

Do You Hear Him Sing?

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Preacher: Warren Boettcher

[0 : 00] I have the privilege of introducing a guest preacher this morning. His name is Warren Betcher, and he's here with his wife Kim here in the front. And Warren is the lead pastor of Southern Rich Church of New Jersey in Marlton.

And he also serves as the regional leader of our foundation. So he's the leader of our Northeast region. So he's really visiting us in that capacity to serve us, encourage us. And he also serves at the national level on the executive committee of the Southern Rich Churches. So he's wearing many hats, but he does it well faithfully. And Warren and Kim are really, as a couple, one of the godbiest and most humble people I know.

And really look up to them. And I'm really eager for you guys to get to know them as well and hear from them. So please welcome with me, Warren. I think I'll be preaching for us.

All right. I'm right away going to make Sean nervous. I'm moving the clock. That's on the...

[1 : 13] Just dividing the room. It's great to be here with all of you. My wife and I have looked forward to this time. We were in Manchester last weekend.

So Cade's Cross Church with Jake Young. Spent Saturday or Sunday with them and preached at that church. Went to Acadia this week for the first time for us up in Maine.

Did tons of hiking up there. Climbing different mountains, Cadillac mountains, different mountains. And seeing the coastline. And going on a whale watching cruise, which we've done once. We enjoyed it.

We won't do it again. But we did enjoy that. And to be here is just such a privilege to be involved with you. We were with the Roos last night along with Matt and Cheryl.

And Ray was there. And just had time with them. And so it's wonderful to be here with your church. And I want you to know that your church is prayed for regularly. So our church outside of Philadelphia or suburb of Philadelphia in Washington, New Jersey.

[2 : 16] We pray for this church. Actually, my son-in-law and my daughter really seriously considered being part of this church plan. Sean came, spoke.

My son-in-law felt very moved in an unusual way because of respect for Sean, which I would share. And they were wrestling.

Now, we were, to be honest, we were praying they wouldn't come. So we're grandparents. And so grandchildren means a lot to us. We have five children, 12 grandchildren.

Can I have been married for 40 years? So, but I want you to know this church is dear to our heart. And we pray for you on a regular basis. And you represent an answer to prayer.

There was a vision in Sovereign Grace at one point. We were like, can you ever get a church in New England? And that started with Paul Butler. The first church planted into, or, yeah, Paul.

[3 : 11] The first church planted into New England. And now there's four churches in New England with more being planned. And that's a phenomenal answer to God, that we would see churches gospel-wise, gospel outposts, in places where we need the gospel preached.

So I want you to know that your church is dear to us and you are praying for. Ranging for those decisions you may never meet, but they do care and we are connected that way. And also, my respect for Sean, who couldn't be hired by one of the graduates today, is that I'm preaching and not listening to him preach.

He's a smart guy. And he's a very smart guy. So I don't want to ask him questions. He didn't ask me questions. I'm not saying, well, actually, I want to hear your perspective on this issue.

Because you're probably going to have a more thought-out perspective than I'll have. So he's a smart guy. And I would say this about Sean. He's a man full of faith. And church planted does take faith.

He's a man full of faith. And he's a very humble man. Through the way that God has gifted him, his humility is profound. And the other thing that stands out back to you that I've known about him is his courage.

[4 : 17] And you want a pastor who has courage. Because pastors are called to love and tell the truth. And sometimes you can be liked. And we all want to be liked.

Nobody walks around not wanting to be liked. But that can become a trap if it hears you from telling the truth. Sean, as a pastor, loves you and loves his people enough to always be truthful with them. And to ground that truth in the grace of God. So, Sean, thank you for having you serve up here. And thank you for how you are being a gospel outpost. We will be praying for your outreach barbecue picnic next Saturday.

So, that would be our prayer list this week on Thursday. We will spend time as an fellowship training for your outreach that that gospel level will expand into this community.

So, thank you. So, it's great to be with you this morning. I'm going to be speaking over the love of God, which is a massive topic. If you think about the Apostle John, twice in John 4.

[5 : 19] He actually makes a statement in John 4, 8 and John 4, 16. He has this phrase, God is love. It's not the summary attribute of God, but it is an essential attribute.

When we think about who God is, this is one of the ways he describes himself. That he is a God of love. He is a loving God to us. Paul writes in Ephesians 3, and it's a love that surpasses knowledge. So, how do you talk about something that actually surpasses our ability to fully comprehend him? And I believe I can say, in a young age, by now, 5, I'm 16 now, so I was 55 years.

I don't think I understood much of the gospel early, but I think I was genuinely saved. I was a sinner. I needed a sinner. I was a sinner, and Jesus died for my sins. But understanding the grace of God has been depressing.

But understanding really who I was, apart from God, that really was a sinner and really needed. And because I was a Christian early in my life, I was in traditional school, I didn't do what I considered going to be immoral things.

[6 : 31] So, in our chapels and school, the people who would come and speak would also come in, and they'd have these testimonies that were so unlike anything I had. You know, drug use, immorality, crime.

We had a guy who was part of the warlocks, the motorcycle gang, and actually had a chapter. Somebody got shot at his reddit. And you're like, you're like, I don't have a testimony.

I don't do any of those things. You're like, I think I lied once. So, I think I did. You know, and what happened in that is I didn't have an understanding what would have drove my sin.

Because I was very proud. I wanted my own glory. I wanted my own ease. Those things did function for me. But they didn't seem big.

So, because my sins didn't seem big, God's grace didn't seem big. And it was really in my 20s when God started to really reveal the sins of my heart, the motivations of my heart. And that was a real struggle.

[7 : 31] Because then I really fell into the confirmation. Am I even a Christian? Why did I not change? Why did I keep confessing the same sins? And it was really in my 20s that the grace of God got really introduced.

The love of God got really introduced to me. And that love just has grown, in my understanding, ever since. It still is an inexpressible love.

And that's what we're going to be looking at this morning. So, if you have your Bibles with you, open up here to Zephaniah chapter 3. It's probably not a typical place you'd go. So, you've got to go Old Testament.

And if you're looking for Zephaniah, just look at the index if you can't find it. Don't act like you don't know where it is. It's near the end of the Old Testament. So, you hit the Matthew, you go too far.

Just go back about 20 pages.

And it comes to Zephaniah. Zephaniah chapter 3. Zephaniah is one of the minor prophets. And they're called the minor prophets. Not that they're less significant. So, don't think of them that way.

[8 : 31] But they're just shorter. In fact, these books are very significant to us. Here's what the minor prophets typically do. They typically announce God's judgments.

Typically against God's people. Who typically rebelled against God. And that was true of Zephaniah. So, here's what you'll see in the minor prophets.

You will see the holiness and the justice of God. God's not to be trifled with. We just finished a series in Joel. Where God sent a massive locust claim. To the people of Israel. Where they were starving. And then he followed that up with a drought. And the first message in our series in Joel 1. Was when God shouts. In other words, God will give your attention. To call you repentance. God acts. God is holy. God is a jealous God. He wants worship. Our worship.

[9 : 28] He wants our fidelity. And our loyalty. And the children of Israel regularly. Went up and down with that. And when they did. God would bring judgment. So, here's what the minor prophets. If you think about it. Oh, the justice is going to be clear. The holiness is going to be clear. But I think really what we see in these books as well. Is that God's promise of restoration. That God loves to rescue. His people. Who wander from him. So, if you read the minor prophets. Don't miss the big picture. The big picture is God's rescue. And restoration. In the midst of our sin. And that's what makes God's love. One of the things that makes God's love. So astounding. Is who he loves. The pictures of God's love. Theoretically. God loves you. And if you have honest appraisal. Look in the mirror.

[10 : 25] Unthornish. Not in your best moment. Not in your public moment. But in your private moment. In your worst moments. If you're a child of God. He still loves you. And his love does not wane. He loves people like us. People who are prone to wander. Prone to leave. The God we love. So the title of this morning's message is. Do you hear him sing? Do you hear him sing? Here's the main point. God's love. For his people. Is to be the controlling influence of our lives. The animating. Motivating. All encompassing. Effect. In our lives. So. Zephaniah chapter 3. We're going to read this. And then pray. I'm going to read verses 14 through 17. Sing aloud. O daughter of Zion. Shout. O Israel. Rejoice. And exalt with all your heart.

[11 : 24] O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord. Has taken away the judgments against you. He has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel. The Lord. Is in your midst. You shall never again fear evil. On that day shall be said to Jerusalem. Fear not O Zion. Let not your hands go weak. The Lord your God is in your midst. A mighty one who will save. He will rejoice over you with gladness. He will quiet you by his love. He will exalt over you with loud singing. Let's pray. Lord. Lord. We have read your word. And I pray that you bless the reading of your word. The reading of your word alone is powerful. If we slow down. We pay attention.

[12 : 23] These are your very words. And spirit of God. I pray that you would. Empower those words in our heart right now. Lord. Please help me to serve people who you do love. whom you set your affection to and upon. Lord. You have purchased with your own blood. Lord. For anyone here who does not know you. May they. May they see the God of love. And what you've done to express love to them this morning. And may they respond to that great love. Lord. Help me to preach your word accurately. For the benefit of your people. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. I'm sure you've all experienced things that have taken your breath away. One of the things I love to do is I love to hike. So I've hiked. I've hiked up in Acadia. I've hiked out in Washington dozens of times. Probably. I've done backpacking in the presidential range.

[13 : 22] In the White Mountains. Which can be very challenging. I've also gone out west. I hike out west pretty much every summer. I'll go out in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming. I'm going to Wyoming this summer. And I'll hike in the mountains. I'll backpack four or five days out. I've seen Christmas bears out. Which is. Sounds very thrilling until you see them. And you go from it sounds exciting to actually. I could be terrified of getting minutes of that. But I've seen beautiful things. True. Glorious beauty. And so I've gone up over mountaintops. Over ridges. Passes. 10,000. 11,000 feet. And all of a sudden there'll be there. Just a turquoise blue lake. I mean it's pretty blue. And it's just beautiful.

It's awe inspiring. And then it's surrounded by snow capped mountains. And you just look at it. And you go wow. Well this is gorgeous. This is glorious.

[14:21] This is beautiful. This is majestic. And it takes your breath away. I was in Yosemite National Park. And did some big hiking air. And some backpacking air as well.

And we went to a place called Half Point. And you can walk on Half Point. You can walk right out to the edge. To a 3,000 foot cliff. Now actually I don't walk out to the edge.

Because if you're walking out. You realize there's still nothing. I'm not seeing a slope. And you walk. Not this far. I'm coming back a little bit far. Next thing I'm on my knees. And next thing I'm crawling. And there's one thing you do. You crawl. And you look over. And it's 3,000 feet straight down. I got a rock once. It's through a rock. It counts about nine before you heard it did.

And it's just. Ah. It takes your breath away. Think about the experience. This is a few of you. And you've had it. Taking your breath away. And you're like. Ah. Wow.

[15:20] Wow. That's amazing. Brothers and sisters. The love of God is meant to take our breath away. It's meant to have that same effect.

Ah. God would love me. Ah. That way. Me. It's meant to have an effect on us. To take our breath away.

This is what makes Zephaniah 3 an amazing text. It is an amazing text. And what makes it most amazing is the context. So it's not just the text.

It's the context. When this is written by the prophet Zephaniah, at this point, all parts of society had turned from God. Or were indifferent to God.

The priests were indifferent to God. Had turned from God. The princes were indifferent from God. Or turned from God. The merchants were. Had turned against God. The masses. The elite people.

[16:19] And the normal people. Basically the nation of Israel had turned away from God. Or had become indifferent to God. And probably being indifferent to God is actually worse than turning from God.

So if you're turning from God. You're coming against God. You recognize it's there. You're fighting. Indifference is you're irrelevant. Just treating someone like they're a non-person.

So indifference to God is a great evil. A great affront. The creator of the universe. Who made this magnificent universe. This complex universe.

And then people just walk around indifference. I listen to sports radio regularly. And people always say. Well yeah I believe in God. I believe in the analysis. If I believe in God. I'm like. You just said something profound. And you said it in such a trite way.

It has no meaning to you. If there's a God. He's either of ultimate being. Or of no meaning. But there's not mid-ground to you. And this nation.

[17:15] That God had chosen. Who God had delivered out of Egypt. Who God had done miraculous things to. But God had made his own people well. They were now. Rebelling against God.

Or indifferent to God. And it's in the midst of their indifference. And their disobedience. And their rebellion. That God gives the promises that we read.

In Zephaniah chapter 3. Now there's ways that this text is fulfilled. In the Old Testament. But this is mostly a messianic text. It points what Christ will do.

And here's the news for us this morning. Is God will always have the last word. In the midst of their disobedience. In the midst of their indifference. God still is going to have the last word.

Here's why that's going to be discussed. It means our circumstances do not have the last word. It means other people in your life. Do not have the last word. And it means this. Our sin does not always have the last word.

[18:14] God has the last word. So two points this morning. Simple points. Number one. God loves to love his people. And number two. God's love is meant to control our lives.

First point. God loves to love his people. Look at verse 17. The Lord your God is in your midst. Strongly.

A mighty one who will save. Now pay attention to the second half. He will rejoice over you with gladness. He will quiet you by his love. He will exalt over you with loud singing.

Do you notice what's true of God in this text? There is no reluctance. There is no duty in his love. There is the light in his love. Now if you ask me.

How or why is God the light in us? I really don't think I can answer that question. Because he chose to. Because we have potential.

[19 : 20] There is no more of the good. It is a choice he made. It is the right he has. And brothers and sisters. This is a consistent theme in scripture.

Listen to these following texts. We have these for you. Psalm 149 verse 4. The Lord takes pleasure in his people. He adores the humble with salvation.

Isaiah 62 verse 5. The second half of verse 5. As the bride who rejoices over the bride. So shall God rejoice over you.

One of the great privileges I have. As being a pastor. I have done countless weddings it seems. And one of the things I love. Is when I am in the front eye. I have a great seat. So I have a groom right next to me.

And then the bride comes. And I always like. When the doors close. And all of a sudden they open. And the bride appears. I watch the groom. I look at the bride for a moment.

[20 : 21] And then I watch the groom. You know what I notice? A man captivated. A man in utter joy. And a man saying. Can you walk faster? Right?

With the slow letting walk. Grooms are like. Come on. Move along. Let's play a fast tune. Run down that aisle. And that's how they think through that. And so there's this.

There's this delight that God has. In us. Like a bride who rejoices over the bride. So shall God rejoice over you. Micah 7.18.

Who wants a God like you? Pardoning and passing over transgressions. Transgressions for the remnant of his inheritance. Listen. He does not attain his anger forever. Because he delights. He delights.

Instead. Fast love. Luke 15. I think you're in a series of the Lord. You're going to write a wonderful series. That will be. It is for you. Luke chapter 15. Verse 7.

[21 : 17] Just so I tell you. There will be more joy in heaven. Over one sinner who repents. Than over 99 righteous persons. Who need no repentance.

This is how God thinks about us. Theologian Matthew Henry said it this way. He's a theologian from the 1600s. The great God only loves his saints.

But he loves to love them. Now I want to pause for them. And ask you a question. Because you may be asking this question as well. How can God sing over someone like me?

How can God sing over someone like me? And if you're all like me at these times.

You can look in the mirror and say. I'm a mess. And there's times I think about my life. And you have. You're 60 years. 60 years old. Five children.

[22 : 14] Twelve grandchildren. Been married for almost 40 years. You. Really never miss church. You went to a Christian school for 11 years. Been a pastor now for 35 years almost.

You should know that. How can you make the same mistake? How can you doubt? How can you drift? How many times do you need to be rescued?

And I can just say, Lord, I'm a mess. That's not hyperbole. It's not. You know. Sometimes you're going to think, well, I was a mess before I was a Christian. And I think you know how to resolve that mess. Before I knew Christ, I was like this.

But after I knew Christ, I'm supposed to be like this. What would happen to the gap? When we're not leading up and matching up to all of our expectations and all biblical expectations.

It could be a mess. So I can make a mistake as a father. And if you know my kids here, they come up and say, yeah. And we tell you, there were times he got angry. Simply angry.

[23 : 16] All he did is be apologized. He owned it. But anger, as a husband. 40 years has not been just, man, look at that. And it just started with glory.

And it's going glory to glory. My mom's here. I can't say that. You know, I mean, she would have. How many times do I have to tell you my birthday's important to me?

Really? You would think that pain alone would have had me learn that lesson. But I was like, because I didn't know my birthday's being important.

So I got out, hey, I'll get a present sometime the week of. And for some reason, her feelings were hurt. And he said, well, how many times have that happened?

Yeah, probably for a decade. But, man, you are slow. Yeah. I'm being honest. It's not ever early. I don't mean, slow learn.

[24 : 15] And folks, sin is stupid, too. So I'm a mess. As a pastor, I made mistakes. As a person, my first, and this is actually, my first message, first Easter message when I was a pastor was in 1993.

And I was preaching out of Galatians 6.14, where Paul talks about, you know, forgive my ghost except in Christ Jesus, you know, the cross and the crucifix. So no other post. During the message, there's times when people are laughing at the right times.

I'm actually, you know, they're saying something, and they're laughing. And there's times I can tell that, you know, oh, there's a little bit of soberness. And in the middle of the message, the message is, boast only in Christ.

I had this thought come to my mind. This is a good message. Now, that's a hard place to think as a pastor, because that way you think, hmm, this is a good message.

What did I just do? I just boasted about a message that probably most people are going to remember a week from now. And I'm boasting about it. It's my first Easter message. And I'm boasting, this is a good message. Point text. We're always supposed to boast in Christ.

[25 : 21] And then you start wondering, is God going to kill me right now? Like, is this going to be, like, we're going to get church playing done in, like, a week? And it's going to be, well, they started and they ended because the guy died while preaching.

And while it's somewhat humorous, I do feel God's rescue in those moments. Because you know what, in that message, God was rescue. Because God did say, what did you just boast in? Where are you going to find the identity? And son, pastor, call man, I love you enough and I love those people enough.

I don't want you to find your identity in performance. I don't want you to find your identity in pastoral success. If you do that, you'll not abusing people. You won't be a servant.

You'll be a master. And I love you enough and I love them enough to rescue you during the message to confront you, to challenge you in the message.

[26 : 25] And so I'm preaching and having a separate conversation, in a sense, with the Lord. And I got in a good case. Because I'm boasting in the wrong thing right now.

So when I say I'm a mess, it's not hyperbole. But what do I have to do with my hope? Well, my hope is found in this text as well. In the next verse, verse 15, the Lord has taken away the judgments against you.

So you know why I can tell you that story? God has taken away that judgment against me. God has done something for me. Folks, God is not like us. God loves messes.

God loves messes. God disciplines even those that he loves. And this is what it says in Proverbs chapter 3. Do you see what God puts together that we don't generally put together?

Discipline and delight. Parentally, I don't typically put delight and discipline together. Discipline is my disfavor, right? And favors when you're okay.

[27 : 38] But actually, God delights in those he's also disciplined. Oh God, you are so, so very different than who I am.

You love messes. You love your people. Listen to this quote from Charles Spurgeon, who's my historical hero. And apart from biblical preachers, I think the greatest preacher of all time, preached in England as a young man and then preached faithfully over decades.

Charles Spurgeon said this, the Lord takes pleasure in them to fear him, imperfect though they may be. He sees them as they are to be and so he rejoices over them.

Even when they cannot rejoice in themselves. If you're here today, you're like, if you do my week, if you knew yesterday, if you're a parent, you could be saying if you knew this morning.

Or next week. What happens next week? Don't give me your good week. What happens when you have a bad week? You have an indifferent week. You have a more ridiculous week.

[28 : 49] He rejoices over that and anyone can not rejoice in themselves. When your face is blurred with tears, your eyes red with weeping, and your heart heaves the sorrow for sin, the great Father is rejoicing over you.

We are questioning, doubting, sorrowing, trembling, and all the while, he who sees it from you, the end from the beginning, knows what will come out of the present disquietude, and therefore rejoices.

let us rise in faith to share the joy of God. And there seems to be in this text just one condition.

And the condition is that we seek refuge and actually to go back, you know, go back to verse 12, just look up from verse 14, but it says here in verse 12, I believe in your risk and people humble and lowly, they will seek refuge in the name of the Lord.

So what do they do? These are people who start to realize, oh, I need God, I have been indifferent, and now what I'm doing, I'm not going to make it up, I'm not going to pay for it, I'm not going to try to reform myself, I'm going to look to God, I will seek refuge in the name of the Lord.

[30 : 12] And that's where they go, to God. Those who trust in God, oh, he rejoices over those who trust in himself.

Question, have you placed your trust in Jesus Christ? Have you? Nothing more important, most important question to ever resolve in your life, right?

Christ is either true of all the things he said were about and suffered true, but utterly false and not important. Religion's not good for just happy life, successful life, well-ordered life.

Paul would tell you very clearly in 1 Corinthians 15, if Christ is not the race and that your faith is futile, you're still of your sins, and you turn and you're married for tomorrow you die, it doesn't matter.

But if it's true, it's eminently true. It claims us, it empowers us, it directs our lives.

[31 : 19] Do you know that God loved you this way? That he, God is not tolerating you. And I think because we grew up in so much of a performance culture, and in performance, how we do it, it's so hardwired in us, how you deal, what you got to do, what's your, you know, I played sports all gone, how you performing, did you work hard?

It's all my effort, and then, and the feedback to my effort. Work hard, put more time in, train more, whatever's involved.

And there's so much about performance and acceptance, and God says, you didn't have a make.

So he looks at the performance of his son who lived a perfect life, who died a death in our place.

He says, look to his performance. And if you trust him, if you seek refuge in him, oh, I sing over you, and I rejoice over you, and I sorrow over you, even in your worst moments.

Doesn't mean he doesn't care about those moments. He'll rest for those moments, but his love does not change in those moments. So that's the first one, God's love.

[32 : 29] God loves the love of people. Second one, God's love is meant to control our lives. And when I say control, fuel, direct, encompass, animate, empower our lives.

God's love is meant to control our lives. So how? How does this text inform us of God's love to control our lives, to influence our lives? So one of them, they want to be happy.

Look at verse 14. Sing around, the Lord of Zion. Shower with Israel. Rejoice and exalt with all your heart. Be happy.

Now, guys, wait a second. I heard Sean preach. Sean talks, it's not just about happiness. It's about holiness. It's about our joy. I'm not sure a flip of happiness.

I'm trying to take your text. It says, sing, rejoice, exalt. But here's what I think that is. You can grieve and rejoice at the same time. My wife and I experienced in the last couple months, I would say, maybe the most greatest trial in our lives.

[33 : 38] And so there's, it was almost a grief that couldn't be covered. And as we're processing through that, there was this, this huge grief. and yet, there was also a, still a, but I know God.

And that can't change. That won't change. And I know God loves me. I know God's fooling me. And so you have this grief on one side, and yet, a joy and still a happenings in the other.

And that just came from truth. And I thought, you know, whatever assails me, on this side, this side remains true. So grief, but rejoicing at the same time.

And there's a reason for us to be happy. There's a reason for us to rejoice, to resolve with all our heart. And we find a reason in verse 15.

So rejoice. Sing aloud, O Israel, until our time. Shout, O Israel. There's joy. There's happiness.

Rejoice. Rejoice. It's all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. Why?

[34 : 53] Because the Lord has taken away the judgments against you. He has taken away all judgments. This is what Christ has done for us. This is the truth that stays with us.

Regardless of what's going on out here, circumstances, people, what are they doing? What's happening? Health reports. Disappointments in life. Goals that were toward the goals.

Dreams that did not happen. What happens? Why? This is the other side. He has taken away all judgments against me.

I love the hymn of 4,000 times the same. What's one of the verses in that, one of the statements in that? His blood can make the fowls clean. His blood availed for me.

In Matthew 7, 19, it talks about our sin being cast into the depths of the city. And that idea of being cast into the depths of the city means you never see it again.

[35 : 56] It's never brought back against you. So why are we happy? Because Christ died for our sins. That is categorical.

If that's true, if you believe that, that's the most defining part of your life. Christ loved me so much. For God so loved the world, this is God, they create this immense, glorious, complex world by His voice effortlessly.

Love me so much that I love the world that He gave His only Son. That whoever believes in Him shall not perish in heaven's own life. Do you see the lack, in one sense, the lack of effort God had in creation?

He just spoke it versus the effort He had in redemption. Redemption cost His Son. Creation spoken. Call it in a distance. Redemption about together. Redemption said, I have to send my Son to die for indifferent people, rebellious people.

[37 : 20] And I'm doing that because I love it. And my Son is going to die on a cross. And not just the physical pain of all that, but we can talk about all the physical pain of dying on a cross and all that happened to him physically and body and all the nerve that means and all the things that he created that they were enraged in pain.

That was the spiritual. This man who knew no sin had our sin placed upon him. Our guilt placed upon him. Our worst moments placed upon him.

Our moments when we didn't know Christ placed upon him. And our failures after we know Christ placed upon him. Your sins past, present, future placed upon him. And then you have the God of justice and holiness punish his own son.

And a man remembered, oh, creation wants it's easy. Redemption costly. For him. But he loved us that way so cause of that oh, we can now be happy.

Our sins have been resolved by Christ. His blood can make the fallous from him. His blood availed for me.

[38 : 43] So, be happy. Secondly, be confident. Be confident. God is with you. Look what else he says in verse 15. The Lord has taken away the judgments against you.

What else has he done? He has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst. You shall never again fear evil. The Lord is in your midst.

A mighty one who will save. And this is the Lord here. This is the covenant keeping majestic God. L-O-R-D capitalized.

This is covenant keeping majestic God who does all things, has all power, self-existent, unchanging God. He will save.

He will be with you for the trial we are in. I, for those I am young, I don't know how to make sense to this world, nor how to live in this world, if you don't have Christ.

[39 : 42] In other words, you're either not paying attention, or everything's breaking your way. But what happens when the reality of life hits? And hit then where?

Live long enough, and you will suffer. Live long enough, I don't face it, our expectations won't be met. Just a point will happen.

My son has Crohn's disease. He's in his thirties. He's had it since his teen years. He's got it actually a 10 who was diagnosed. He's locked about three feet of his intestines. It's just living in a cursed, fallen world.

And yet there is rejoicing in his heart. There is a trusting of God in his heart. There is that if I wait until I feel good to do things, Lord, I'll never do anything.

So I serve with the strength that God has given me. And he knows this. God's a company to keep me. God is with him in the midst of his troubles. And someday his troubles will all resolve and go away.

[40 : 51] The king of Israel, the Lord is in your midst. You shall never again fear evil. When you finish this series in 1 Peter, 1 Peter 5 talks about Satan being a roaring lion, a lion who's proud to devour.

And we not need fear him. We need to be aware of him without fear him. Resist him and he flees. Why? Because God will clear out my hands.

The Lord God is with me. So we can be happy, joyful, we can be confident. Nothing will change the love of God towards us.

And what's it say here in verse 17? He will quiet us by his love. In a child when they become quiet, they're content and they're secure. And now it's safe.

There's something that happens there quieted by the love of God. His unchanging, rejoicing, singing love. We are quieted by that love.

[41 : 55] Listen to this quote from Jerry Bridges. We're going to make a book for that we have to do with the Lord to now for decades. Jerry Bridges said, just as God's love to his son cannot change, so his love to us cannot change.

Because we are union with what he loves. God's love to us cannot fail anymore than his love to Christ can fail. May that love help your confidence.

So, be happy, be joyful, secondly, be confident, and lastly, be zealous. Look at verse 16. On that day, it's something that said to Jesus, fear not, O Zion, and let not your hands grow weak.

Here's what it starts. I mean, the great king has rescued you, he has set his love upon you, so now serve him with all your might. Seek his kingdom first.

One of the great joys of church plans, so you're, Sean, how long is the church been here, three years? Yes, in three years, a church plan, which is somebody in our 25th anniversary. What a great thing to go plan a church, to be involved.

[43 : 11] What a great thing to watch God work. I mean, it's just thrilling. I pray for the day when you guys will plan other churches. And the only, it's a joyful day and a hard day, because two things happen at once.

You're excited for we're planning another church, exhilarating, and then you're saying goodbye to some friends. And that's painful. It's like, I love you.

And we're still friends, but we don't see each other the same way, because you're going somewhere else to build and do something differently. And there's a cost in that.

And we plan at two churches, in both tears, tears, and joy. Brothers, sisters, God loves you this way, serve you on your heart.

One of the things I have felt through life is I have no regrets of serving Christ regardless of the cost. You asked me to walk in the army, you said you're 60, taught me alive.

[44 : 18] I taught my Christian school for nine years, there was a lot of sacrifices involved in that, pastoral ministry for almost 30 years now. So I've been Christian ministry, really, from when I graduated college to today, it's been all Christian ministry.

I said, well, what about the sacrifice? What about the sacrifice? Absolutely. What about the pressures? Absolutely. Are financial pressures fun? No. They're not. They're hard.

Very hard. It was hard driving home to our apartment and we hit Pennsylvania when I was a Christian school teacher and you know, the people from the world are walking by drunk and cursing and they're not next door and it's being accused of his wife and we're living in an apartment and you're just like, Lord, you said, you know, what guilt is one that we can't ask for an angel?

We can't ask a whole bunch more than this. There were sacrifices. It was hard. We're not in the same place today. I'm grateful. But yes, you regret sacrifices for God.

I'll tell you, counter-workly and absolutely, I have no regret in serving Christ at any moment in my life, regardless of course. So where do you have regrets?

[45 : 32] You know where I have regrets? Serving myself. Oh, I have I can answer about stuff. I can talk to you about mistakes, reasons, mistakes, sins.

You know, in serving God, not once. I've had different trips to India, where I've done pastors' conferences in India and going there and because of the places I was in, my life has never threatened.

I don't act like I'm some courageous guy or not. But driving in India itself can be life-threatening. If you've ever driven in India, it's very challenging. And I think of places where missionaries have been killed, they've earned 200 Christian homes.

I always had a pastor I met, knew someone who'd been killed through faith, and certainly I didn't know someone who was beaten. And so when I wrote, I left, I wrote letters to my family and my church.

There are hard letters to write anything, I wish I'd come back. I'm writing to my bars and I'm not walking down the aisle. I'm writing to my sons. I'm writing to my church.

[46 : 38] I'm writing to my wife. Meet them. So I'm writing these letters, but I hope they'll never be sent. And in all those letters, it's like, you know, we end it this way. Follow Christ with all your heart, serve Him with all your mind.

You'll have no regret. There may be costs, but you will not have regret. What you're doing, you're starting.

How do you serve? We've now been 25 years. We have some guys that have been community or community or smaller for 20 years. I think, you know, what helps a person serve a smaller group of people for 20 years?

Inspiration can help you for a year or two. We're inspired, we're acknowledging, we're starting, it's a startup company, we're all in, we're 70 hours a week, and what happens over time?

What sustains service over time? We know it's a God that loves us like this, a God that claims us like this, a God that's been gracious to us like this.

[47 : 46] So serving, you will have no regrets in doing this. Brothers and sisters, God loves to love us. He rejoices over you with loud singing.

Let this be the controlling factor, the compass, the animating effect in your life that sets direction for you. More with young audience.

Probably ambitions. Nothing wrong with jobs and careers. Nothing wrong with saving. But what's really aiming, what's really informing your priorities?

What will drive your priorities at the end of the day? Pray for the children in this church, and children will grow up and become youth groups on that.

You want them to see Christ as the most valuable thing in the world. That's the life, that's what you're building right now.

[48 : 51] That's the example you will set. Thank you for your example. Thank you for what you are doing to establish a gospel presence in Cambridge. May that gospel presence in Cambridge grow to other neighborhoods in Cambridge and beyond.

May the day we say, man, we've got four churches in the world. It's all many more than that. Many more than that. God's love to us informs us.

He loves you. He loves to love you. Please hear that. And I'm going to close with this quote from Charles Spurgeon. This is what Charles Spurgeon says.

Let us show to the people of the world. Everybody is watching you. wondering, why would you give? I mean, my word.

You're giving how much to a church? Why would you serve? Why are certain people today's a hot one?

[49 : 58] Why would you be in church on Sunday morning? It's your day off. What else could you be doing? Let us show to the people of the world, those people that ask us those questions, who think our religion to be slavery, becoming a Christian, very limiting, very legalistic, who start to have assumptions about our religion.

Let us show to the people of the world who think our religion to be slavery, that it is to us a delight and a joy. Let our gladness proclaim, let our gladness proclaim, that we serve a good master, one who loves to love his people.

That's fine. God, I thank you for grace that was moving by your love for, well, not just for Israel, a nation you call those, really called them out of darkness.

There was a time when Abraham didn't know you, didn't care, and he you revealed yourself and called into your own heart. And in God, you made a nation, you made a nation, not a nation to be just a nation, but a nation to be a light to the world.

And God, you've done that through Jesus Christ now. We thank you that you love us. Lord, we want to be sanctified, we want to grow in holiness, we want to reflect who Jesus is on the earth, we want our lives to be upright and godly, so that those who align us, Lord, have no standing against us.

[51 : 59] Lord, it's all fueled by how you love us. Lord, your love is generous, gracious, consistent, and unchanging.

Lord, the thing that you delight in us tomorrow morning, we wake up and we say our sins are not counted against us if we have faith in Jesus Christ and we've been humble enough to say, I need a savior and I have one in Jesus.

But tomorrow morning we can wake up and say, oh, now my sins are not counted against me, but God has made me his own. I am his child, I am a daughter or a son, and I belong to God, and he

will never leave me nor forsake me, and he will rejoice over me with sin, with delight.
Thank you that you are that kind of God, and may we serve you as that kind of God. We pray this in
Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
[53 : 31] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.