

# Joy to the World: Reconciliation Has Come

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[ 0 : 00 ] Still kind of going through the whole time change. As always, when you tend to travel and be away from home for a while, you tend to pick up a cold or two.

A couple things that I wanted to get into just to kind of bring you up on what happened in the Philippines. The first thing I wanted to say was thank you. Thank you for your support, your prayers. It was a touching time. It was, and just so you know, we sent out an email letter that kind of detailed what was going on.

If you did not get a copy, there are copies at the welcome desk. And probably one of the reasons you didn't get a copy is we do not have your email address in order to send you a copy.

So when you grab one of those copies, please just give us your email address. We don't solicit you for anything. What we do is we just inform you, let you know what's going on, what's coming up.

[ 1 : 00 ] So yeah, so there was basically two different, there was supposed to be three phases to the, there was actually supposed to be four phases to the mission strip.

The first one got canceled even before I got there, but it was after I had booked the ticket. That is a phase of ministry that will probably happen in the spring.

The first phase was that conference. So Danielle and I had just basically landed. They had a driver pick us up, take us to the hotel, have a shower, and up and go. You're ready.

And you're with about a thousand people just kind of walking your way like a zombie through the conference. So the conference was hosted by a church called Higher Rock and what's called the Master's Academy, which is the training center, which is a part of TMAI.

So I'm going to show you slide number one here. This is me and to Daniela's immediate left is Bob Amigo. Bob Amigo is the pastor and this group of people are all his family.

[ 2 : 08 ] So he's got brothers, sisters, kids, grandchildren that all come to the church. But Bob had been a pastor at this church for many years. And the story that I'm telling you not only stands out with him, but it's one of the most common stories that we heard at the conference was that several years ago, I would say over a decade ago, someone had invited him to the Shepherds Conference.

The Shepherds Conference is the church hosted by the Grace Community Church, John MacArthur Seminary, where I went to school.

And he went there and just over that week felt burdened that his ministry wasn't biblical, that he was pursuing a prosperity gospel ministry.

And he felt convicted, he came back, and the first thing he did is he asked his church for forgiveness. Just simply said, for all these years, I have been leading you wrong.

Would you please forgive me? Not only did they grant him forgiveness, they still continued to follow him. And what transformed, what happened was a complete transformation of this church.

[ 3 : 20 ] And now they have become such a central hub to that area of supporting these different churches. So the reason there was, quote unquote, I was told, only a thousand people at that church, or at this conference, was because the other, there's a place that they usually rent for three thousand, that holds three thousand people, was under renovations.

So they had to shorten it. So usually when this church runs a conference, it is a big deal. And what's encouraging is just the amount of service and kindness that is displayed in their church that does the serving.

So Daniela was really blessed to kind of connect with the ladies. Don't mock me, but I used to say she's kind of with her people. They're all little.

You know, kind of doing their thing, helping, and some really great friendships that are ongoing. So the second issue, which was slide number two, there was a typhoon that happened, super typhoon while we were there.

It actually was just wind and rain for us. But some other parts of the country, it was a complete devastation. And I was supposed to preach at a church that's actually on a peninsula, and the roadways got washed out.

[ 4 : 39 ] So we weren't able to do that part of the ministry. So yeah, I'm just going to show you, I think, what's the next slide?

What's slide number three? We'll just go with it. All right, so this is the second part. So this is the TMAI Summit. And let me just read you the mission of TMAI.

This is the Masters Academies International. Its mission is to strengthen the global church by establishing and supporting indigenous pastor-trained schools around the world.

There's five such centers, like hubs based around the world, that they train local men to exposit scripture, shepherd biblically, and reproduce leaders so that churches are planted, strengthened, and sent into their own communities and beyond.

So it kind of started, I don't have my pointer, but the second guy from the bottom right, that guy's name is John. I did not like him.

[ 5 : 42 ] He was an L.A. Dodger fan, and he wore Dodger colors the whole time just to bug me. But right behind him is Sean. So Sean was the first guy to go in 20 years ago.

Now, you'll notice there's indigenous people in there. These are now pastors already pastoring. They're then developing, and praise the Lord, whether or not it ends the world like Skynet.

But right now, AI is being used to translate the Bible into over 50 different translations over there. So it's happening at a very rapid pace as the gospel is getting in.

So where I kind of fit in with this is that other part about shepherding biblically and reproducing leaders. Because what happens is, the guys that they choose to come to these things, they're smart guys.

They usually have advanced degrees because they've got to figure out languages, then they have to figure out how to translate it, and then get it into this other language, all the while working in the church.

[ 6 : 45 ] So what happens is, as they continue to get bigger, they bring on these other men. And what happens is, the shepherding aspect kind of falls away. So TMAI has identified the need to bring in guys like myself that are seasoned pastors.

I don't really feel very seasoned, but over 15 years, just seen a lot of things. So for about two days, I just spent every single meal, every single conversation.

And I wrote the elders. I said, it felt conversations of eternal weight. In that, I'm being inserted into these issues that are going into churches and just praying, supporting, looking at scripture.

Because there's church splits that happen. All manner of sin happens all over the place. And some of these guys just aren't knowing how to do that and how to walk through certain communities.

Just a final note on how to train indigenous. One of the things that's proven TMAI is on the money, if I could use that phrase, is the war in Ukraine and Russia.

[ 8 : 02 ] Because of that war, all the Americans were kicked out of Russia. But you know what's still working? All those training centers. They're moving. The indigenous Russian guys are running them and they are producing pastors behind the old iron curtain.

Pretty cool, eh? You know, that's the goal. Okay, we're out. That's fine. God's got it from here. And that's happening in several places. So when you think of it, and there's a couple of other slides here.

Um, these guys are the Pakistani guys. Um, the one on, uh, with the white shirt, he's actually a full-time doctor and pastor. They live in a country where you're not able to share the gospel publicly.

That's put in prison offense. So these guys are like doing all sorts of stuff using social media.

They're doing podcasts. They're, they're so way ahead of the curve in getting the gospel.

So Hanuk, who's on the left, who we've had some excess funds. We've sent them to help him because he's getting extra training. You know, before he had the same story. He, he was in, in a church.

[ 9 : 09 ] He can, he can actually trace his lineage down to 1903 when, uh, there was a famous missionary arrived in the Punjab. His grandparents, parents were saved through that ministry and eventually him.

But it was not based on God's word. It was a kind of a word of faith movement. So, you know, he used to just spirit. What do you want me to write today? And he'd write this sermon. And it was a

struggle, not, he said, struggle to find a place to meet all the time.

They had no money, but he felt really called and called. And then finally he heard that there was this group doing free classes in the city. So he went to one of our classes that one of my classmates was offering.

And as pastor Bob did, he learned, Lord, forgive me. I have been preaching. I have failed to preach God's word to God's people. So he went back, asked for forgiveness.

That church has grown from anywhere from 30 to 60 to over 200. Now they bought a building and they're now using that as a training center. So there was a lot of these stories where these guys have this long lineage that it's not so much that we were there as a part of the leading them to Christ portion, but we've come along these guys who've been struggling for years, if not decades, behind enemy lines, trying to do as best they can.

[10:31] And now they're being equipped and they're growing. And these guys are growing like weeds. So they all have these kind of similar stories, which is encouraging. Next picture.

So this is just myself, Daniela. So we kind of had a blessing in that Daniela had made friends with this lady who was helping out. And we wanted to bless them with a dinner on our final night there. And it turns out her husband's a general in the Filipino Armed Forces. He's actually a national hero there. So they said, well, we'll take you. So I had the pleasure of going to the Manila Hotel.

If you know anything about World War II, World War I, this was Douglas MacArthur's headquarters during the war. So he's a bit of a war buff. I'm a bit of a war buff. So we kind of had that conversation.

And God's blessing showed through the next day. And I say this somewhat facetiously because it turned out he was a golfer and invited me to golf at the official Air Force golf course the day that we were leaving.

[11:37] So he had a military escort pick me up at the hotel, drive me to the golf course. We had a military escort. As we golf, military people would move the other golfers aside so we didn't have to wait teeing off.

So it was the quickest 18 holes that I had ever done. But it was fantastic. And just to get to know him. And of course, we've extended them the blessing to please come and visit us.

They do come to the United States, but we'd love to host you. God's kind in that with technology. I know even Daniela's hooked up on WhatsApp and still connected to some of the girls.

And likewise, I just summoned the men just encouraging them and creating these long-term relationships. And they've asked you if Squamish Baptist would like to be a part of some of their short-term ministries.

So one of their ministries that they have is they're trying to get clean water to a mountain town that has no clean water. So they're going to send me the details of that project and another outreach project to an indigenous group of people on one of the islands who've never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[12:54] So even what Dave was praying for, what our hope is, and just as we were praying as elders on Sunday, if this is a door for us to walk through, may the Lord be very clear.

And one of the things is we want to see church-based ministry and being a part and strengthening that we ourselves becomes friends with this church and able to support those churches over here. So thank you so much. I have so much more. I got a notebook I'm still processing. The other thing I want to pray for today is just Pastor David Crete. Pastor Dave and Chelsea are in Kelowna, and he's preaching at one of our dear friends' church.

His name is John Tucker. John and Jane Tucker. They're on sabbatical. And I'll tell you, this has been this one wonderful blessing of this merger and having three men that can preach is we're able to loan out our pastors.

And it's created these really great relationships with guys on the islands. And we're now being asked to kind of come in and help with certain situations. So God has been kind to kind of bring in these kind of influential areas where the ministry of Squamish Baptist, whether it be Dave working with counseling, there's been a situation to help develop elders.

[14:13] So God is kind, and these things are going on. And I want you to know about each and every one of the things and blessings that God has given us. So, hey, let me just go to the Lord in prayer before I hit the service.

God, we thank you right now. We just pray for your voice in David's mouth as he ministers to the saints. We give you thanks for John and Jane Tucker, just their faithfulness. They've been associated. John's preached from this pulpit. Loves the Lord just a time away with his family that he so dearly needs on sabbatical. I pray for blessing and rejuvenation. And I just pray for David just in that same way to continue to have influence in the churches in the Kelowna area as we get to know more and more pastors and just provide blessings to them. Not only just sending up preachers, but just friendships. A lot of guys are on their own and don't have anybody checking in on them. Pastoring sometimes is a lonely place. [15:12] And I know I am blessed without measure because not only do I have two other like-minded men. I've got these three other laymen who are serving as elders and some in the church that are just loving you, want to grow, want to seek your truth, be part of what you are doing in your kingdom, O God.

Lord, you are good. I'm excited for the rest of this series as we continue to march through these chapters in Romans.

And I ask you to prepare our hearts to understand some of the most significant truths that we need to understand this morning before we can even go on and understand any of the more great truth that your word exposes to us in Romans chapter 6.

So we give you thanks for these things. Give me a clear mind, a voice. And thank you for fishermen's friends, which helps me along. So we ask these things in your most holy and precious name.

Amen. Amen. So obviously, there's a theme I'm supposed to be touching on now, right? Kind of wasn't emotionally ready for that, but I was in the Philippines.

[16:25] And you guys, all Filipinos all know, Christmas starts in August. They're rip-roaring. Christmas is everywhere. It's an exaggeration.

It's September 1st. They really get it going. But anyway, kind of made me start thinking about what are some of the themes and whether or not I was going to break off from Romans. But in fact, we're going to dive deeper into Romans because Romans, this text that we are going to be dealing with is a wonderful text.

And it really touches on the Christmas and Advent themes. And it talks about the hope of our coming Savior. What could be greater reflected in what's supposed to be a quote-unquote Christmas Advent sermon.

This upcoming passage, which begins in verses 12 to 21, just to let you guys know, theologians consider this section of Scripture to be one of the most richly and dense passages in all the Bible. And what I mean by that is on the words that God has given Paul to use, he's touching on close to 10 major doctrines, which is 10 major Christian teachings of our faith.

[17:54] It's big. Not only that, it serves as what's called a hinge passage. And you might be here. You might disagree. You might have a position of a different theologian.

And I say, it's a free country. You're free to be wrong. But there's a hinge that happens. And what I mean by that is we have to understand this first book.

And this hinge will connect us to the second part of Romans. Now, for those of you who are new or who've been here for the past six months or who've been here for the entire series and forgot or slept through it, let me give you a very quick recap.

The book of Romans, written by the Apostle Paul, can be divided into five sections. And these sections each have a driving question behind them.

And this is written by Paul's expertise. He's been in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, Jerusalem. He's been involved in dozens and dozens of churches.

[19:05] He's done three missionary churches. He's already written some letters. So Paul knows what all these churches are doing. And this book of Romans, it's like, hey, let's get this straight.

Let's get this so we don't have any other misunderstandings about what's going on. The first question that Paul answers is, what's wrong with the world?

And subsequently, what's wrong with me? Let's be honest. The world is a mess. We have it good in Squamish. In fact, just this fall, I'm golfing with a gentleman who comes from one of those hot zones.

There's essentially 17 hot zones that are either major or minor wars going on, where literally hundreds of thousands of people are dead.

Okay? It's wretched. It's evil. And I said, what do you think about that? What's your thought on that? And he goes, what do I care? I live in Squamish. That's how good we got it.

[ 20 : 21 ] But just this past week, Danielle and I are driving through the streets of Manila, and we're seeing children sleeping on cardboard on the sidewalks. We're seeing levers of poverty that are unexplainable.

And then you see these places of riches untold. And you start asking, Lord, what is wrong?

Christmas is supposed to be the time of good cheer.

But I can tell you right now, there's not enough good cheer in the world to cover up what's wrong in the world. There's not enough coke to hand out to your neighbors and a smile that's going to make up for the damage that is done around this world.

But then, let's not even talk about the world. Let's talk about us. How many of us have asked that question yourselves?

What is the matter with me? You can be honest. This is a safe place. Questions like, why do I keep losing battles in my heart that no one even sees?

[ 21 : 40 ] Why do the people I love the most get the worst version of me? Why do I know what's right but drift towards what I know is wrong and is going to cause me pain?

Why is the world so broken and why am I so unable to fix it? Why do I know what's right but drift towards me? This is the first question that Paul answers in Romans 1 verses 18 to Romans 3 verse 20.

Paul tells us that we have willingly suppressed the knowledge of God. We know God exists but we have pushed it down. We don't want it.

We don't want to be confronted. We want to do our own things. And instead of worshiping the God who's created this beautiful world, we create these objects out of wood, metal, and stone.

And that's what we worship. Or we create caricatures of ourselves. And that's how we worship. Us, our needs, my wants, what I like to do.

[ 22 : 56 ] Now, not only did we suppress, we rebelled. I'm going to tell you right now it's a universal rebellion.

If you think you're here and you didn't rebel, trust me, you did. See, once we understand or fully admit that the world is broken and we are just as broken as the world and we're unable to fix it, remember after World War II, actually, actually, World War I, League of Nations had to get these countries together to stop all wars.

That didn't stop World War II. All right, so let's get this UN group. The best of mankind has to offer. What's happening? There's still hundreds of thousands of people dying even after 65 years.

Of all these men coming together, men and women, coming together, trying to figure out the problem and never getting anywhere. The sane person, or let me just say maybe the honest person asks, how can God fix it?

Or how can mankind be made right with God? Forget about the world. I'm responsible for me. What can I do to be made right with God?

[ 24 : 22 ] Because you know you're thinking God can't be too happy with things. We've messed things up. And I believe that's the right way to think through that. I don't think God is happy with the way the world is.

So the question is, how do we fix it? What works? What religious works? What prayers do I need to get right with God? So at least I'm saved. Well, that's the problem with the gospel.

The problem with the gospel is, it's not something that you do. The blessing of the gospel is something that God does. And God, it's so far broken, you can't fix it.

There's not enough religion in the world that's ever going to make me happy. So what I am going to do is, I am going to save you. I am going to send you my son. I'm going to pour all your sins on him. I'm going to pour my wrath on him. He is going to die. And then three days, he's going to rise again in victory.

[ 25 : 26 ] And then the righteousness that is on Jesus, I'm going to give it to you. All you wicked little sinners are now going to be like my son to me.

Only God can make it right. Only God can appease his wrath that we so richly deserve. And how do we get made right?

We just simply accept the free grace of Jesus Christ that he alone offers through faith alone. Jesus says here, have my righteousness.

It's yours. All you need to say is, father, I have faith. I will take it. You can never earn it. It has to be given. And the greatest thing that happens is we learn about this word reconcile. [ 26 : 32 ] Reconcile. It's an accounting term. And it's something that only God can do. Our sin created a debt. Jesus' death pays that debt.

You with me on that? That's what that term reconciled. It's a theological term of reconciliation. We've now, if you become a Christian, a believer in Jesus Christ, you are now reconciled to God. Meaning you have no debt with God. There is no sin against you. But here's the good news. Once you've been reconciled to God, once your relationship to God has been made right, things start to change. This is the hinge that I'm speaking about.

If you are indeed reconciled, as we get to the end of chapter 4, and you've accepted the good news of Jesus Christ, guess what? Good news is coming.

[ 27 : 35 ] And it's even better than being reconciled. It's what reconciled means. That's why in my last couple of sermons, I preached two sermons on Romans 5, 1 to 11.

One author says it's the highest mountain peak in all of Scripture. And if you missed them, I would encourage you to go back on our websites, on Apple Podcasts. Those were literally my two favorite sermons to ever preach since I've been here.

The news is too good. And here's what it tells us. One of the greatest truths is that when God saves us, He saves us from something, and He saves us.

He doesn't save us from something. He saves us to someone. All right? In case you can't figure it out, He just doesn't save you from hell. He saves you to Jesus Christ.

He saves you to a relationship with Jesus Christ. When we are reconciled, we are brought into a real life, a new life, an eternal life that exists in Jesus Christ.

[ 28 : 43 ] If you have new life without Jesus Christ, you're in the old life. Like, if you think, hey, I've done enough, I'm getting to heaven, do I care if Jesus is there?

You better believe you care. So in Romans 1, we learn that we have peace with God, that the war with our Creator is over.

In verse 2, we learn we had access to God. We're now welcomed open arms into the throne room. We can sit on the throne with our Papa. Romans 5 tells us that we now have the love of God poured into our hearts.

And just in case we are thinking too great of ourselves, Paul reminds us in verses 6 to 10 that Christ died for us, not when we were perfect, good, and said enough prayers.

He died for us when we were ungodly, sinful, helpless, and hostile towards him. And the conclusion he reaches, and we find this in today's verse, and I'm only preaching one verse this morning, is found in verse 11.

[ 30 : 00 ] Romans 5, 11. Listen, we rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

This, my friends, is the first day of Christmas. This is the first note of Advent. This happened before the shepherds began to speak, or the angels began to speak to the shepherds.

This was before the wise men followed the stars. This is before Mary was told that she was going to have a Jesus, a manual.

There was first a staggering, earth-shaking declaration. God is reconciling sinners to himself. The God who should have judged us now welcomes us.

The judge is the one who became our father, who is the enemy, who is now our friend, and to the rebel, he's now our father.

[ 31 : 09 ] And the only response, the only response that we can have to this news, that we've been reconciled, reconciled. What did Chris Mitchell preach on last week?

What did Chris Mitchell preach on last week? Joy. The only response, the only right response to the news of Jesus Christ reconciling us is joy.

Not joy in circumstances, not joy in our gifts, not joy in seasonal worth, but joy in God himself.

Listen, the fact is, Chris shook us up last week.

It was a wonderful sermon. We learned that joy is both a gift, and guess what? A command. What happens when you don't follow a command? You know what the opposite is of a command?

You ready for this punch in the gut? Sin. To not be joyful is sinful. Chew on that for a moment when you get to small groups.

[ 32 : 12 ] Right? But, the main point that he brought out is that true joy belongs to believers. Why? Because they have been reconciled to God.

So today as we open Romans 5.11, we begin this Advent season not with feelings of nostalgia, not with stories of sentimentality, not with decorating a new manger scene, but Paul hits this with this incredible staggering truth.

God has come near to reconcile sinners, and because of that, we rejoice. So this morning is a very simple sermon.

I'm going to give you three simple truths of reconciliation. Three simple truths of reconciliation.

Reconciliation. The first truth of reconciliation is it is a gift we do not deserve. Reconciliation is a gift we did not deserve. Why? Because it is what God accomplished for us. If you're ever feeling low, and you wonder if nobody loves you, guess what God does.

[ 33 : 29 ] God does so much that he had his son die for you, so you can be reconciled to a right relationship with him. You see, if there's one thing we know about the Apostle Paul, he doesn't sugarcoat the truth.

Like I said, in verse 6, he says we were weak. In verse 6 again, we were ungodly. We were, verse 8, we were sinners. Verse 10, we were enemies of God. But that's the resume every single one of us shares.

And yet with this truth, when we were weak, Christ died for us. When we were ungodly, Christ died for us.

When we were sinners, Christ died for us. When we were enemies, God reconciled us. There is nothing in us that moved God towards mercy.

Everything in us deserved wrath, but God moved anyway. Here's your doctrinal truth. Reconciliation is a one-way movement.

[ 34 : 39 ] Reconciliation is a one-way movement. It's not you closing the gap to God. It's God closing the gap to you. It's not the enemy running back to the king.

It's the king running after the enemy, not to kill him, but to hug him. That is why this is considered grace.

This is why this is considered love. This is why this is considered joyful. The punchline to all this is you do not negotiate your reconciliation.

You do not contribute to your reconciliation. You do not improve yourself into reconciliation.

The only way to be reconciled is to receive the reconciliation that God freely offers to you. That's Paul's whole point in verse 11 when he says, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

[ 35 : 56 ] Not earned, not achieved, not performed, but God initiated, God accomplished, God delivered, and God supplied.

If you would let me for this moment give you some advice, stop trying to pay back God.

Stop trying to make things up to God. Stop trying to perform for acceptance. Stop trying to improve your spiritual resume.

Why? All those things focus on, number one, you. God didn't reconcile you because you were impressive.

God reconciles you because he's impressive. And if you are in Christ, then you are as reconciled as to Christ himself and it can never change.

[ 37 : 09 ] There is no distance left. There is no hostility. There is no condemnation. There is no wrath. You are not an enemy trying to become a son.

You are a reconciled son or daughter learning to live like one. That's our challenge. Live like who we are.

So as we get into this Advent thing, understand that it doesn't believe, it doesn't start in Bethlehem, but it started in the heart of God.

The God who moved towards his enemies in love didn't start with a manger. He started with a mission. And that mission was to reconcile the world to himself.

So that's the first truth. We do not deserve reconciliation. The second truth that Paul has for us is that in reconciliation is the joy we get to live in.

[ 38 : 14 ] Reconciliation is the joy we get to live in. Another way of saying it is, this is what God produces in us. God reconciles us, then he produces in us. That's why it says in verse 11, we rejoice in God.

That is the effect of the cause of being reconciled. If point one showed us what God has accomplished for us, point two shows what God is doing in us.

And Paul says, we rejoice in God. Not, we rejoice in our blessings. Not, and we rejoice in our answered prayers.

Not, we rejoice in circumstances turning around. No. Our call is to rejoice in God himself.

My friends, this is the mark of a reconciled heart. Before reconciliation, you might have been religious, you might have come to church, but I'm going to tell you what you were doing.

[ 39 : 21 ] You were using God. You were using God. You were in what's called a transactional relationship that God never agreed to. But you wanted to. Right?

If I do this, God, you will do this for me. If I am good, you will bless me. If I recycle, you'll give me enough money for a new car.

Whatever that prayer is. Religion is all about trying to get something over God. God says, quit doing that.

Would you just love me? Would you just have joy in what I've done? You don't have to do that anymore. You see, why is this so?

And this is a doctrinal truth for you. Reconciliation is not about a change of status. Reconciliation is about a restored relationship. It's not like, hey, I was going to hell and now I'm going to heaven.

[ 40 : 26 ] I got a different status. No, no, no, no. I get to be with Jesus now. I have this relationship with the Son of God, the ruler of the universe who hears my prayers, who indwells me, who renews my mind.

It's about you and I being made right again by the creator of the universe. You see, we're not just forgiven sinners.

We're not just acquitted criminals. We're not just declared righteous. We're welcome children.

We are beloved sons and daughters of the King. And more than that, we are reconciled worshipers. Reconciliation is to be the true joy for the believer.

In fact, it is inevitable. Martin Lloyd-Jones makes this very uncomfortable observation which Chris made. He asked the question now, if joy is a command, go follow it.

[ 41 : 49 ] You see, reconciliation just doesn't fix our record with God. It creates a new relationship with God. You guys want some honest truth?

Can I give you some honest truth? I'm a pastor. I think I'm supposed to do this. The problem is most Christians don't have a joy problem. Most Christians have a God problem.

They don't have a joy problem, they have a God problem. You see, if your joy rises and falls with circumstances, it means your joy is tied to circumstances.

If your joy rises and falls with God, you will never ever run out of joy. Why? Because Paul makes it clear in Romans 5.11 that the Christian's joy is anchored in a person who never changes.

Do you get this? God never changes. Your joy is anchored in God himself.

[ 42 : 59 ] Now let me explain Paul's logic to you. Fact. Joy is the end result of everything God has done that we've read about from Romans 1 to Romans 4.

We get into Romans 5 and we find out we're at peace with God. Can I get a yahoo? Yahoo. All right. Then we have access with God. Can I get a yahoo?

Come on. With me. Yahoo. Then we have hope in God. Can I get a yahoo? And then we have love from God. Whoa. Produces joy. Then we get salvation by God.

And then verse 11 it says reconciliation through Christ is joy exploding. That's what it is. It's been erupted.

I've got peace with God. I've got access with God. I've got hope in God. I've got love that God has poured in me. I am saved. And I now have this joy exploding.

[ 44 : 00 ] As one guy said joy is not the icing on the cake. Joy is the Christian life. Joy is the atmosphere of reconciliation. creation. Friends, this is the kind of joy you can only have on this side of the cross.

Let me tell you something about this joy. This joy is not fragile. This joy is not seasonal. This joy is not emotional.

It's a joy that cannot be taken by trials. It cannot be taken by sickness. This joy cannot be taken by loss. It cannot be taken by fear.

And it does not fear death. Why? Because the joy is rooted in God, not in anything God gives. Let me say it another way.

Joy is not the absence of storm. Joy is the presence of the Lord. That's why Paul doesn't say we rejoice in our circumstances.

[ 45 : 10 ] He says we rejoice in God. See, once you understand this, you start to think, hey, this Advent thing starts to look really good.

This whole Christmas thing, the true meaning. Advent is not about the lights, the music, the atmosphere. Atmos is about God drawing near to us.

It's God closing in on us. It's God moving toward us. And when God moves towards sinners and reconciles them, joy moves in.

Joy came to the world because God came to the world. reconciliation is the reason Christmas is joyful. It's not the singing, it's not the season, it's not the traditions or the nostalgia.

Joy comes because God came. Amen? So that's the second truth about reconciliation. Let me unload this third truth and this truth is going to shake you.

[ 46 : 28 ] This truth I guarantee is going to put a little bit of fear in you. It's going to make you think and I want you to understand here before I go, I'm going to get before I get into it, I'm going to get pastoral on you.

You're going to not be alone. Okay? You've got pastors, elders, and shepherds with you through this next phase. It's intent.

But the third truth about reconciliation is that reconciliation is the hope we carry into the world. Get that?

Reconciliation is the hope we carry in the world. And what that means is this is what God does through us. Notice Romans 5 11. Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

What Paul's doing as he ends this verse, this section, he's reminding us that reconciliation is not a private comfort. Reconciliation is not a personal treasure.

[ 47 : 34 ] You ready? The truth of the matter is reconciliation is a public announcement.

Reconciliation is a truth world changing message.

the truth of reconciliation is a mission. Reconciliation came through Christ and now God sends it out through us.

Here's your doctrinal point for this passage. Reconciled people become reconciling people. Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 5 verses 18 he says all this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

That is in Christ God was reconciled the world to himself not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ God making his appeal through us we implore you on the behalf of Christ be reconciled to God.

[ 49 : 01 ] Boom! Christmas is the biggest mission event of the year. God reconciled us God gave us the ministry of reconciliation and now we are ambassadors for Christ and God is making his appeal through us.

In other words you are not the same person you were before Christ saved you. You see you're not just forgiven now you're commissioned.

You're not just reconciled you're sent. you're not just a recipient of grace you're a messenger of grace. These are hard truths.

Reconciled people do not stay silent. Reconciled people do not stay hidden. Reconciled people do not keep good news to themselves.

See here's the truth. If the gospel stops with you you never understood it.

[ 50 : 19 ] If reconciliation makes you quiet maybe you didn't receive it fully. And if grace didn't turn you outward maybe you're not walking in it yet.

You see reconciliation is God's message through his people to a people who are so messed up and lived in a messed up world.

This Romans is probably the best missions training we've ever received. We understand the world. We understand the question why is this world so messed up?

We can be honest with our loved ones. Hey let me tell you about how I messed up. I don't have a relationship with my son anymore.

My dad doesn't talk to me. I'm on my fifth marriage. I can't keep a job for more than six months. I'm the problem.

[ 51 : 34 ] And now you know why. Why? Because man chose to suppress the truth. So when they ask you, what's the hope? What religion do I need to follow?

There's no religion. There's this man named Jesus who came down on Christmas Day. He lived an entire human life. He lived it perfectly. Then he went to the cross and he died for you.

All your sins, the whole world's sins, poured out on him. He rose three days later, conquered it, and God gives us his righteousness. You might not be able to solve this messed up world, but I'm going to tell you right now, you can solve your messed up relationship with him.

And if I can say, be honest with you, you can do it right here, right now. Maybe you're one of those people that you have not fully reconciled to God. Maybe you're living as a Christian for part of your life and now you're doing your own thing.

Maybe today's the day it's like, Lord, I need to be fully recognized for you. Have you ever asked, maybe I am not experiencing joy? Maybe that joy is because you keep still wanting to live your life instead of the life God has called you to.

[ 52 : 53 ] Maybe that thing you're fighting is the thing that God called you to die to self to. Here's the question, who in your life needs to hear the wonderful message of reconciliation this Christmas?

A spouse, a prodigal child, a neighbor, a co-worker, a family member who will sit across from you at Christmas dinner? Listen, the season is not about manufactured warmth.

The season is about God moving towards sinners in Christ and God moving us towards sinners with Christ. Just in case you missed that, I'm going to repeat that.

This season is about God moving towards sinners in Christ and it's about God moving us towards sinners in Christ.

See, he wants you to make the appeal for him. Make no mistake, Advent is not sentimental, it's missional.

[ 54 : 09 ] Advent is the story of God sending his son, but it's also the story of God sending his people. It's heavy, eh?

I've got a note here, Christmas is not a retreat, it's a mission field. But here's the deeper truth. If you're a believer in Christ, you were saved from wrath.

You were saved into joy and you were saved unto a mission. Reconciliation is the hope the world needs and God has chosen you as the carrier of that hope.

So as we step in this Advent season, let me conclude with this. The world wants us all falling for the lights, the music, the goodwill towards men.

It's all a distraction. It's not a feeling, it's not a tradition, it's not a seasonal emotion. It's a fact.

[ 55 : 29 ] The fact is we rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have now received reconciliation. Amen? As a Christian, reconciliation is not something you hope to get someday.

It is something that you are joyful for what is here now. You already have the peace of God. You're good. You're in Christ. But here's the thing.

Joy didn't begin in Bethlehem. Joy began in the heart of a God who reconciled us. So my encouragement to you this week is one, rejoice in what God has done for you.

Two, rejoice in what God is doing in you. Let joy rise. Not the circumstances, the joy, but from Christ. And three, rejoice in what God wants to do through you.

So friends, rejoice in God, rejoice in Christ, rejoice in the gospel, rejoice this Advent, for I'm here to tell you joy has already arrived.

[ 56 : 39 ] Let me pray. Dear, holy, heavenly Father, what a packed verse, what a glorious truth.

And it hurts when we're not feeling joyful. Sometimes that joy is tied onto these personal events, and sometimes those personal events have been long going.

Years. It can be a physical disease. Perhaps it's dealing with an organic depression or a mental issue.

It could be just this grinding relationship with your parents. And you just wonder, am I ever going to go through this? How can I be joyful?

You set our compass straight. Joyful in God. It's not to change. There's a seriousness to it.

[ 57 : 43 ] But in understanding this idea of reconciliation, we know we have a mission, and I'm sure there's more than a people, a few people here.

It's like, I don't even know how to carry out that mission. I don't know what to do. Some of them are here. I know, these are the people I want to go talk to. I'm going to go talk to them by five o'clock

today.

I'm going to cover all 37 people on my list. And there's some that are scared to death to open up maybe to a loved one, family member, and just simply say, God loves me.

Let me tell you why. And what he did for me. Father, may this truly be the mission season.

In the hearts and our souls of the people of Squamish Baptist Church, and the friends and families that are represented here, I ask you these things in your gracious and glorious name.

[ 58 : 50 ] Amen.