

# Don't excahnge God for less

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Morning is taken from the book of Jeremiah, chapter 2. Just while you're turning there, if I can set the book of Jeremiah perhaps in a broad context.

The people of God are meant to be worshipping God properly, and they think they're safe because they have the temple. As long as we have the temple, people, the surrounding nations will think that we're a God-fearing people, and God is on our side, and therefore no one will come near us because we have God who created everything.

We have the temple to prove it, and of course, in the end, God removes the temple. People weren't relying on God. They were just relying on those images as to portray that they were godly.

So God removed it from them. And it begins back in Jeremiah 2 of where this exchange between them having God and then not having God takes place.

So we're just going to read one verse, and then we're going to turn to Matthew. For my people... Sorry, this is chapter 2, verse 13. And God is speaking to his people, and he says, For my people have committed two evils.

[ 1 : 2 6 ] They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that cannot hold no water.

That hold no water. So there we have it. Two evils, they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

If you'd like to turn to Matthew 13. Matthew 13 is where Jesus is giving a list of parables.

The parables that explain between God's people and who are not God's people. Parables concerning the kingdom.

And, of course, parable concerning the value of God and his kingdom compared to anything else in the world. So Matthew 13, verse 44, reads this.

[ 2 : 2 9 ] Again, hear God's word. The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

So there we have the two passages. But we'll come back to that after this next hymn. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Jeremiah or Matthew. And you may even be wondering how these two are connected. Well, they're connected in terms of who God is and then the alternative to God.

Not that there is any alternative that can compare in terms of value, importance, authority. But we are considering over these Sunday mornings what it is to be Christian and what it is to become a Christian.

[ 4 : 0 0 ] Being Christian means that you're just further down the road of becoming a Christian. It's the same road heading in the same road. It's the same road heading in the same direction.

It's just that you're further down it. And therefore, Christians have more in common with people who are on the same road 50 miles apart than they do with someone who is on the same part of the road but going in the opposite direction.

It may be easy to look over there where I am. Well, they're not when they're heading in the opposite direction. Being Christian is simply walking the ways that God has laid out.

Walking with other Christians. And hopefully that everyone is maturing and growing up. Becoming a Christian is simply beginning that. And then you mature through that.

Many people, however, in the Christian life throughout history and in the church of late, pause. They stand still. And they plateau.

[ 5 : 08 ] And sometimes this is to do with God's grace. He just, you know, gives you a breather you've had. You've been through a lot. Or you're about to go through a lot. And God necessarily causes your life to slow down.

He calls you to take stock of priorities according to the way he lays them out in Scripture. And this means that no Christian ever moves at the same speed of another Christian.

No Christian ever matures at the same speed of another Christian. Every Christian grows. That's the very definition of life.

How do you know something is living? Well, you know it's living because it grows. It's a basic definition of what life is. But it is a definition nonetheless.

If it's growing, it is alive. And so your Christian life matures. It grows. Because you have life. You have that living water that Jeremiah speaks about.

[ 6 : 09 ] And Jesus speaks about in John 4. So the idea here is for us not all to be at the same place on the maturity level.

But it is to recognize that if we are Christians, all of us are growing. To become a Christian is simply to be given life in which you will then grow.

But up to the point, you have no life. And that may sound strange. Up to that point, you're not even complete. And that may sound strange. But we'll understand why it isn't the more we get into it.

Most importantly in Jeremiah, that when people entangle themselves in sin, they don't understand themselves clearly. And they don't understand their own need.

And even if they do understand what their need is, they don't necessarily feel any need to do anything about it. One of the key conditions of depression, as you see in the book of Proverbs, is that depressed people like being depressed.

[ 7 : 18 ] It's one of the sort of twisted conditions of depression. Then, every now and then, they don't like being depressed.

But there is a kind of safety net there sometimes. That sometimes they wish they never had it. And other times, they're quite happy to be that way. And that's just the condition sort of coming out sort of through your pores, so to speak.

In the same way, sin can blind you to the things of God. It stops you from hearing God's word. It stops you from seeing things from God's point of view. It does awful things to a person. Unconfessed sin dims the spiritual senses.

And then what happens is that these people begin to look for alternatives. In the book of Colossians, one of the main issues there is the idea of like a Gnostic gospel.

That there is a secret knowledge out there that if I can only get my hands on, my life will be better. I will make better decisions. That it must be there somewhere.

[ 8 : 23 ] And I enter into some kind of mindfulness pattern to get there. There's nothing there. God alone gives you himself.

God alone will fulfill every single one of your needs. And there is no alternative to God of the same value, quality, importance, authority, or can give you what you need.

And yet, even though we kind of know this when someone says it, and even though we kind of believe it, we're still failing to commit to it often.

So don't tell me what you believe. Tell me what you're committed to. Don't tell me that you believe in Jesus. Don't tell me what you believe in Jesus.

They believe, but they're no longer convicted by their beliefs. They're no longer committed to the things that they say they believe. So people are more than just material beings with material needs.

[ 9 : 53 ] They are spiritual beings with spiritual needs. And one of the key skills that a Christian must have and is taught, especially in the book of Proverbs, is that ability to be able to tell the difference.

That true wisdom is not being able to tell the difference between black and white, but it's being able to tell the difference between white and off-white. That your skill of perception and wisdom is heightened because it's given to you by God.

That you're able to tell the difference between what is valuable and what is not valuable. That you're able to tell the difference between what is expensive and what is not expensive, and the reasons why one thing is more expensive than the other.

Now when you can do this with normal things out in the world, the price of a car or a home or something, you will say things, well that's not worth it.

You've put a value on it. What you're willing to pay or what you're not willing to pay. What we have here is that people are exchanging God, the most valuable thing that they could have, for lesser things.

[ 10 : 59 ] And the only reason they would do something like that is because they don't recognize the value of what they have got. So even in the church, just like in the world, there's lots of people it seems that cannot tell the difference.

A basic skill, but one that seems to be missing. Let me put it this way. You cannot work out how important Jesus is by how many people follow him.

You just can't get there. You can't say Jesus is important because allegedly there's a billion Christians on earth. I don't think so.

So you can't work out how important Jesus is by how many people build their lives on him. You just can't do it that way. You can't work out how much authority God has by the way people live.

Because the conclusion that you would come to would become all skewed. You would say things like, well, how can God who has all authority allow that to happen? But God's authority can't be worked out that way by looking at what is allowed to happen and what is not allowed to happen.

[ 12 : 10 ] And so when people no longer are able to tell the difference, they end up settling for less. Now when this happens in terms of relationships, this takes me a long way back now to a conversation I had in an open meeting.

So because it was in a public arena, I can therefore disclose it again in a public arena. That one person says, a girl, she was in her 20s, and she says, well, I have a view on marriage that goes something like this.

That if I can't find the person that I want to marry, then what went up is that I'll marry the second best. That if I can't find the person I want to marry, then I find the next person.

And there's a time limit. I thought how sad someone would think like that, that think that marriage actually comes down to those type of considerations. I mean, we believe in God.

We believe in providence. We don't believe in fortune or, unfortunately, our lives are not shaped by those type of things. The idea of settling for less has nothing to do with preferences or priorities.

[ 13 : 31 ] It does have very much to do with desire. And, of course, if your desires are not godly, then your preferences and priorities are not godly either.

And so settling for second best is, you know, where other types of conversations can corrupt relationships. Well, what does this mean as we come to consider our relationship with God?

Well, the summary is this. As we consider these two readings together, Jeremiah allows us to see that God's people have exchanged God for something else, but something that cannot even compare with God.

And they have settled for second best. They have settled for their alternative. Not that those alternatives are anything like belonging to God.

Not that they can even compare. And yet, nonetheless, these people have settled for the alternative. They have settled not even for second best. It doesn't even compare.

[ 14 : 35 ] It's not even on the same shelf, if we can put it that way. In the parable, we also see a man exchanging, but his exchange is the other way around.

He comes to a field in which he finds treasure, and he realizes that everything that he has in his life cannot be compared with what he has just found.

And so he sells everything that he has to buy the field so that he can have what he has in the field. He's not even interested in the field. He's interested in what the field contains.

And so he gives up everything. It's not even a big deal to get rid of everything to get that one thing. So in these two cases, the people of God and Jeremiah can't tell the difference between value and importance.

And in the parable, the man can tell the difference between what is truly valuable compared to everything else that he has. And in both cases, people make exchanges based on how they perceive what they have.

[ 15 : 41 ] God's people, you would think, would never exchange God. But lo and behold, they've done that very thing. And here you have a man who in this context is like the unchristian walking through a field, finding a treasure, recognizing that he has found nothing like this on earth ever before.

And he sells everything that he has to acquire that one thing. He is not like the rich young ruler who will not give up what he has to gain Jesus. Loss of version, as I've said many times before, is more powerful than greed.

In fact, loss of version is the opposite side to greed. Greed is you wanting more. Envy is you wanting what somebody else has.

And loss of version is you not wanting to lose what you have to gain what you don't have. And Jesus Christ presents the rich young ruler with how he can be a follower of him and have eternal life and basically have God.

And what gets in the way is what he has. It's a comparison. Though there is no comparison, what goes through his mind is that it made him very sad because he had very much.

[ 16 : 53 ] But he had very much, but he didn't have Jesus. And so if you don't have Jesus, you have really nothing. So throughout scripture, there are plenty of occasions where Adam and Eve in the garden, Eve, as she is tempted, looking at the fruit on the tree, she's exchanging relationship with God for something else.

So how you understand God and how you understand your own need largely dictates almost everything that you then do. Whatever is your treasure, whatever is your desire, that is the thing that you'll pursue.

Whatever you don't want to lose rather than what you want is the thing that will shape your life. The reason people settle for second best in this world without God is because they think that some things are better than others.

They think a man, for instance, with money is better than a man without money. They think a job in this country is better than a job. We make these sort of arbitrary decisions and that's why we come up with things like second best.

That's why relationships can, well, this relationship is not as good as my last relationship. Why a person would ever talk like that, I can understand why that happens.

[ 18 : 12 ] I can understand what's going through their mind because there is nothing ultimate. Everything is up for grabs. Everything can be swapped out for something new. It's not too difficult to figure out why some men in their 40s, I'm in my 40s, I'm not going to do this, trust me, think, well, I'm going to, I'm of that age now, perhaps I need a younger model.

You know, they get that 40, my brother's going through it now. He's just gone and bought a motorbike and he looks, you know, and you think, what are you doing? I won't tell you what I called him, but what are you just, what are you doing?

And of course, these things happen. And it's called the expulsive power of a new affection. Thomas Chalmers, the great Scottish pastor and theologian, said that men and women can be brought down to this basic understanding, that every change that happens in their life happens because of the expulsive power of a new affection, that when something new comes along, that which currently exists is pushed out the door because of the novelty of the new.

So without an ultimate standard, without something that tells you what is actually true, beautiful and good, then everything's up for grabs.

Everything can be compared to something else. I've got a sneaky suspicion, I could be wrong, that I think comparison, properly understood as I'm explaining it, is a product of a fool, not a product of creation.

[ 19 : 48 ] That those kind of comparisons are the product of a sinful mind, not the product of the mind that God gave man and woman at the beginning. I just don't believe it could come from, that kind of arbitrary, distinguished making could come from God.

That's another matter. But what we have here is people giving up God in order for something that doesn't work, and another person recognizing that what he has doesn't even compare to what he has found.

And so what kind of impact does that have on a person's life? Well, firstly, Christians who lose out in the world, lose out in the world because they're seeking the world.

The reason why this nation that used to be a Christian nation and we're not even in the afterglow of it anymore has lost out to the world is because this nation has sought the world.

There's just no doubt in my mind that that's what's happened because that's what we read in Scripture. So Christians who lose out, lose out to the very thing that they're seeking.

[ 21 : 04 ] But Christians who gain and are seeking God gain so much because that is how God has ordered the relationship between us, the world, and him.

Jesus made it very, very clear that if you lose out in this world, you need to take a good look at your life because it looks like you're seeking the world. But you gain in this world, you gain lots in this world when you understand it from Jesus' point of view where he said, seek first me, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and then all these things will be added unto you.

God first, things later. God first, things later. if I can put it in sort of a slightly different way.

Love God, use things. Don't use God and love things. So love God and use things that he gives us because they're meant to be used, meant to buy things, meant to make things look beautiful, truth, beauty, and goodness.

They're out there to be enjoyed. The world is thick with material things for you to enjoy. Some beaches have beautiful sand with clear water.

[ 22 : 22 ] That's that way. God has designed it that way so that you can go out and enjoy it. Bathe in what God has given you. Walk up the hills that God has given you.

Swim in the seas that God has given you. But love God and use those things. But the moment you begin to love those things and use God, then it all goes wrong.

And when I mean use God, I mean come to him in prayer for something that you want. You're using him. You're not really loving him. You're doing it under the pretense of loving him. But there's probably no really love there.

Love God and use things is the way God designed it. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things will be added unto you.

God is not saying, well, you must stay away from those things. They're material. No, he's saying, love the material things. Well, use the material things. Love me and use the material things.

[ 23 : 24 ] That's what I give you for. I give you grass to walk in. I give you beaches to swim. I give you mountains to climb. I give you flowers to pick. I give you paint to paint pictures to create yourself.

I give you all of these things so that you can use them and enjoy them and enjoy them but love me. And so, a Christian loses out when they get those two the wrong way around where they love things and use God.

Use God to deal with certain fears that they might have. Use God to answer certain prayers that they might pray. And that's how these alternatives creep in because we mix it up.

We mix love and using thing up. And the impact is quite dramatic. That we wonder why certain spiritual things don't turn up in our life.

We wonder why God promises all of this and yet we don't see any of it in our life. And it's because God is purposely holding them back because you've got it the wrong way around.

[ 24 : 34 ] You have sought out alternatives and like the people in Jeremiah you've gone to cisterns and they can't provide you with the water that they have. They're broken. There's nothing there for you.

It is second best but it's not even second best. It's not even a comparison to what you can have if only you came to God. So seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness is just another way of saying love God first and use as much as you like.

Use things. But don't love the cistern and forsake your God. God will add blessing upon blessing to his people because he's said so.

All these things will be added to you but you have to get it the right way around. It's not a conditional salvation. It's got nothing to do with salvation at this point. It's just got to do with your Christian life.

This is how your Christian life is meant to be lived. This is how it works. This is how God has designed it to flourish. flourish. And of course it doesn't flourish when you get that the wrong way around.

- [ 25 : 46 ] So what is God's provision? Well, we can see back in Jeremiah 2 that God provides you living water which is just another way of saying that God provides you with himself.
- And yet we have God and then we seek out alternatives. But we've not swapped like for like. And that's the thing that we need to understand. That whenever we swap out God for something else, we're not swapping out like for like.
- We're swapping out the eternal, almighty, authoritative God for material things. Forgetting that we are not just material people but we are spiritual people.
- And when spiritual people only consider themselves to be material, then what happens is they only seek material things to supply what they think they need.
- And they go anywhere to look for this. They'll almost spend any amount of money to gain it. But the thing that they have forgotten is that they're not just material beings.
- [ 26 : 51 ] They are spiritual beings. And what they need, what you need, what I need is living water. What I can do without is other type of material things.
- Now God provides those things because the material body needs H<sub>2</sub>O, it needs water. The material body needs food. The material body needs strength.
- It needs that to keep our material side going. But that's not all that we are. And one of my favorite quotes comes from Dietrich Bonhoeffer who said that it is absolutely deceitful to say to a person that you can live on bread alone.
- You can't. And the reason Dietrich Bonhoeffer said that is because he was trying to get his people to identify that they're not just material beings but they are spiritual people with spiritual needs.
- And so to say that you can live on material things alone, it is the most deception, deceptive thing to say. You're deceiving a person to say that. That all you need is this.
- [ 28 : 00 ] And it's not. You need God. God seeks people and he seeks to give people himself.
- And people, even when they have received God, decide to seek out alternatives. And some of these alternatives are based on nothing more than their desires, their priorities, and their preferences.
- But this is what I want, I know what I need, but this is what I want. And yet what they need is that living water, which is a metaphor for God himself.
- The God, the Holy Spirit, coming into your life, giving you that fullness, giving you that freedom, giving you that completeness that you cannot have without him.
- And yet it is sin which corrupts you to think that that's not true, or that you need other things as well. That I just simply need to fulfill this spiritual, not this spiritual need, this material need.
- [ 29 : 07 ] And that my spiritual needs can run on low without it really having any kind of impact on my Christian life. Remember how I said, perhaps you don't remember, I'll say it again.
- I believe you remember everything that I say and have said for the last nine and a half years. I'm just repeating because the Bible tells me that I need to repeat.
- Those who believe that they don't need to read the whole scriptures, I don't need to read the whole Bible, and then believe that their Christian life isn't any different because of it, are so mistaken.
- if God has given us his word and expects us to have all of his word, then all of his word is going to make a difference to all of our life. And so those who think, well I can live off the tiny part of God's word that I know, and I don't need to go into the rest and it won't really make any difference to my life, I don't understand how you actually understand that to be true.

In other words, if I were to put a plate of food in front of you, and you only ate one thing off it, and you felt hungry at the end of the day, and I said to you, well, you didn't eat all your dinner, you would go, well okay, it's not, that's not the, I wouldn't want to admit it, like children, yeah but I'm hungry now, I wasn't hungry then, but the point was, if you ate then, you wouldn't be hungry now.

- [ 30 : 41 ] That's that idea of wisdom and seeing further down the line. What this short parable then teaches us in Matthew is that you need to be able to recognize what you need to give up to gain what you don't have.

What you're to recognize is where the true value is, and what your proper need is. There is no alternative that can satisfy the human other than God himself.

And in this parable, Jesus has given it to us, demonstrating to us that as you come to it, that no person would ever think as they wander up to this treasure in a field with a pile of stones in their hands, and as they look down on the ground, they find a pile of diamonds.

What person wouldn't drop everything that they have to gain what they don't have? In material terms, if you've got a pile of stone in your hand, and right in front of you is a pile of diamonds that you can pick up, but you cannot pick it up for as long as you have these pile of stones, what person wouldn't drop the stones in exchange for the diamonds?

And that's exactly what the man does here. He considers everything that he has is in his hands, and worth dropping for what he has found. And Jesus' point here, it's the kingdom of God, it's God himself, it's his righteousness, it's Jesus Christ.

- [ 32 : 10 ] Everything that we have is worth letting go of just to get Jesus. Now this isn't about earning your salvation, it's about recognizing that anything else that you have doesn't even come close to comparing with who God is.

Drop it. Just get rid of it. If you had to make room for God in your house, like you do a piece of furniture, you decide what has to go.

You ever move something into your house thinking, well, we haven't got room for that, but if we get rid of this, we can make room for it. Well, God is going to move into your life.

What has to go? How much room do you need to make to make room for God? And that's what this parable is essentially saying. Just get rid of everything.

Love God first and all these things will be added to you. Love God and use things and don't do it the other way round. And so many people go through this life simply holding on to the wrong things and then losing out on God, the rich young ruler, for example, as far as we know.

- [ 33 : 28 ] He has so much but then he has so little. The people in Jeremiah have God and they exchange God for things that can hold no water.

The God of living water and they exchange him out. So what does it mean then for you to receive living water this morning if you don't have it? And what does it mean for you to come back to the well of God, if I can put it that way, and receive the living water that you once tasted before?

Well, it means this, that no person is complete without God, and God is not an addition. No person is complete without God, but then secondly, God is not an addition.

Let me try and explain it to you in a slightly different way. Imagine your plate is full, and I come along with something extra, and I say, I'll put it on top.

You already have a full plate, and now you have something additional put on top. That's not the way life is meant to be understood, that people out in the world are already full, but all they need is the addition of God.

- [ 34 : 42 ] Rather, the way this is meant to be seen is that everyone in the world is like an incomplete jigsaw puzzle, with a central, most important piece missing.

And God is that piece. So God, no person is complete, but God is not an addition. He makes you complete.

In the first example, you have a plate that's already full, and something is being added. But you're not to think of Christian life, if I have everything that I need, I just need to add God to it now.

No. What you are is an incomplete person, with the need to be complete, with God coming in. It's hard to tell people that true humanity is a life that contains God, and that a person who is not, doesn't belong to God, isn't truly human.

They would laugh at you. They would think, what are you saying? You're making no sense. God created man for man to live within him.

[ 35 : 59 ] And therefore, when God is not in the life of man, that man is incomplete, that woman is incomplete. They're no longer fully human, because God designed humanity to be in relationship with him.

And so there are plenty of people out there who think that they are not only fully human, but they live quite full lives. And it's just not the case.

A person who belongs to God doesn't have the addition. He has the thing that makes him complete. So you need to understand, at least try and understand this morning.

You're not to be satisfied with less. And the reason you will be satisfied with less is because you seek out alternatives. And the reason you seek out alternatives is because you are driven by your own compulsions.

You're not free, but you're compelled by your own desires. You're compelled by your own priorities. You're compelled by your own preferences. You think you're free in choosing what you're choosing, but actually you live a life of compulsion, not a life of freedom.

[ 37 : 12 ] that what's actually shaping you is not choices, but desires. Desires for this, desires for that. Things that you are filling your life up with, but not necessarily filling your life up at all.

And so God is calling you, his people, to let go of the broken cisterns and come back to him, the God of living waters. don't seek out alternatives that cannot provide.

Don't consider yourself only to be a material being when in fact you are a spiritual person with spiritual needs. When Jesus spoke to the woman at the well, telling her, I can give you living water, and she says, well, you've not even got a bucket.

How can you, where are you going to get this water from? He was trying to get her to tell the difference between what she could get with herself and what Jesus could give to her that she could not get on her own.

And as you know, the story is that she had been married a few times, four times, five times, and the man that she is with now is not her husband. You can understand why that happens because you, perhaps this time, it's different.

[ 38 : 33 ] Perhaps this one will be different. Perhaps this, it'll make, it'll be different this time. And it's perfectly understandable why a person tries more and more things because they're looking for the thing that will complete them.

But none of those things actually complete them. And so when they're seen for what they are, you move on to the next thing. And what often happens is you swap out one alternative for another alternative.

And it's like Thomas Chalmers has rightly said, it's simply the expulsive power of a new affection that an old affection simply dies away with the present of a new one.

The presence of a new one. And so until you get to the place where you have the ultimate affection, until you get to the place where you have the ultimate love, until you get to the place where you have the ultimate gift, until you get to the place where you have God, that cannot be trumped by anything that he has created, until you get to that place, then your life is simply going to be a life of alternatives, driven by compulsions.

You will love things and perhaps use people. You will definitely love things and use God. And yet the way God has designed your life in relationship to the world is to love him and use things.

[ 40 : 02 ] Go and enjoy them, but get it the right way around. Well, here's the exhortation as we close. As Jesus put it, wherever your treasure is, there your heart will be.

Whatever controls the heart controls the person. whatever priority there is in the heart, that will come out through your fingertips.

Whatever preferences there are in the heart, that will come out through what you say and what you do. Whatever that treasure is, then that is the direction that your life will take.

And a person who has God is like this man in the parable, who in his joy gets rid of everything. He doesn't grudgingly get rid of it.

He doesn't say, do I really have to give this up in order to have God? You can tell when a person is sort of struggling with coming to God, when they ask the very simple question, well, what do I have to give up to become a Christian?

[ 41 : 09 ] When you become a Christian, that's not even a question. When you actually come to see who God is, you don't ask a question like that. Rather, you're like this person, in his joy, he just gives it up anyway.

It's no longer important. But when you're caught with a question like that, what has to go in order for me to live this Christian life? What do I have to give up?

Do I really have to pray this? Do I really have to study my Bible? Do I really have to be committed to the church? Do I have to commit myself to Bible study? Is it absolutely necessary that I come to prayer meetings and the Christian life just feels like a life of hard work?

Where's your joy? You just don't know who God is. You just don't see him. You have no idea.

Because if you did, the joy would set in. And all of those other things, it's not hard to serve people then because you realize it's the joy of God that keeps you doing it.

[ 42 : 17 ] It's not hard to keep going. It's not hard to pray. It's not hard to study your Bible or to be committed to the people in the church. None of those things are difficult. Because the joy is the necessary motivator that keeps you going.

If you've sought out alternatives, you don't know God. I'm not saying you don't belong to God. God, I'm kind of saying that you don't know the God you belong to.

You don't know exactly who you have. If you think that praying is a drudge and that studying your Bible is just drudgery and that being committed to the church is just hard work and I have my own life, you know.

No, you don't. You really don't. The life is given to you as living water. You're bought with a price. You're not your own. You belong to Christ. Christ. Where's that joy gone?

If the Christian life feels like hard work, the Christian life is hard work in many ways, but if the Christian life feels like hard work and I'm constantly having to give up things, I'm constantly having to do this, then you've lost God.

[ 43 : 30 ] You're no longer beholding God and that joy is just gone. That's why it's so difficult. That's why it's so hard to press, why it's so hard to study your Bible.

That's why you seek out alternatives to make you happy. You have a little spending spree here and there. Nothing like booking the next holiday to give you something to look forward to. All of those things are alternatives to fill gaps that only God can fill.

Where's your joy? Well, let's get back to the parable with this final thought. that the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field. When a man found, he covered it up. Then, in his joy, he goes and gets rid of everything that he has, sells everything just to gain what he doesn't have.

God is more valuable than anything in short. And there is no treasure that can compare with God.

So, remember, Jesus made it very, very simple. Seek ye first the kingdom of God. Seek God and his righteousness. And all these other things will be given to you.

[ 44 : 42 ] Love God and use things. Do not alternate and love things and use God. Amen. Amen.