i have time to talk about that there's no way that i can really do justice to that sort of debate because if i were to do that we'd have to abandon every all of the other scripture that god has given to us this morning so if you want to talk about it in more detail then come on after the service come up and talk with me or you know what give your growth group leaders a challenge right bring it up in growth group and discuss it there all right growth group leaders you've been warned you're on the alert um regardless of where you stand on this issue here's something that we can all agree on god has truth promises commandments that he wants to communicate to you he wants to communicate to me and the holy spirit commonly communicates his truth through the words of your brothers and sisters in christ here at squamish baptist church so here's the question are you listening for god's words by listening to his people are you listening for god's words by listening to his people now there are two ways that you and i may be quenching the spirit first we can dismiss the holy spirit's work by dismissing or resisting the truth that other people in our church are telling us somebody in this church sees and identifies something that's going on in your life and they want to tell you truth they want to correct you they want to encourage you they want to help you and they're doing it for your good for your joy they're expressing the grace of god to you and you resist you don't want to hear it you're quenching the spirit second we can avoid the holy spirit's work not just by dismissing other people but maybe by avoiding the inside of other people in our church by keeping certain corners of our life hidden from them giving no one access to what's really going on inside of us because they can't speak to something they don't know about if there are things going on in your life that you've hidden away from everyone here if there are struggles in your in your life that no one in this room knows about except you you are hindering your communion with god you are hindering your expectations of god's grace you are hindering your experience of joy in god i say this not to heap guilt on you but because because god your father loves you and i love you and your elders of your church we love you and we want you to know the good life

we want you to know the happiness and joy that comes from a genuine true community with god with god's family paul urges us not to dismiss not to avoid the words of god through his people but in verse 21 here just thus instead test everything hold fast what is good abstain from every form of evil we listen to god's words by listening to his people but we do it in a certain way we don't listen like well you know just like gullible people who believe everything that someone says to them who believe anything that another christian says who believe any random person on youtube whatever they say or any random preacher on tv we carefully weigh the words of our fellow christians we test everything we do that by confirming that they align with the scriptures we do that by discussing them with our church elders or growth group leaders or with wise believers who can help us and guide us we approach the words of other christians to us and we don't we don't approach it with just sort of eye-rolling cynicism like sure whatever we approach them with a listening heart that is willing to do the hard work of mining for wisdom the hard work of sifting out good from bad right from wrong truth from error the hard work of finding joy and happiness in our great expectations of god's grace communing with god means always speaking to him and always listening to him and we have great expectations of god's grace through our communion with him him now let's move on to paul's

closing prayer for the thessalonians verses 23 through 24 here's what we're going to find we have great expectations of god's grace for holiness before him we have great expectations of god's grace for holiness before him that's the future we have to look forward to here's what paul writes in verses 23 through 24 now may the god of peace himself sanctify you completely and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our lord jesus christ he who calls you is faithful he will surely do it paul addresses his prayer prayer to the god of peace and he does that because god has sent his son into the world to bring peace to bring reconciliation between himself and human beings reconciliation among those who belong to his family what this peace does is it's it means an end to that joy killing hostility that exists among people who have rebelled against god or are resisting god the way god brings peace paul says here is by sanctifying us that is by making us holy just like he is holy god brings peace by conforming us to his own character his own holy good character now some people contrast i've heard people contrast holiness and happiness it says you know you know god want god's priority for you is not to make you happy but to make you holy um i understand what folks like that are getting at when they say that the reason they're saying that is because we settle for a counterfeit happiness when we could really have holiness but you know what god's grace god in his grace your gracious good father wants you to be holy because that's what will make you truly happy

to be truly happy we must be holy that is what human beings were created to be to be like our father who is holy and so in these verses paul first says he gives us this promise this amazing hope god will make us perfectly holy that's the first thing he says he will sanctify you completely our holiness is going to be great in magnitude so that we shine as lights in the world just as jesus christ our lord did we are going to experience the joy of holiness a joy so intense a holiness so intense that we can barely even imagine it now we cannot i can you and i cannot imagine what we will become when the work of our god is finished we cannot imagine the magnitude of our holiness second paul says that god will make us not only perfectly holy but entirely holy that's what he prays in verse 23 may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our lord jesus christ now when paul is saying spirit and soul and body he isn't really trying to chop up the human being into pieces and do a philosophical analysis of the components of the human being you know what he's doing is he is piling on terms he's piling on spirit soul body much as jesus said you know love the lord your god with all your heart soul mind and strength he's piling them on and the reason he does that is because he wants to show that every single part of who you are spirit and matter soul and body it is all going to be kept blameless at the coming of our lord jesus christ god will make us entirely holy through and through and we are going to experience the joy of holiness in every part of our being what that means is that there are going to be no more dark corners of the soul that are not transformed by his holiness his grace his holiness is going to leave no corner of your life untouched changed changed transformed third paul says not only will god make us perfectly holy entirely holy he will make us securely holy that's what he promises in verse 24 he who calls you is faithful he will surely do it everyone who has been called to salvation by god everyone who has been called to salvation by god everyone whom god has effectually drawn to himself everyone whom god has adopted into his family every one of us will be made holy and blameless everyone god calls no one left behind everyone will be saved god is not the kind of god who starts a project and then abandons it halfway through he is not the kind of god who gives up he never loses and we have confidence in this not because you and i are somehow in of ourselves we're just such great you know mature christians and we're immune to apostasy you know uh we're so very faithful it is not because we are great and faithfulness but because god our father is great in faithfulness he is going to be able to do this he is going to finish the work that he began in you and in me when he called us to be his family he is going to keep us blameless of the coming of our lord jesus christ he's going to make us

his church into a spotless bride that he is going to present to his son so that he may share that joy and we may share in it too that we may share his joy and happiness forever and ever that is our future that is our secure destiny we will have the good life god will make us perfectly holy entirely holy securely holy we have great expectations of god's grace for holiness before him now paul brings his letter to a close by giving a few final instructions to this little church that he loves so much and he tells them in verses 25 through 27 brothers pray for us greet all the brothers with a holy kiss i put you under oath before the lord to have this letter read to all the brothers there are a word there that just keeps coming up over and over and over again that goodness of god the love the father has for his son it is graciously overflowed to us to you and to me and we in turn overflow overflow

with god's grace with his favor towards the brothers his grace towards one another as brothers and sisters in god's family we have great expectations of god's grace for seeking favor for one another we have great expectations of god's grace for seeking favor for one another you know that might be the most awkward sentence i've ever written um i know that's really awkward way of putting it um that's my fault uh here's the idea though we we expect god's grace that he has given to us that it is going going to overflow out of ourselves into one another that's what we expect that's what we look forward to and we even get to experience in the here and now here's what jesus promised in john chapter 7 if anyone thirsts let him come to me and drink whoever believes in me as the scripture has out of his heart will flow rivers of living water out of his heart will flow rivers of living water here at the conclusion of first thessalonians paul gives us three real life three practical ways that the holy spirit flows out of the holy spirit flows out of you and out of me with grace with goodness with goodness living water bringing god's grace to our brothers and sisters in god's family verse 25 paul urges the thessalonians to pray now we saw him do that just a few verses earlier right pray without ceasing that time his emphasis is on our communion with god this time his emphasis is on prayer as a form of love towards our brothers and sisters in god's family in prayer we solicit god's favor for our brothers in prayer we solicit god's favor for our brothers we love them just as we have been loved we long for them to share the joy that we know as children of god we want communion with them just as we have communion with god our father verse 26 paul urges the thessalonians greet all the brothers with a holy kiss i will not ask you to do that okay this this is a cultural thing okay and you know this is true even in some even in some

[39 : 06] cultures in the world today right this is a cultural form of affection among family members and close friends you wouldn't just greet anybody you ran into in the street with a holy kiss paul is asking that we show acceptance and that we show affection affection not just to the people in our church that we like that we naturally like not just the people in church that naturally like us and not just the people in our church who are naturally like us we do it to all the brothers that's what he says to all the brothers all the members of god's family every family has got some weird and wacky people in them god's family is no exception we show affection and love to all of them we show the grace of god to all of them because we're all members together in god's family because god our father loved all of us and brought all of us together he enjoys it no god our father enjoys it he rejoices when you and i show affection and love for one another and he wants us to share his joy he wants us to share his joy as our father verse 27 paul urges the thessalonians have this letter read to all the brothers so just as paul has urged them to listen to one another to the words of one another so paul is urging them to recite aloud the divinely inspired words of his letter to them now he says he wants them to read it to all the brothers once again these words aren't intended for you know just sort of an elite group of scholars or enlightened individuals these words aren't to be kept for the elders of the church these are the holy spirit's words for everyone in his family these are god's words for you for me for everyone he wants us to speak them to everyone in our church with the words of scripture we speak god's favor to our brothers we speak god's favor to our brothers and so they can share our joy in knowing that we all together are loved and accepted and taught by our father through his holy spirit we have great expectations of god's grace for seeking favor for one another so we solicit god's favor for our brothers we show god's favor to our brothers and we speak god's favor to our brothers now we do all these things we make all these efforts not out of just this moral drudgery not out of this sense of duty we are meant to do these things for the sake of our dreams for the sake of our joy for the sake of our happiness for the sake of the good life as we come to our god and father with great expectations your god my god he doesn't want you and me to settle for anything less than the good life c.s lewis he put it this way in his famous sermon the weight of glory he said if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the gospels it would seem that our lord finds our desires not too strong but too weak we are half-hearted creatures fooling about with drink and sex and ambition and a fresh coat of powder at whistler when infinite joy is offered to us

like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea we are far too easily pleased we are far too easily pleased this jean christ Jesus once told a famous parable in matthew chapter 13 the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up then in his joy joy, in his joy, he goes and sells all that he has. He sells everything he has, everything that brought him happiness, everything that he thought was the good life. He says, I don't need that anymore

because I have the good life. I have that treasure. He buys that field.

And to him it is no loss. He has lost nothing. He has gained everything. There's a man who takes his joy seriously. The kingdom of heaven will be filled with people who have given up everything they have because they knew what would truly bring them happiness.

Do you know what our God is challenging you and me with today? He is challenging us by saying, you are not taking your happiness seriously enough. You are not taking your happiness seriously enough. You can find solid joy and lasting treasure. But you can only find it in me, in my family. We have great expectations of God's grace through communing with him, for holiness before him, and for seeking favor for one another. And it is time that we started taking our joy, our happiness, as seriously as our Father does. Our Father who showers grace upon grace upon grace on us. Let's pray.

Lord, I confess that for too long I have, in vain I've been looking for a resting place here, in this world, in the things that I, every, the things that everyone in my culture around me is telling is going to make me happy, is going to bring me joy, is going to be the good life. And I've just been looking for it and looking for it and looking for it. And I have forgotten that sweet land where living waters flow.

[46 : 16] I hunger now for heavenly food. And my poor heart cries out for God.

You are our joy. You are our happiness. If you are the one who showers on us grace upon grace upon grace, open our eyes. Let us see it. Let us embrace your family. Let us embrace, oh God, the good life that you have given us.

I pray that Squamish Baptist Church may be known in the town of Squamish as the church of happy people, as the church of joyful people.

That have a joy that cannot be explained, that cannot be accounted for by all that this culture calls the good life.

let us be known as the people who truly know the good life. Because we have Jesus Christ our Lord, and we have great expectations of continuing grace from Him. Amen.

[47 : 35] Amen.