

More Money, More Problems!

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[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Ecclesiastes chapter 5, I'm going to begin reading in verse 10. He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income.

This also is vanity. When goods increase, they increase who eat them. And what advantage has their owner, but to see them with his eyes. Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep. There is a grievous evil that I've seen under the sun. Riches were kept by their owner to his hurt. And those riches were lost in a bad venture.

And he is a father of a son, but he has nothing in his hand. As he came from his mother's womb, he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand. This also is a grievous evil. Just as he came, so he shall go. And what gain is there to him who toils for the wind? Moreover, all his days he eats in darkness, in much vexation, and sickness, and anger.

Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun, the few days of his life that God has given him. For this is his lot.

[2 : 02] Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil, this is the gift of God. For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart. There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy on mankind, a man to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor so that he lacks nothing of all that he desires. Yet God does not give him the power to enjoy them, but a stranger enjoys them. This is vanity. It's a grievous evil. If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with life's good things, and he also has no variable, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he.

For it comes in vanity and goes in darkness, and in darkness its name is covered. Moreover, it has not seen the sun or known anything, yet it finds rest rather than he, even though he should live a thousand years twice over. Yet enjoy no good. Do not all go to the one place. All the toil of a man is for his mouth, yet his appetite is not satisfied. For what advantage has the wise man over the fool? And what does the poor man have who knows how to conduct himself before the living? Better is the sight of the eyes and the wandering of the appetite. This also is vanity and a striving after win. May God bless the hearing and the preaching of his word. Each July 4th, we celebrate independence, freedom from British rule and from taxation without representation. But more than that, as a nation, we celebrate the incredible idea that all people, as our Declaration of Independence says, are endowed, this is that language, by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, right? That's the foundation of American life, liberty, pursuit of happiness. But what really is happiness? The cartoon, Peanut, says, happiness is finding a pencil, pizza with sausage, telling the time.

Happiness is learning to whistle, tying your shoe for the very first time. Happiness is two kinds of ice cream, knowing a secret, climbing a tree. Happiness is five different crayons, catching a firefly, setting him free. As great as pizza with sausage is. I don't think that's what our founding fathers were talking about. They were talking about something better. The founding fathers were dreaming of a nation where people could devote their lives to pursuing their deepest, wildest, most far-reaching joys. Founding fathers were dreaming of a nation where people could pursue their happiness. After all, happiness is really all we ever pursue. The philosopher Blaise Pascal says, all

men seek happiness.

This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. That's the end behind every pursuit. The cause of some going to war and of others avoiding it is the same desire in both, attended with different views. This is the motive of every action of every man, obviously every woman, even of those who hang themselves. As soon as you read that, you know it's true, right?

[6:08] Everything, almost everything you've done so far today has been to make yourself happy. You've fed yourself. Hopefully you've caffeinated yourself. You've taken a shower and perhaps stayed in a little longer when you heard the kids outside the door. No one has to tell you or me to seek happiness. It's something we all cannot not do. One, our common pursuit of happiness is something Solomon has been talking about this whole time. The search for meaning in life under the sun is really a search for true happiness, not the happiness of good times and good vibrations, not the happiness of the next thrill or the next gadget. It's the happiness of living a life that makes sense of life under the sun, a life that doesn't buy the lie and doesn't drown the pain. Happiness is actually all Solomon has been searching for, all he's been talking about, and yet happiness, as we've seen, is hard to come by under the sun. This morning, Solomon turns to one of the most common and most deadly destroyers of happiness in life under the sun. Money. This passage is carefully crafted. It's long. You got a sense of that as I read it through. One author says it is the most intricately developed passage in the Old

Testament. So it's a very tightly contained unit. It marks the end of the first half of Ecclesiastes. After this, he kind of rambles through different proverb-like saying, mostly. It's the last instance of vanity and that striving after the wind formula that we've heard again and again. It's the most thorough expression of happiness and enjoying life in the whole book. It focuses on one theme, the deadly distraction of money and possessions in the pursuit of happiness and joy. In a word, it says, there is no satisfaction under the sun except daily enjoying what you have been given from God the Father. There's no satisfaction under the sun except daily enjoying what you've been given from God the Father. We're going to break this out like all good preachers in three points. First one is more money doesn't solve your problems. More money doesn't solve your problems. I've titled this message,

More Money, More Problems. And we're about to see why. Solomon lists at least three, you could argue, more reasons why believing that more money will solve your problems is a lie. The first is more money equals more bills. More money equals more bills. Look down there in verse 11. He says, that would be chapter 5, verse 11. When goods increase, they increase who eat them. What advantage has the owner but to see them with his eyes? They increase who eat them. We assume that a little more money will solve our problems, will enable us to get ahead and finally be on top of everything. But Solomon says, more money just means more bills. More money means there's more expenses to eat up the money.

Now they say you don't know how many friends you have until you get a truck. Solomon says the same thing is true with money. You don't know how many friends you have until you got a wad of dough in your pocket and you're looking to spend it. The friends come out of the woodwork. One author says, more money just means more people hanging on. I remember years ago watching the ESPN documentary called Broke. It's about all these NBA and NFL stars that signed their contract. These guys that came out highly touted lottery picks and yet now are broke. And one of the main reasons is all the people hanging on. They say your first contract is just to pay all the people that have been hanging around waiting to get paid. How about that? That is this passage. But you don't have to sign an NFL contract to know the feeling of expenses going out the door. Everyone who's ever worked hard knows the feeling of coming home with a paycheck only to find a long line of expenses waiting for you.

Have you paid the plumber? Don't forget, sports fees are due. Oh, and the check engine light is on in the van. And have you heard that weird sound the washer is making? The result is, Solomon says, you may make money, but you don't have money. You may make money, but did you see what he said?

[11:02] You only get to see it. You only get to see it with your eyes as it flies out the door. So take a good look. All that money. Cause it's flying out the door right now. So more money just equals more bills.

More money also equals more worry, more worry. Verse 12, sweet as the sleep of the laborer, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep. So often we think more money will make life less stressful. And it's true to a point, you know, not making enough money to meet your needs adds quite a bit of stress, but more money above your needs does not make life less stressful.

That's the truth. That's the biblical truth. In fact, it's the opposite. More money reverses it. More money equals more worry. The full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep. It's not the hunger that keeps him awake. It's the excess and ease that keeps him awake. The reference to labor there helps us understand that Solomon's not talking about a diet. He's not talking about, you know, acid or something like that in his tummy that's keeping him up through the night. You know, he's talking about the fact that he doesn't work anymore in the same way he's embraced excess and ease and it's left him worried. So Solomon's talking about the common temptation to believe that more money will make life easier and less stressful. The idea is though you may eat better and though you may eat at nicer restaurants, you don't sleep better. I love the way Charles Dickens catches this or captures this in the old play, *The Christmas Carol*. The richest man in town is Scrooge. Yet the whole play is around what happens when he can't sleep. The ghost of Christmas present takes him to the house of Bob Cratchit.

Just a poor, working class poor man. The Cratchits are gathered in their poor shabby clothing, having a wonderful Christmas celebration, giving thanks, sleeping like a log. So how do you sleep? Is that extra job, extra shift, really helping? What's your schedule reveal about what you're hoping in? Are you biting the baited hook, Solomon would say, of believing that more money will solve your problems? Do you ever say to yourself, I wish I could go back to when life was simple and we were living on a shoestring? I say that all the time.

[14:13] But are there changes you could make right now so that it's not just a wish? Solomon would urge us to do that. Sub point three, more money equals more money lost.

More money equals more money lost. Solomon continues in verse 13 and begins describing a grievous evil. If you'll notice, evil is repeated four times in this passage. A grievous evil he's seen under the sun.

The owner keeps his riches, thinking that money saved will make him safe and secure. But the preacher says the riches were kept by their owner to his hurt.

Specifically, the owner loses his riches in a bad business venture. Now that's interesting. That's all we know about what happened to this guy and this grievous thing is he had a bad business venture. Bad venture in verse 14. We don't know the details. The details seem to be purposefully general. And the reason is Solomon wants us to focus not on how he lost his money, but on why he lost his money.

[15:16] Does that make sense? His problem is not a bad business plan. A poor business plan. His problem is not a mishap or a sudden change in the economy.

The owner's problem is that he holds on to his money too tightly. The grievous evil is his greed and his hoarding.

He began to believe that it was his money. You know, one of the most famous songs about money is from Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*. The song called *Money* begins with a rhythmic clang of cash registers and coins splashing.

It's in 7-4, which makes it even more interesting. The song describes the craving for more and more money. And in so doing, emphasizes the way we think all our money is our own.

It says, money, get back. I'm alright, Jack, but keep your hands off of my stack. Money, it's a crime. Share it fairly. But don't take a piece or a slice of my pie.

[16:20] It's my stack. It's my pie. It's all mine. And the man begins to believe in verse 13 that the money's his.

And then he begins to believe that it's what makes him secure. Rather, this is what Solomon's helping us see. Rather than depending on God, he began to depend on his money.

He began to assume it was his money that made him safe and secure. That it was his money that would protect him when trouble fell upon him. He assumed making more money then would make him more safe and more secure.

So he kept his money all to himself and tried to invest it to make more money for himself. But it was all a deck of cards. Bound to fall.

Money provides no safety, no security. Proverbs 18.11. A rich man's wealth is his strong city and like a high wall in his imagination. In the end, trying to make more money made him lose everything.

[17 : 29] Safety and security, beloved, can only come from God. Do you remember the story of the Israelites? Do you remember how the Lord told them to just get just enough manna for the day?

Do you remember what happened to the manna when they gathered more than enough? It stank. It was, I mean, literally, that's the text. It bred worms and stank. I bet it did.

It's all too common for us to depend on what is given and not on the giver. It's all too common to depend on what we possess and not on him who possesses everything.

So we feel better, right? When our bank accounts are full. Our emergency funds are maxed. Our retirement accounts are doing whatever.

They're fruitful. Our work schedules are packed. We have no days off because we're packed. We're making money. But watch out, Solomon said. But Jesus reminds us, don't lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.

[18 : 40] But lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven. Neither moth nor rust destroys where thieves do not break in and steal. Money seems so secure. But really, just here today, gone tomorrow.

Here today, gone tomorrow. More money just means more money to lose. You know, how do you lose it?

I mean, you know, how do you lose all this money? I mean, the text would say a bad business venture could be one. Turn of the economy, more bills. Could be selfishly spent on yourself and just eaten up, you know, where it's all gone.

Kind of like that show broke. But if it's not, the idea, if it's not lost somewhere along the way, it will all be lost on the last day. I mean, if it's not lost somewhere along the way, it's not going with you on the last day.

As theologian George Strait once said, I've never seen a hearse with a luggage rack, you know, because no money is going to heaven. And that's what he's pointing at and telling us to deal with as he, look in verse 15, as he came from his mother's womb, so he'll come again.

[19 : 56] Naked as he came. Shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand. This is a grievous evil. Just as he came, so he shall go.

So he concludes, is there any gain in more and more money? What gain is there for 16B? Is there to him who toils for the win?

Nothing. Nothing. Do you notice he says toils for the win?

He said striving for the win repeatedly, but here he says toils. What he's saying is all your work is just for the win. Go ahead and make more money. Make it. But cash the paycheck and raise it into the win.

And just watch it float away. That's what's going on. Don't buy the lie. Point two, more money doesn't satisfy.

[20 : 55] More money, more problems. More money doesn't solve them. More money doesn't satisfy. Solomon makes this clear in our opening verse, verse 10.

The one who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves his income with his income. The love of money never reaches its goal. The one who loves money is never satisfied with money.

Richard Belcher, the more a person has, the more a person wants. My granddad, you say you got a bad case of the I wants. I mean, you know, that's the way it is. It doesn't matter how much a person has.

It doesn't matter how rich they become. It doesn't matter how great their possessions are. None of that matters. None of that is consequential. None of it matters. The one who loves money will never be satisfied with money.

chapter 6, verse 7 captures this reality very provokingly. If you'll look there with me. He says, all the toil is for his mouth, yet his appetite is not satisfied.

[21 : 59] I think that captured as well. All the work is to satisfying this hunger, yet the appetite is not satisfied. All your work is to feeding this love of money, feeding this hunger, but you're never full.

You're never satiated. You're never satisfied. You're never content. You'll never be happy doing that. You'll never say, there, that's enough. I don't need anything else. Never.

You just eat, eat, eat, eat, eat, eat. Supersize it. It's never going to satisfy. Perhaps it goes without saying, but it's important to see the main problem is not money, but the love of it.

If the main problem is money, we'd just give it all away like St. Francis, and then we'd be happy. The love of money is a problem. 1 Timothy 6.10 says, The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.

Through this craving that some who have wandered away from the truth pierced themselves with many pangs. The love of money is a craving that cannot be satisfied, leads to all kinds of evil. Money is not the root of all kinds of evil.

[23 : 07] The love of money is, the idea is, if you love money, you'll lie. You'll cheat. You'll gossip. You'll slander. You'll use false measures.

You'll do whatever you can. You'll worry. You'll steal in order to get more money. And you don't have to have a lot of money to love money. That's a lie, too.

One of the most provoking examples of how sideways you can get when you love money is Howard Hughes. I remember as a kid watching documentaries.

I was into weird people, I guess. But documentaries on Howard Hughes as a boy. He's one of the richest men in America. He once was the richest due to his work in air travel and real estate and more.

But he died alone on a plane on the way to Houston. He became a recluse and was addicted to drugs to suppress his anxiety over money. He avoided everyone, lived in hiding.

[24 : 09] He became a pre-COVID obsessive germaphobe. I don't know what he would have done with this virus. Picking up everything with Kleenexes.

He once wore Kleenex boxes for shoes because he thought they were more sanitary. He became obsessed with avoiding taxes. He didn't live in a house. He moved from hotel to hotel, living on a floor by himself, covering the windows with aluminum foil so that no one could see who was inside. He was filled with worry and anxiety and never satisfied with his massive wealth. I mean, his wealth does continue to do amazing things in our country with medical research.

But he was never satisfied with it. Why doesn't money satisfy? And this is where Solomon is going to turn the key on us a little bit.

Some parts of the Bible says more money doesn't satisfy because money never could satisfy because only God can satisfy. And that is absolutely true. That's why this world is so unsatisfying.

[25 : 27] And I would invite you to come to Jesus Christ where you can be made right with him, but also find the satisfaction, purpose, and meaning that you long for. That's true, right?

But it's not exactly the answer Ecclesiastes gives. Chapter 6, Solomon tells us why more money doesn't satisfy by describing another evil under the sun.

Verse 1 there, he says, There is an evil I've seen under the sun. It lies heavy on mankind. A man to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor so that he lacks nothing of all he desires, yet God does not give him the power to enjoy them.

So this man has wealth, possessions, and honor. He lacks nothing of all that he desires. He has everything he wants.

He appears a lot like Solomon. That's exactly what Solomon got from the Lord. Wealth, possessions, and honor. But God does not give him the power to enjoy them. Here is a man.

[26 : 35] This is such a sad picture. Here is a man who eats at the finest restaurants but has no taste buds. Here is a man who drinks the finest wine but cannot enjoy his flavor. Here is a man who sleeps next to a beautiful wife but does not enjoy her.

This is a man who cannot be satisfied with all he possesses. And so Solomon continues in verse 3, a very dark parable here, or description here.

If a man fathers a hundred children, lives many years, so the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with life's good things, and he also has no burial, I say a stillborn child is better off than he.

It's often assumed that the greatest things in life are the greatest things in life in the sun are long life in children.

That's what Proverbs says again and again. But here Solomon said it's better to be stillborn than to only have long life in children. It's better to have never lived than to be discontent and be unable.

[27 : 37] The peace of being unborn is greater than 2,000 years of discontentment. What's this mean? What's all this mean?

What it means is all the wealth and possessions and honor of the world is just a can of peaches without a can opener. What are you going to do with it? Lick it?

You know, what are you going to do? Are you going to hold it tight? You're going to have more cans than the next guy? Is that, is that, what are you going to do? It doesn't matter what you do. An unopened can of peaches will never satisfy you.

It'll never taste good. Wealth, possessions, and honor in themselves do not satisfy. They can't satisfy. Don't buy the lie.

Don't bite the baited hook. Only God can give the power to enjoy everything that's sold and every store under heaven should say satisfaction sold separately.

[28 : 44] Deal with the Lord. Deal with the Lord. Third main point.

The only good is enjoying what you have been given. There are two evils in our passage.

Two grievous evils. Tragic evils. But verses 18 through 20 introduce us to the one good. There are one good in life under the sun.

And these are so good. We're going to read them one more time. Verse 18. Behold, chapter 5, verse 18. Behold, what I've seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment.

And all the toil with which one toils under the sun. The few days of his life that God has given him. For this is his lot. Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them.

[29 : 46] And to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil. This is the gift of God. For he will not much remember the days of his life.

Because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart. That's a good one to get tattooed on your arm. If you want to. You know, we've seen verses like this.

But this is the most extended reflection of the good life. Everybody's trying to sell us the good life. You know? Everywhere. Turn on the TV.

The good life's found in this new grill. The monster big green egg or something like that. You know? Or the good life's found in this new van. Oh, never mind. Nobody wants vans anymore. It's found in a good Tahoe or something like that.

Whatever. It's always trying to say the good life is here. But this is the good life. This is it. This is what Solomon's trying to help us see.

[30 : 48] And if you notice, there's three references, each of these verses to God and what he gives. God gives life in all our days. We don't decide when to be born, when to go home.

God gives life in all our days. God gives wealth and possessions. And thankfully, God gives the power to enjoy life, wealth, and possessions. In a world marked by so much brokenness.

So much futility. So much, as we've learned. So much stuff that does not bring profit. That does not pay out. That does not give us what it promises. God still gives the ability, the power, to live this life with joy.

And there's so much joy to be had. And here's how. Sub point one. Accept the life given to you.

If you look down there in verse 19, he says, Everyone to whom God has given wealth, possessions, and power to enjoy them, and to accept his toil. Accept his lot, rather.

[31 : 52] Accept his lot. Your life, your days, and all the work you're called to do is the gift of God to you. It might appear random, or haphazard, or even evil, and wicked at times.

But all of it is God's doing. The lot is cast into the lap. Proverbs 16, 33. But every decision is from the Lord. It is your lot. Like playing a game of cards.

Your lot is the hand you've been dealt. That means your life is incredibly limited. Minus two. You cannot do whatever you want to do.

You cannot be whatever you want to be. You cannot go wherever you want to go. Your life is a gift. You don't decide what you receive when you receive a gift, do you?

You accept it. Pay attention to what God is giving you. Solomon said, pay attention to your birth, your parents, your home country, your education, your talents and giftings, your relationship, your experiences, your difficulties, your opportunities, your job, your salary, your possessions.

[33 : 02] All of it is God's gift. All of it is his gift, his free gift to you. It's limiting, but it's a wonderfully free gift.

Jeremiah Burroughs and his wonderful book, *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*. I've been known to read it at length to friends at times, but just a wonderful, fascinating book. He says, I beseech you in active obedience.

We worship God by doing what pleases him. That's what we think about often when we think about obedience, but by passive obedience, we do as well worship God by being pleased with what God

does. It is but one side of a Christian to endeavor to be, to do what pleases God.

He must as well endeavor to be pleased with what God does. And so you come to be a complete Christian when you can do both. But that is, except your lot is, I'm going to be pleased God with what you do.

My life was constrained and limited from day one. I came from one mother, one father in one town, in one little part of South Carolina.

[34 : 12] All of it's shaped. It's so limited. So is yours. And yet all of it's a gift. Learn to accept it with humility. Keep your life free from the love of money.

Be content with what you have. We all know we have a gift, right? But we're prone to move on from it.

I remember when we bought our first house and whatever, 10, 15 years ago, I was amazed. It must've been a gift. Like what in the world am I doing in a house?

Hey, two years before that, I was raising all my money like a missionary. I'm like, where did this come from? It had to be a gift. Oh my goodness. I used to sit and do my devotions going, Lord, thank you for this house. I can't believe it's in this house.

And yet, the AC broke. And the copper pipes had little pinholes. Then the drain spit up a little bit into the kitchen sink.

[35 : 15] And would slowly drain after that. The house, it was such a gift. Came to be viewed at times a little more than a curse.

We can be the same way with our lives. You can look across the fence. Say, no, they got the gift. Over there. Mm-mm.

Not so. Not so. The power to enjoy lives comes from learning to accept the gift you have. And what I mean by that, it's not like numb resignation.

Well, I guess it is what it is. Can't change what it is. And so I just, no, or, or apathetically throw up. Nothing really matters. I just can't go through this.

That's not. The power comes from resting in the fact that the good God is behind all these good gifts. That's him.

[36 : 18] Sub point two. Sorry for all the sub points. Got a little carried away. Sub point two. Enjoy the life given to you. Accept the life given to you. Enjoy the life given to you.

You must learn to accept what is given. Then you can enjoy it. By accepting what you have been given, you're going to break through into the power to enjoy what you begin.

You find the way to eat and drink with joy. You find the way to enjoy God's gifts. You find the way to enjoy your life with all its opportunities, difficulties, and perplexities. You find the way to open the can of peaches.

You find a way to live. Douglas Wilson said, It is a cold fact that God does in fact give many goods to men who are not given the corresponding power to enjoy those goods. The good Lord, though, gives to his people a can opener to go with the cans of peaches he gives them.

To the unbeliever, he gives no way of genuine enjoyment. To the believer, you get a can opener. Drink down those peaches or whatever you do with them.

[37 : 28] The result is you begin to actually live. There's a wonderful nowness to these verses. You begin to actually, instead of being frustrated by all the things that didn't happen to you in your life.

Right? How much of our culture is caught up in that? Instead of being frustrated by all the things that didn't happen to you or did happen to you, that are really shaping you right now. Instead of living in the past like that, being dominated by that, or instead of being hopeful for all the things you hope will happen in the future, you daily live your life as a gift of God that you don't deserve.

That's what he's after. A wonderful nowness to living before God. Living, Coram Deo. Living before the face of God. So that you turn away from living in the past.

Living as a victim of something in the past. But you also turn away from hoping in the future. But to be just so wrapped up in the good of right now that you don't even know what time it is.

That's what I want. I had the privilege of being a minister for camp this week. I hadn't been back to camp for a little while, so that was fun. But a camp called Camp Joy.

[38 : 37] It was a camp where I was converted 21 years ago on August 9th. It's a camp for adults mentally and physically handicapped. Each camper is attended to and paired up with one counselor.

I want to introduce you to one of those campers named Anthony Sproul. How's that for a smile? I was paired up with Anthony 20 years ago.

Anthony has several palsy. It's severe. He's mentally quite sharp. But he has very little control over his limbs, except a little control over his neck and his right arm.

He needs help to do everything. And now has a feeding tube to get him the nutrients he needs. He has significant difficulty speaking.

Conversations with him are slow and hard. But thankfully, he's very patient. But he's a legend. A legend at Camp Joy.

[39 : 54] Last week, he was paired up with a young man, 17-year-old. One afternoon, he needed help, and I got to do it. I must admit, I was confronted with my own selfishness in the few hours I spent with him, helping him to use the bathroom and take a shower, reveal more selfishness in my heart than I would care to admit.

But I was confronted also by his joy and contentment. We took him to the pool that afternoon for a swim.

It was quite an ordeal. Getting him ready. Lowering him into the water. Setting pool noodles underneath his legs, his lower back, and his neck so that he could swim.

Watching him, it was obvious how much fun he was having. Can you imagine the feel of cool water when you've been stuck in a wheelchair your whole life? Every now and again, though, he would push his head back over the noodle underneath his neck to submerge the top of his head under the water.

And a big smile would break across his face. Just again and again. That's a man who's found the power to enjoy life.

[41 : 27] He's accepted the life given to him. He didn't choose it. He told me he longs to run.

When he heard that I like to run. And he will run. In the new heavens.

But he doesn't spend his days complaining about not being able to run. And he's learned to enjoy the life given to him.

As I looked him in the eyes as my whole family got to meet him this time. Submerging his head under the water. Couldn't help but think of our passage.

Anthony? He'll not much remember the days of his life. Because God keeps him occupied with joy.

[42 : 36] That's the way I want us to live. I want us to live like this.

To accept our lot. And enjoy. I mean all this is what the Apostle Paul talks about in Philippians 4. When he says contentment.

He says I can do all things through Christ who strengthened me. That does not mean because of Jesus I can do whatever I want with my life. That's just what the culture says. Or I can climb every mountain or afford every river or whatever.

He means I'll rejoice no matter what. Bring it on. Hell and all its demons. Everything will be ordered in my life according to the will of my Heavenly Father.

And I'll rejoice no matter what life brings. Because Jesus Christ will be with me until the end. So let us press on. There's no satisfaction under the sun.

[43 : 36] Except daily enjoying what you have been given from God the Father. Father in Heaven we cast ourselves upon you.

We offer ourselves to you sincerely and completely. Father to look at our life as something that we have been given and that we need to accept and receive takes humility and courage.

God I pray that you would protect us from the evil one that loves to accuse and destroy the work you do in our hearts and lives and cause us to be the happiest church in the world.

That would be true of us. It would be said of us. Maybe on our tombstone. Hey, he didn't much remember his life because he was occupied with joy in his heart. We long to live life under the sun with joy.

Help us, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.

[45 : 02] For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com
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