

The Gospel for Everything

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[0 : 00] Revelation chapter 21 verses 1 through 5.

Once you have your hand out, go ahead and turn your Bible to Revelation chapter 21 and we'll read verses 1 through 5. That'll be the text for tonight's message.

And if you didn't know, Revelation is the last book in the Bible. That's helpful. Yeah, yeah, well, some people may not know. Okay, Revelation chapter 21, beginning in verse 1.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man, with man. He will dwell with them and they will be his people. And God himself will be with them as their God.

[1 : 36] He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

And he who was seated on the throne said, Behold, I am making all things new. Also, he said, Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true. Okay, so just for a review, what we've been talking about here over the past few weeks is that the gospel, that gospel doctrine creates gospel cultures called churches where good things happen to unworthy people for the glory of Christ alone. Gospel doctrine creates gospel cultures called churches where good things happen to unworthy people for the glory of Christ alone. And so Revelation 21 shows us how big the gospel really is. It's as big as the universe. Redemption is as big as creation. The Bible begins with God creating the heavens and the earth. It ends here with him making a new heaven and a new earth.

The Bible shows us the shape, the structure, the origin, and the goal not merely of human history but of cosmic history. No other religious book or religion does the same.

[3 : 00] The Bible gives us hope that all that is broken with our world will be renewed and made right as we long for it to be. It's by the mercy of God and his grace that anything in this world actually works at all.

It's by his mercy and it's by his grace that the world even functions as it does. Sometimes we might think, you know, my life is hard. Where is God?

When rather we should be thinking my life is livable. Thank you, God. Right? Have you ever thought, why don't we all get cancer?

You know, why don't we all get sick with these different kinds of diseases? Why don't we all plot to murder one another? Why aren't natural disasters unleashed upon us all the time, every single day?

We don't think that way, do we? We don't really take, well, we take for granted all that we do have and we don't realize how awful things could be.

[4 : 02] The Bible says that at this very moment, the Lord Jesus, according to Hebrews 1.3, upholds the universe by the word of his power.

John Calvin said of this passage, to uphold is used in the sense of to care for and to keep all creation in its proper state. He says that he sees that everything will quickly disintegrate if it is not upheld by God's goodness.

So the hope of the gospel is much more than a psychological boost to help us ramp up for Monday morning. Look at the magnitude of what God has promised us in Isaiah 65, 17.

There it says, for behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. And so as I was thinking about that, I was thinking about vacation.

You know, what in this life do we have that kind of illustrates what that's going to be like, to not remember those old things because of what's going on before our very eyes?

[5 : 11] And I think of vacation. Because a lot of times when we go on vacation, right, especially if we don't do a staycation, but we actually leave and we go far away from home, vacation has a way of taking our minds off of our problems back home, doesn't it?

It has a way. That's why so many people go on vacation. Because you're so far away, and it has a way of helping you not feel so stressed because you're far away from the problems that exist at home.

And so when you're miles away from home and from those problems, they get left behind and you don't care to have thoughts about them because you're focused on the fact that you're on a break, so to speak.

On that great and final day, as we step together into the new creation as God's people, you might turn to someone and say something like this, hey, John, I'm trying to remember, what did we call it? Did we call it cancer? You know, what was that thing that we used to call that was such a terrible thing? What was it? It doesn't matter, right? Here we go. Now we are spending the rest of our eternity together, and all those things that were are now no more, and we won't care to have any remembrance of them.

[6 : 26] In fact, this divine restoration of the created order foreseen by the prophets is not completely ahead of us. The promise of that future land is in this world, or the promise, I should say, of that future landed in this world almost 2,000 years ago when Jesus announced that he was starting to fulfill those old prophecies.

Let's look at Luke 4, 16 through 21 together. And he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up, and as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.

He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed. To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. And he rolled up the scroll, and he gave it back to the attendant, and he sat down, and all the eyes of the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

Praise the Lord. So Jesus' healings, his casting out of demons were attention, they weren't, I should say, attention-grabbing stunts that he performed in order to draw a crowd to himself.

[7 : 51] No, they were a preview of coming attractions. He was the Son of God. Jesus was driving out the forces of sin and destruction out of his creation. This is a preview of what was to come, what will come.

Our Lord's resurrection gives us a glimpse in one man of the future redeemed human race. The risen Christ is the second Adam. He's a new beginning.

So let's read 1 Corinthians 15. Thus it is written, the first man Adam became a living being. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust. The second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust.

And as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also, praise God, bear the image of the man of heaven.

[8 : 55] We who are believers share in this newness of life now. Right now. 2 Corinthians 5.17 Therefore, the Bible says, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. So becoming a Christian doesn't just add something to the old you. It creates a new you. The risen Christ indwells you now, never to leave you or forsake you ever.

Romans 8.10-11 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness. If the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who dwells in you.

So, people who truly believe in the gospel, show it. They have to. They have to. How could they not? If you have undergone this kind of transformation, it will be shown.

You will know them by their fruits. We will suffer like others, absolutely. But we are, as Paul said, sorrowful but always rejoicing. We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, as Romans 5.2 says. [10:14] Each of us then is like a homeless man. Each of us. These of us who are believers in Jesus Christ. We are like a homeless man who sleeps under a bridge and eats out of the dumpsters.

One day, a limousine rolls up, picks and out steps an attorney. And he hands us a letter. And it has mentioned on that letter that we have a long-lost uncle who's died and who has left his fortune to us.

And he's, you know, he's a millionaire, or was so. And we know that, according to the attorney, the check will arrive in a few days, right? And so suddenly, though he's got to wait for a few days, this homeless man, his cardboard box that he lives in doesn't feel as hopeless as a place as it once did. He can live with it for a while longer because he knows that he has a fortune that is awaiting him. It's on its way. So in the same way, a gospel-rich church rejoices in the hope that we have, this hope that we have in Jesus Christ.

We are poor sinners who can look beyond present circumstances and enjoy our future by faith right now. So we should be joyful always.

[11:31] Rejoicing always. We are poor sinners who can look beyond present circumstances and enjoy our future by faith right now because we know what is awaiting us. Thanks to Jesus, our existence is glorious even now.

And we possess the promises of eternal life that are still to come. We are not to be people marked by despair. Despair denies the gospel and it destroys the gospel culture.

2 Corinthians 4, 7-11 But we have this treasure in jars of clay that show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way but not crushed.

Perplexed but not driven to despair. Persecuted but not forsaken. Struck down but not destroyed. Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.

For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake. So that the life of Jesus always may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then the question becomes how can we be so joyful and not despairing?

[12:41] Well, the answer is because of the gospel. Because our God in his mercy has caused us to believe this good news despite our fallen wills and desire for sin.

God made us alive together with Christ. Our sins have been atoned for. We've been forgiven. We're not going to hell anymore. We're going to heaven forever.

That's great news. The gospel has the power to sustain us through hardships in this world, in this lifetime. And as I was thinking about this, I was thinking about the Lord of the Rings trilogy.

And I can't believe this, but a couple, a few Sundays ago now I guess, we were over at Katie and Jesse's house and the Lord of the Rings was on. And they have, you know, a nice big long couch. A lot of people were seated on it. A lot of our church members were on it. And about half the people on the couch had never read the books or seen the movies. That's tragic. And there are probably people here that haven't seen the movies or read the books.

[13:46] Come on, you guys are missing out. Yeah, I know. Well, maybe that will be our next Bible study. We'll just do it. We'll do the Lord of the Rings. Oh, goodness.

So, anyhow, all that to say, there's a part in that movie that I think is significant. A good job of illustrating what it's like to live in this world as Christians.

And, of course, J.R.R. Tolkien was a Christian. And so a lot of what he wrote in those books, I believe, symbolized in many ways what he believed as a Christian.

But if you know those movies, or even if you haven't, Sam Gamgee is in the midst of a difficult journey with Frodo. And they are on their way to Mordor to destroy the one ring of power that seeks to enslave all to the evil Lord Sauron.

And so as they are on their way on this journey, and it's a perilous journey, they come across all different kinds of hardships. And, you know, it's just a very difficult journey that they're on.

[14:51] And so they're finally in Mordor, which is this land that is smoldering. And it's lifeless. And it's close to the enemy's gates. And he looks up into the nighttime sky when the clouds part just a bit.

And this is what he says. This is what it says. But Sam saw a white star twinkling for a while. The beauty of it smote his heart. And he looked up out of the forsaken land.

And hope returned to him. For like a shaft, clear and cold, the thought pierced him that in the end the shadow was only a small and passing thing. There was light and high beauty forever beyond his reach.

Revelations chapter 21 verses 1 through 5 as we read. It shines like that star in the nighttime sky to us.

The promises of this passage will not go away. However dark the night might seem as we live here in this world. So let's look at this passage again verse by verse.

[15:52] Verse 1. The apostle John says, Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And the sea was no more. So this verse does not tell us that God will discard nature.

It tells us that he will redeem it. He will redeem it. R.C. Sproul said this about this verse. He said, So these verses do not tell us that God will discard nature.

It tells us that he will redeem it. And the key word here is new. New does not mean the universe will be completely new as if it will bear no continuity with the present universe.

It means that the universe, this present heaven, this present earth, will be renewed. God will restore his creation that he made, that he owns, and that he loves. Fixing broken things is what God does. That's the way of God. God takes damaged things like us and he brings renewal. Renewal that can never be undone. There will never be another fall of Adam to reverse the newness that Jesus creates.

[17:33] And then when John says there will be no more sea, that can kind of be confusing. What does that mean? Is there no bodies of water there? Well, in Jewish literature, the sea was often used as a symbol for that which was ominous or sinister and threatening.

Earlier in the Revelation of John, we see that the beast emerged from the sea, Revelation 13.

Likewise, in ancient Semitic mythology, there is frequent reference to the primordial sea monster that represents the shadowy chaos.

The Babylonian goddess Tiamat is a case of that. The Jews also feared other problems from the sea besides turbulent storms. Their traditional, if you remember, their arch rivals were marauders who beset them countless times.

They were a seacoast nation. They were the Philistines. And they came from the direction of the sea. And so they associated the sea with bad things. The Jews looked to a new world where all the evil symbolized by the sea would be absent.

They would not exist anymore. The new earth will have water. It will have a river. It will have life-giving streams. But there will be no sea there. There will be no wars is what we're talking about.

[18:44] No riots. No overdraft charges. No fender benders. None of that stuff. Any of those evils.

They will be completely gone. We will have real and true world peace. Verse 2. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Listen. So while we should be good stewards of the earth, right? We should seek to do right in this world, but we'll never be able to create heaven on earth. That's an impossibility. In a fallen world, a fallen people, we cannot create some kind of utopia.

We are incapable of creating any kind of heaven on earth. Only God is able to do that. God will do it at the second coming of Christ. And he'll do it for his glory alone.

God will bring down to us the perfect community. The promise of the gospel is not about you going to heaven to be alone with Jesus. The promise is that all of God's people will be with him in glorious community forever.

[19:50] We'll be in community with the Lord forever. Then verses 3 and 4. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away.

Some people have endured so much pain in their life that they may be tempted to wonder if they can ever feel happy again.

You ever known anybody like that? You ever had somebody that's like, man, they just have gone through so many tragedies. Tragedy after tragedy. And for people like that, they can tend to doubt that they could ever feel happy again.

But according to these verses, a day is coming when we will know God's immediate presence. We will dwell in his presence.

[20 : 54] And his presence will not be one of reproach but of comfort to us. We will be in his presence not because we have overcome sin and patched ourselves up, but because Christ took on himself all of our sin.

In exchange, we've received his endless mercy in its place. In the Old Testament era, God dwelt among his people in the tabernacle and then in the temple. God told Solomon that as long as the king obeyed, God would remain among his people.

1 Kings 6, 13 through 11. But Solomon, if you remember, in his descendants who succeeded him on the throne, disobeyed. So the glory departed in Ezekiel 9 through 11.

Yet even before it departed, the temple walls separated God's presence from his people. On that great and endless day promised to us in Revelations 21, there will be no walls.

There will be no separation. There will be no distance. There will be no absence. Instead, there will be no pain. There will be no suffering. God will wipe away every tear from our eyes.

[22 : 01] We will be healed and we will be whole and we will never weep again. This is the priceless hope that the Bible gives us. That God himself will be with us as our God forever and ever and ever.

We should hate the prosperity gospel and its promise of worldly wealth over and above Jesus. We should hate it. That false gospel is insulting to God.

It portrays him as being merely a stepping stone for a better job or a higher pay or a bigger house filled with more material possessions. The prosperity gospel does not give, but in reality it takes away.

It takes away what our hearts truly need, what our hearts truly long for, which is the joy that we were created for, which is God himself. Verse 5.

And he who is seated on the throne said, Behold, I am making all things new. There will be nothing old, nothing dilapidated, impure, or worn out in that radiant kingdom of Christ.

[23 : 13] We will encounter nothing that will cause sad memories to surface. Our Lord, having vanquished every enemy, will reign and we with him forever.

That is gospel doctrine. How does this gospel doctrine then lead to a gospel culture? Well, it creates a bright, resilient hope in us.

It should create churches that face life as it is, head on, and not defeated. Let's look at 2 Corinthians 4, 16 through 18. So again, we do not lose heart.

Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light, momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

As we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. So in the face of everything that would seem to rob us of God, this assurance builds us a cheerful defiance.

[24 : 18] And it does so in two ways. First, the hope of the gospel makes us cheerfully defiant toward every disappointment that we endure in this broken world.

I want to quote Augustine to you. He says, Do not hold unto the old man the world.

Do not refuse to regain your youth in Christ, who says to you, The world is passing away. The world is losing its grip.

The world is short of breath. Do not fear. Thy youth, I should say, Thy youth be renewed as an eagle.

And then secondly, The hope of the gospel and the triumph of our Savior makes us cheerfully defiant even toward our own sins and failures.

[25 : 45] And I'll say that again. Second, the hope of the gospel and the triumph of our Savior makes us cheerfully defiant even toward our own sins and failures.

I'm going to end by quoting Martin Luther. When the devil throws our sins up to us and declares that we deserve death and hell, we ought to speak thus.

I admit that I deserve death and hell. What of it? Does this mean that I should be sentenced to eternal damnation? By no means. For I know one who suffered and made satisfaction in my behalf.

His name is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Where he is, there I shall be also. The gospel for everything.

Right? We have a bright future. A glorious future to anticipate. So that's why I like to say that no matter how good things might seem to be here, a better day is coming.

[26 : 45] No matter how bad things might seem to be here, a better day is coming. For the Christian in this life, there's always reason to hope because of this great promise that we have from Christ Jesus our Lord.

And that wonderful day, that wonderful kingdom that we will live in forever. Okay, so we have some questions. First, we have a microphone, so make sure you use the microphone. How do Christians show that they believe the gospel?

We talked about this, right? If you're a Christian, you should show it. You should know them by their fruits. So how do we show it? How do Christians show that they believe the gospel? Jackson?

Well, we show the gospel by going to other people and telling them about God. Amen.

Amen. We've got a mission. Yep. Matthew 28, right? How do we show as Christians that we believe the gospel? Well, we believe it so much that we go and we share it with everybody.

[27 : 53] Great job. Any other responses? We show it by our face, too. We should be, of all people, the most happiest.

Yeah. You know, our outlook is our outlook toward heaven. Yeah. Amen. There's so much hatred in the world and division and greed and lust and power.

What you were speaking about, and deny yourself, take up your cross and walk. And also our love for one another. If we're bickering and dividing the churches that really preach the gospel, then we're not love and the love of the truth is not in us.

Yeah. Absolutely right. Good comments. Yes. Stan? I think you can say it in one word. Living it.

Yeah. Living it. Yeah. Practice what we preach.

That's two words. Living it. Living it. Well, you know. Okay. We're going to be legalistic. That was, too. But you're right.

[28 : 51] Yeah. We show it because we live it. We don't. We practice what we preach. And as we've all talked about, right, the world is to look at the church, and we are that bright and shining city on a hill, and they see there's something different there because we don't live like them.

We don't act like them. We aren't bickering and fighting, or we shouldn't be, because we are putting others ahead of ourselves, and ultimately, we are living our lives seeking to be obedient to what God has called us to do.

And we want that. We want that. We have a new set of desires. You know, our desire is to glorify the Lord with our lives. Okay.

Let's move on to the next question. Why do some Christians seem to struggle with being joyful?

Okay. So we've talked about the fact that we should be joyful. And certainly, we saw verses, right, Apostle Paul's talking about we're perplexed, we're persecuted, but we're not despairing.

We're not giving up. We're always joyful. But let's answer this question. Why do some Christians seem to struggle with being joyful? Would you say that the church is doing a pretty good job, for the most part, of showing the world that we're different?

[30 : 05] Showing the world that we have this kind of joy? I think sometimes it comes from us struggling with something that either we're mad at God for, and we can't get over that, or there's something that we've yet to discover that we're struggling with, and we're not breaking down and getting in the word.

If we're in the word, then it's shown to us. Yeah. We don't have to sit there and, you know, wonder, why am I not happy? Yeah. If you're in your word and you're praying like you're supposed to, God will give you that answer.

Yeah. I think you're right, because a lot of times when we have those, when life happens, instead of going to God, right, in prayer, going to his word for reminders, we try to take matters into our own hands, and that doesn't seem to go very well, right, instead of going to God.

But we do that, and I think when we do that, yeah, it robs us of joy. Because we're not capable of doing what God can. And I'll add to that, yes, that is where it needs to start, but, you know, it tells us in Hebrews, we don't forsake the assembling of ourselves together.

And this is, I think for me personally, my joy gets renewed by coming and being among God's people, worshiping God. I mean, our small groups are good, we share and we pray, but to come

and worship as a body and truly worship him in spirit of truth gets me outside my struggle and helps me see it from his perspective.

[31 : 45] Yeah. And then that joy can be renewed. So, you know, sometimes when we're going through a rough patch, we don't want to go to church because we're struggling and we just don't want to confront it or be confronted with accountability.

But coming here, being in the small groups, coming on Sunday morning and Sunday evening and really being immersed with what we are hearing from the pulpit will help too.

Yeah. Good. Yep. I think that's a big problem, right? Right. As we said, you know, when you're dealing with those things, you think you're tempted to stay away from the church when what you need is to be with God's people.

And you need to have them bear your burdens and you need to, you need to, you need, you just need it. You need that worship. You need to see and be reminded of these wonderful truths that we have.

Promises. James? That's a, this has been a question that I have pondered. Okay. For a long time. So you, you ought to give us a really good, you can come stand up here if you want.

[32 : 43] We can. Under five minutes. But I don't understand that. So that's a valid question because I go back and I look at John 14 when Jesus promises the disciples that he's going to send them a comforter to give them comfort.

And he's preparing them for his death on the cross. And we, I think we forget that we have God dwelling in us through his spirit.

And if you have that in you and you acknowledge it and you allow him to take control, you can't help but have a more positive attitude.

But I see people that call themselves Christians and they are so unhappy. They're so miserable. And I don't understand why. Yeah. Because they have the spirit of God living in them.

I just don't understand that. Yeah. I think that's a good point. I don't think we, you know, should understand it. All right. Patsy. Then Cameron. Well, okay.

[33 : 45] I speak for myself when I say this. When I feel like, you know, when I struggle, I fail to understand where my true strength and joy comes from.

And when I go back and reflect that it's Christ, he is my source. He is my strength. Then I find comfort.

And that's, that's. Yeah. Amen. Okay. Patsy. Well, we all do things a little different.

I think we're not all made alike. And when things happen to us, some handle it a little different than others.

And I know I struggled a lot with the loss of my husband. I still am. Yeah. And at the time I was looking, I was just saying, you've got to help me.

[35 : 01] You've got to help me, Lord, to get out of this. Because I, it was hard for me. Sure. And it lasted and it lasted and it lasted. Things are better.

Good. But when you say joyful with being joyful, that was hard for me to come back to. Yeah.

And because I was halfway gone. When you're married 52 years, that person is part of you.

Yeah. And I lost part of me. Sure. But it's coming back. But it's, it takes a long time. What, what helps?

What's helped you? My, my family here. Yeah. Coming to church. But it's still, it's still a void.

[36 : 07] Yeah. And it's, it's really hard. Sure. But that, but other people, like I say, other people handle it sometimes a little different.

And if you read, David, what's his last name? His, he's writing memoirs about, about, you know guys who I'm talking about.

David Jeremiah? Is that what you're talking about? No. One of the, the, okay, I can't think of her name right now. But anyway. Okay. That's just my, that's the way I think.

My. Good. Thank you, Patsy. Thank you for that. That's true. Man, and you know, we're talking about a marriage especially because the two become one flesh.

You share everything. That's the most intimate relationship that there is. You lose somebody who has been a part of your life longer than anybody else.

[37 : 14] You've spent most of your life with that person. Yeah, that's hard. Okay, Cameron. Man, I don't know how to follow that. But I think a lot of times for, for a lot of us, it's, you know, we're not going through something like the loss of a husband.

We're not going through something like Job in the Bible. It's, it's just those little things that, that you, you don't really realize it's taking your eyes off Christ. But that's what is so easy to get lost in in this life through, through, through work, through, through friends, through, through raising kids.

Sometimes you just, it kind of piles up and you don't realize it's piling up and you don't realize you're maybe a little distracted from your walk with Christ. That you tend to not be joyful because you're so distracted with, with everyday things that sometimes it's, it's hard to wake up on that right side of the bed and be joyful from the get go with, you've had a rough night or the kids have been up, you know, we, we had two rough nights in a row and it was hard to get up for church this morning and be joyful.

So this is definitely, you know, day of experience. Sure. So, but just, you know, getting yourself up and getting to church and, you know, it's just, it's just, it's, it's hard to constantly remind yourself to keep that focus on Christ, even, even through the everyday stuff.

Good. So the one thing I hear is the same people are saying the same thing. All right. Clarence. Go ahead. I do struggle being alone, living by myself.

[38 : 57] But I remedy that. I, my first thoughts when I wake up is in the Lord. Just as soon as I wake up. And I thank him that it's his day that, that he's made for me.

Amen. Willard. You can get your exercise, Mike. You're going to, you know, you're going to be in great shape by the end of this. Run next time.

psalm 5 or psalm 30 verse 5 weeping may endure for a night but joy comes in the morning amen i think we've got to be careful that we don't picture ourselves as needing to be outwardly joyful all the time uh difficulties come uh some of those weigh heavy but i think you know the out the idea of outward joyfulness can be a misnomer for us there's a difference between outward joyfulness and inward joy inward joy i think can be ours in the midst of dire circumstances yeah but that does not necessarily mean that outwardly we are joyful yeah we joy we have an inward joy because we do know christ we are in relationship with him we know he controls our lives and so we can rejoice inwardly in that in the spite of the tears that come yeah good i'm glad you said that identifying the different we're not talking about like a fake joy you put on a happy face we're talking about something that's rooted down deep and even though you go through difficulties in life uh it would be strange to go through something really traumatic and tragic and to pretend as if you didn't um but we're talking about yeah like like willard said you know we have that joy down deep and so even though we go through these things we haven't lost hope and we keep on going because we know that uh you know joy comes in the morning that there's a future that we have to look forward to okay brenda when i was 50 i lost my mother and my mom and i were best friends i took very good care of her for many years and to let go of her was a true struggle but you know even though i shed a few tears i kept going back to knowing that one day we're going to be back together yeah and what a joy that is for me because as a christian i need to know that you know i am solid in who i am i know that we will be together again and it gives me great joy not to say i didn't shed tears because i did and i miss her every day sure which we do i mean that's just the human in us but i i can go on because i know what tomorrow brings absolutely so i'm i'm looking forward to that day amen i think the thing that i'm the common thread that i'm hearing is that when we as christians are lacking joy the reason is because we are god is um or we've been absent from the church and we've we've pulled away from god you know we've pulled away from reading his word we've pulled away from prayer we've pulled away from associating with god's people and then we see for those who are talking about you know gone through some really difficult things that the best thing for them was to be with god and to be with god's people so why do so many christians seem to be struggling with being joyful it's because they're far from their source of joy you know and so we need to be with the lord every day you know as mentioned over here waking up in the morning um giving that first just you know directing your focus automatically to the lord when you are far from your source of joy you're going to struggle to be joyful okay amy did you have your hand up okay i'll try to do this real quick it's okay to hurt yeah if somebody steps on your foot it hurts if somebody's ripped from your life it hurts if you find out somebody that you love's got cancer it hurts hurt means you're alive hurt means that you still feel something and that you if you can remember where to run to when you when you need that help and it is your church family and it is the bible and it is the lord and that's why do some people why do christians seem to struggle with being joyful because the first initial thing is it does hurt yeah and you think where's god and you get remember he's right where he always been right and he's got everything in control this is for his glory whatever

it is and the worst things that you go through you may never understand why but it was for his purpose and if you believe the word and if you believe god and you do those things also remember this one thing too joy is not necessarily happiness in fact most of the time it's not if you look up those two words in the dictionary they may be related but they're not the same word and happiness has to do with stuff and joy has to do with Jesus others and then yourself so my three cents good good comments dan i want to take a little different direction um false doctrine um oftentimes um causes ultimately causes people to struggle in their faith i mean when you when you have the belief or you know you've read all kinds of books heard preachers preach on tv you know that that god wants to give us all the good things in life and that we won't get sick and if we are getting sick it must be something about our faith and and there's a lot of people that struggle today that go to church every time the doors open because something's going on in their life yeah and uh and they just yeah they have a hard time processing that their god's not a god that would do that yeah good point as we've mentioned before and as we you know just talking with each other here and talking about this question you know and the importance of your church family when you're going through hard times is let's come in here and not be fake you know uh if you're struggling with something then let us know because that's part of what why god has brought us into community with one another so that we can bear one another's burdens and uh and like dan said when people are coming to the church because they're they're hurting uh if we're feeling like we in order to go to church we got to fake it we got to fake happy because we're supposed to be happy well like we said there's a difference there and um we need each other we need to be used by god to help others as well um and i think of my uh just in you guys have heard my testimony about my my brother who died when he was one and uh my parents were not in the church and it was through his death that and through a man who ministered to them while he was in the hospital still alive but not doing well they got back into the church and you know my my his birthday was uh this month i think he would have been 42 but uh we have pictures of him in our house and we talk about him and i have seen all throughout my life when his he was he died i think a couple days after his birthday it was close but to grow up in my home and my parents on those days especially for my mother is just a hard day and we knew that but her joy never wavered you know because she she was thankful for the time that she had with him and she's thankful how god used his life only one year but man he had a he had a meaningful one year and what god was able to do through his life for my family and still and so yeah i think it's strange if we act like we're super humans and we're not affected by tragedies but we we mourn we don't put on a happy face because we feel like we've got to fake it around other people or we're going to think we're a bad christian no um we we mourn but we know that man we've we've got we've got a day is coming you know where every tear will be wiped away and we'll have that full understanding yeah and so even as we're struggling we have that hope and thank god that we have the complete revelation of his word right we've got the end and so we know how it's going to how it's all going to come down and um that gives us reason that even when we're going through hard times that we know that we have a god who will never leave us or forsake us um and that's wonderful news that was a good question man i didn't think it was going to be such a good question what's number three i don't have it before me you have to remind me how can christians be joyful okay let's move on i think we got that one pretty good number four god will restore the heavens and the earth we have about five minutes he will dry every eye he will dwell eternally with we will dwell eternally with him forever how should these promises affect the way we function as a church now kind of talking about it but as a church how should we function now knowing this is our future press on yeah one of the things that uh is a a joy robber for me is um it feels like it can feel like now you got to hear me out it can feel like as a church we're not succeeding because we always hear the numbers of the people who are leaving the church and the young people and so you can feel like man we're what are we missing what's going on here and so that can be a joy robber for me but uh to be reminded that you know god is always sovereign that god is not unaware of what's going on that god is not without a plan and that ultimately in the end we know how it's all going to uh come down and so we as a church should function knowing that we shouldn't come in here like man you know we're we're losing out there uh no we shouldn't be surprised you know the world is the world um but we continue on as the church we press on like we said we just keep going because we know how it's all going to end we know that we have a mission we should be diligent and fulfilling that and being witnesses for christ but ultimately we're not despairing we shouldn't be despairing when we come in here we should be rejoicing always anybody else want to take a stab at this question west i think i've said this before about uh going out the voice of the

martyrs you hear these stories what's going on in the rest of the world and so yeah in the united states it sure seems like things are uh you know we're losing and uh one of the guys out there one time said that we feel like as christians in america to uh hunker down in church put up the razor wire and just wait for jesus to come back but the gospel is advancing all over the world people don't i mean iran is the fastest growing christian nation in the world and you hear so many stories about how god is doing his work i mean

[51 : 43] we know the plan and people are going to get saved and and we're moving in that direction but it's it's happening even though we may not see it right here and so just keep that in mind that god is on the move the gospel is on the move and people are just they're having visions and dreams of of christ coming to them and why are you persecuting me and follow me and things like that and just miraculous healings are happening it's it's just an amazing thing and just don't lose heart just know that all the stuff that the bible says it is coming true and we we're just uh waiting for the when god decides it's time to come good jerry had his hands up oh surely god keeps his promises that's why we have so much hope you know amen our he keeps it yeah yeah we function as a church trusting that god's going to fulfill all that god says he'll do jerry had his hand up and while mike's on his way one thing as i was thinking with like dan's answer about right doctrine how how do these promises affect the how the church functions now well we're not we're not coming up with gimmicks to try to draw people in right because we don't need to do that we should not do that right so we're we're we're focused on having the right doctrine right doctrine on paper right doctrine in practice jerry you know paul tells us in in ephesians that god has given us every spiritual blessing in christ jesus who is christ that he's in heaven where we at we're in heaven we need to live like that here down on earth because we don't have to wait till we die to go to heaven we're there in the spirit so we need to live and be joyful and be glad and and let the world see who we are and i fall short of that i'm not trying to i'm not boasting myself yeah we know what you mean if we just live this word what god teaches for a better place and how we could could show the world not who i am but who christ is because he lives in me amen amen okay uh it's uh almost 7 30 i'm gonna pray and then i know we got birthday fellowship so we'll sing we may have one more comment one more comment oh yeah we gotta hear this jackson um we should function like by well telling people about god that he is the savior jesus is his son and that he sent jesus down to die on the cross and save us from sin to make a bridge to at least make it where we can go to god amen amen yep preach it brother yeah i know i know all right that's we're gonna end there let's pray you