

Fall Retreat 2021: Sunday Morning Session

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 November 2021

Preacher: Kyle Huber

[0 : 00] grew up in, and he's been the lead pastor since 2002. His church is very effective, very influential in terms of their missions and their reach, and Kyle's a gifted preacher, and he's an anointed preacher because he doesn't speak of theoretical things that he has learned from seminary, but he speaks of reality that he lives because of his vital relationship with Jesus, because of his character, his life, and so I'm really eager to hear from him.

Please come up, Kyle, and preach for us one more time. Let's welcome him. Thank you. This has been a wonderful joy these days.

I've prayed for you as a church for years, pray for you regularly, love, and pray for your pastor regularly. And we'll still continue to pray, but now we're friends, not just sister churches, which means when I pray for you, I will now see faces, and what a joy that is.

I've been encouraged by the visible love for the Lord, by the intentional desire to know and to grow and to grow and to lean into.

What does that look like? What does that mean? I've been encouraged just hearing you and your stories and getting to know you. So very grateful, Sean, for this opportunity.

[1 : 58] Before we jump in, I want to recommend a book that speaks to the prominent topic of joy in hard things, trusting God during hard times.

I meant to bring it up yesterday. It's called *The Insanity of God*. The *Insanity of God*. It is, I read a lot of books, and this is in the just very top tier of powerful books, written by Nick Ripken, which was a pseudonym because when he wrote it, his identity couldn't be known.

A man, a believer who worked with humanitarian aid in hardest parts of the world, who watched the most horrible things happen to God's people, and then in his own life, and began to just struggle with where is God.

And so he spent the next couple decades going to the hardest places of the world and interviewing believers in the hardest places of the world and just asking, how do you do this?

How do you stay faithful? Why do you still believe? Why do you still believe? So the book is more of the story of that, and he prominently shares from Soviet Union, from Middle East, and from China.

[3 : 29] So it's a book that is impactful and stirring our hearts to be faithful.

As we see, our hard times are not as hard as they could be. We move in a little bit different direction this morning as we've been looking at surpassing joy.

We've been looking at how joy surpasses our uncertainties, how it's greater than our hardships, how God is working in us, even through hardship, so we can take joy in that.

This morning we will be in Philippians chapter 1, and our theme is rejoicing over God's people, rejoicing in one another within the church.

This letter is one of Paul's prison epistles. So he is writing it from the chains of prison to a church that has been faithfully engaged in ministry with him.

[4 : 46] When I was a freshman in college, I grew up, I'd never been far from home, ever. Went out to Indiana, never been out there to go to school, to Taylor University.

And I can remember at one point during the first semester, you're far from home, I didn't know anyone there. And I received a card from a couple in the church that I knew very well.

And they quoted this passage. I'd read it many times, but it was in that card as they were writing it to me that just spoke to my heart and said this passage has always been in my heart and mind as one meaningful.

We'll pick up in verse 3. I thank my God in all my remembrance of you.

Always in every prayer of mine for you, making my prayer with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

[5 : 58] And I'm sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all because I hold you in my heart.

For you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.

For God is my witness how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more with knowledge and all discernment so that you may approve what is excellent and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

Our Heavenly Father, we ask that your spirit would engage our hearts and minds in ways that are rooted in our soul, that are not quickly passing, that we might be people who are honoring to you, well used by you, taking joy in you and in one another.

In Jesus' name we ask this. Amen. Paul begins by sharing why he is thankful for this church.

[7 : 33] And we can see how meaningful this is to him. His heart is in this sharing of gratitude. He is thankful for their partnership with him in ministry.

Verse 19 tells us that this church prayed faithfully for Paul. In chapter 4 we see that they gave faithfully to him. Chapter 4 also speaks of how they shared his troubles with him.

So their hearts were with him in a way that he knew that they were committed to him. And they were involved deeply in his ministry.

In chapter 2 it describes how Epaphroditus, who was a co-worker with Paul, had been sent to him from this church.

This was a church that recognized why God establishes local churches. That we are people pulled from the world, then gathered together.

[8 : 41] That we might grow together, helping one another, deepen our relationships. That we would then fulfill gospel mission together.

We want to do something important in life.

We all want to be part of what is meaningful. We want to do something important in life.

Gospel mission makes small things meaningful. And gospel mission makes big things worthy.

It makes small things meaningful. A word to a fellow believer that you're passing and you just sense maybe the day is difficult.

[9 : 46] Just to ask them or just to pray for them. Or a note, a text to someone because they are in your heart and mind expressing gratitude.

Small things when it comes to gospel mission are very meaningful because God is in them.

And God is so wondrous that the smallest touch of God in anything makes it wondrous.

And the big things that at first may seem hard, intimidating, those things are all worthy. God's worthy of the big commitments.

Big sacrifices for who in eternity will ever be saying, Oh, I sacrifice so much for God. Think, telling people the big things we did.

[10 : 58] How small it all will seem when we see him. We have now the fruit of the gospel.

We have justification. We're being sanctified. We are adopted. The Holy Spirit does dwell in us. We are citizens of the kingdom.

The fruit of the gospel is already a part of us. It is being produced. And so for us who have so much from God, how can we not commit ourselves in partnership with one another for the sake of the gospel?

How can we not pour ourselves into what it means to serve the kingdom of God? Which means to be serving one another.

Gospel work is to love Christ and so to love what he's doing. And we know what he came to do. To seek and save the lost.

[12 : 11] To gather people for himself. To give hope to those who had no hope. To lift up the poor and the helpless and the maimed and the blind.

To minister to them. Gospel work is to love Christ and what he's doing and those who need what he's doing.

Gospel work is our comprehensive job. It's not a component. It's not a category in life. It is not so much what we do.

It's who we are. We are gospel people. We are people who literally have been transformed.

Born anew. We are the citizens. The Bible doesn't tell us to be ambassadors. He just says you are. That's who we are in the world.

[13:13] Gospel work is things that we do because that flows out of, more importantly, who we are as the people of God. Paul is thankful for their partnership in ministry.

What they understood. And so what they pour themselves into. And he's thankful for God's ongoing work in them. Verse 6. What a great encouragement to all God's people.

I am sure. Going back to the language of our first session. What can we be certain of? I am certain of this.

He who began a good work. Will bring it to completion. At the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is working to make us a people who are fit for an eternity with him.

So God is committed to our completion. That we might be what scripture says. If any theologian was just to bring up this idea on their own.

[14:31] Do you know one day you'll actually be like Jesus? How heretical that would be. How heretical it sounds. The problem is it's actually in the Bible. Otherwise, you can't say a believer is actually going to be like Jesus.

That's taking it a bit too far. And yet, that's what the Bible tells us. When we see him, we will be like him. Not that we will all be little gods.

But we will be like Jesus. The perfect man whose love for God is complete. And we're told that is sure.

We know that will happen. If it's begun, it will end that way. This sure result should have impacts in us.

One, it gives us fresh joy in the daily striving to be what God wants. To not be half-hearted.

Because we can be worn down with it.

[15:38] We can be discouraged as we see ourselves. And the enemy, just working, you'll never be. You'll never really change.

Just poking and prodding at us to be more aware of our sins and failures than God's grace. And here, Paul wants us to be more aware of God's grace than our failures.

And so we can take fresh joy in even ongoing struggles with habitual sins and with patterns. And things that we thought we had kind of gotten away from and then just erupted in our life.

And where did that come from? We have fresh joy just to dig in, just to push it beside. Not to dwell in guilt. To confess it and move forward.

Because we know we will be perfected. And if we can have fresh joy in our striving, that means we can have fresh patience with fellow believers because it's true of them too.

[16:44] They will be perfected. Their annoying sins will be purified.

Confidence in our completion is part of our motivation for mission.

Because verse 6 tells us the day of the Lord is coming. There is a king. This past Wednesday, I was teaching in our church on the statement of faith, which our beloved brother, Sean, was such a significant part of developing.

And the section, I had a very plumb section that I was teaching on, which is the efficacy and exaltation of Christ.

And if there's any two sections that you could be excited and are fun to teach, it's his efficacy, his effectiveness, and his exaltation.

[17:55] His exaltation that he is raised, ascended, and reigning. And as I was working through this, I pointed out we have two pictures of Jesus that we celebrate, rightly so.

The beautiful baby in the manger. Jesus humbling himself in coming. The sacrificial Savior on the cross.

And we rightly exalt them and speak of implications. There's a picture the Bible gives us that you rarely hear believers speak about or think of, but we should celebrate it as well.

Revelation 19, Jesus on the white horse. The one who comes in power and majesty and makes all things right.

The day of the Lord is coming. And the day actually will be soon when the day of the Lord's coming will be an historical event.

[19:05] We will speak of it when that day happened. And you will see it. Either you will be plucked out of the ground and your body joined to your soul.

Or you'll be standing there watching that happen. One way or the other, your eyes will see it.

And on that day, everything will be made right. In the world and in us.
Paul's thankful for their partnership and mission. He's thankful for God's ongoing work in them. And thirdly, he's thankful for his thankfulness results in then a heart filled with affection.
Because he's so grateful for what God is doing and how they are serving. Affection flows forth from him. His true love for them.

[20 : 20] Verse 8. For God is my witness. How I yearn for you. That he would say that God is my witness. Means that as he was starting to write, I yearn for you.

He felt that they might just pass over. He wanted them to truly know it. He declares it's right. That he has joy and thankfulness over them. It's the appropriate response. The appropriate perspective he should have for these fellow believers is affection.
The appropriate attitude is joy over them. For what God has done in them. For what God is doing. And what he has for them.
Because they shared the gospel with him. They shared Christ with him. They shared ministry with him. And we need to take these realities.

[21 : 27] And make them central in how we interact with one another. In the church at large. And in the church gathered locally.

The central realities of the same blood has covered our sins.
The same eternity that we will share. The same mission. We can be frustrated with fellow believers. We can be annoyed at those locally. At some points just want to say. Just get over it and move on. Please.

Please. Not saying that's ever in my church. I've heard in other churches that happens. We can be so disappointed in the church at large by what we see.

[22 : 33] Not just teachers teaching what is obscene before God.

But then throngs of people following them. To the way we disagree.
There are things worth disagreeing over. The way we disagree. And yet. If they are in Christ. I think we all have faith to believe. In heaven none of us will be disagreeing or angry with each other. What Christian in this world honestly thinks.

When we get to heaven. The believers that you struggle with so much now. That we'll have anything but love for them. If we know that. Then there's a responsibility to labor toward that.

[23 : 40] Now. And so whenever we enter the assembly of God's people. Like we do this morning. To. The.

Either bringing in the busyness of the week. Or bringing in. I serve in this way. So you know. I've got to get this done. I have to show up here. To make sure. We're realizing.

The preciousness of. Who is here. And what is happening. What we share together. Part of what I pray. Every Sunday morning.

Early. I'm asking. Lord. As we gather. And when we see each other. May just affection fill our hearts. As we're reminded. That we love each other.

How good it is. To be together. May that fill us. We are to rejoice. Over. God's people.

[24 : 41] God's work. Because of God's work in them. Because of what we share together. So Paul shares how he. Joyfully.

Prayers for the church. Verses 9 and 11. He already. Told us in verse 4. That he makes his prayers. With joy. Verse 9.

It is. My prayer. That your love. May abound more and more. With knowledge. And all discernment. He prays first. That their love. Would keep growing.

Abounding more and more. The increase of love. Is the essential mark. Of maturity. You cannot. Grow maturity. If you're not growing. In love. And the apostle Paul. Makes that very clear. You can grow. In theological. Intellect. And not be mature.

[25 : 36] You can do. Big things. And it means nothing. Love. Is part of. What makes those things. True maturity.

And pleasing to God. Whether it's. Works. Or understanding. Love must be. A part of it. That it's abounding. More and more. It continually grows.

The. In Corinthians. Where it describes. Love. And then it ends. With just a statement. And love never fails.

The. The word there. The most literal. Way. To read it is. Love never fails. Off. It's the picture of.

A flower. The blossom. That never wilts. The blossom. Never falls. Off the plant. It just remains. And so. It's translated. It never fails.

[26 : 32] It's the idea of. The beauty of it. Just keeps going. And so. Whenever we have loved. Someone really well. I think. Wow. I was so good. To my wife today.

I mean. I took care of things. I knew she wanted. Without her asking. And I didn't really feel like it. I'm such a good husband. I think.

For the rest of the night. It should be about me. The Bible says. No. We always have. As Paul describes it. In Romans 13.

We have a debt of love. Meaning. We've never loved enough. No matter how. Much we've loved someone. The very next moment. You owe more love. That's how we're to think of love.

As if it's a debt. That we must. Always pay. Love is not only the great mark. Of maturity. It's a great motivator. For it. Love for God.

[27 : 30] Is what pushes us into it. It's interesting. How love. Is. The great fruit. And evidence of maturity. It's also what motivates it. What causes us to keep.

Pressing in. Because we really do. Love. God. And so he's praying. That this. Which is so fundamental. The most important thing.

For them. Would keep. Growing. He mentions two ingredients. Of that growing love. What. What is in growing love. And. You might not.

First think of these. But. It's what. We're told by Paul. Knowledge and discernment. It requires. Knowledge and discernment. Knowledge.

I mean. What is love. And. And. People think they know about love. We talk about it. And. There are aspects of love. That come naturally. We naturally love our children.

[28 : 27] But there's parts of love. We don't get. Hence. Paul's description and list. Of what's needed. We mix in our emotions.

And can think it's love. We mix in our expectations. We mix in our selfishness. We need biblical clarity.

About love. So that's what he says. He prays. For knowledge. That. You would truly see and understand. What. Is. Love. And that you would have discernment.

Meaning. How do you use this love? How does it play out? Right now. In this situation. What does it mean to love this person? Sometimes what it means to love someone is.

Easy and obvious. Other times it's. Hard to figure out. How do I love this person? We need. Discernment. When. Friends or family frustrate us. When a co-worker misuses us.

[29 : 28] What does love do? And. The help is. To always go back. To a gospel centeredness. Somehow. Whatever the answer is.

Of what love would do now. It has to be tied to. Gospel agenda. It has to do with. What Christ's intention. For the world. Is his intention.

For this person. Love is. Thinking of. Someone's eternal best. What is the most important. For them. So he. He prays that.

Their love would keep growing. And. He prays. That their godliness. Would keep growing. In verse 10. So that you may prove. What is excellent. And be pure. And blameless. For the day of Christ. That they would be a. Godly. Holy people. A people. Fit. For communion. And life. With God. These are lofty prayers.

[30 : 22] This is what Paul. Is praying for them. His prayers. Not dominated. Lord. Make them. Stop doing this. Make them.

Give more to me. He. He's praying. For who they are. And because.

These were. So lofty prayers. That were at the heart. Of God. For them. These prayers. Kept stirring up. Affection. More and more. It kept his heart.

Bound to them. So as we are. Praying. For one another. For what. God would. Have happened. It is uniting. Our hearts.

To one another. Our views. Of each other. Need to be based. On the gospel. Not our experience. And that's.

[31 : 16] Rather revolutionary. When we see people. We have an impression. We. We think certain things.

About them. People. We don't even know. You're in line. At Starbucks. And you're having. All kinds of impressions. About who. Who's in the line. What they look like. What they're wearing.

How they order. What they order. Are you kidding me? How they interact. With the server. Or with other people. We're creating. All sorts.

Of. Opinions. How slow. They are. You're waiting. To now. To get your money out. We've been in line. All this time.

You're supposed to have. Your money ready. You don't start. Fumbling now. Things like that. Wow. Again. I'm not speaking.

[32 : 12] Myself. I'm speaking of the confessions. I hear from God's people. But we have all these. Impressions. That come from our experience. Versus.

What we think about people. Is what the gospel informs us. Of. If they're a fellow believer. Or there's someone who doesn't know Christ. Now.

Our experience is part of the reality. And. It rightly informs. Us. But there's something more fundamental. Than our experience with them. It is.

Christ's agenda. For them. What the gospel. Says about them. So how do we apply. Paul's joy. Over. God's people. Three common.

Simple things. Really. Or. Straightforward things. Perhaps. Not always simple. First. Be more careful. How you think about. Fellow believers.

[33 : 10] If there's something. That needs to be. Written in the sky. Be. Careful. How you think about. Fellow.

Believers. Because someone. Who loves them so much. He entered the world. And shed blood for them.

Is overhearing. What we think. And what we say. Guard against. Seeing them. Without.

Gospel. Eyes. Seeing them. Just as the world. Sees them. They do this. They say that. They act this way. We just see them.

By. The externals. Of our senses. That's how the world. Sees people. We. We need to see them. More thoughtfully.

[34 : 05] Than. The world does. Through. God's. Eyes. If. The church. If. The church. If. 2020. Did. Something. For the church.

It showed us. That. The cracks. Beneath the surface. More than we had thought. We thought. We were more united.

We had more common. And. I mean. These became a thing. There are people. Who left churches. Because of these. Imagine that. The gathering. Of the people. Of God. The people. In the world. Who are.

Our forever. Family. And we actually. We had fights. Over these. People left churches.

[34 : 58] Over. These. Now. I. Hate. These. Never thought. I'd say it. Never thought. It'd be a thing. Things have been revealed.

To us. About what's beneath. The surface. How we need to. Reaffirm. How we think. About each other. Do we see. Fellow members.

For their weaknesses. And their offenses. Against us. Which can be real. And the pain of it. Do we see. One another. Simply as people.

Passing through our lives. Yes. The bigger a church is. The easier that can be. Yeah. Yeah. I kind of see them. Maybe I know their name. Or. You know. They go to our church.

And. Pass each other Sunday. And if we're good Christians. We'll even say hello. Oh. What became. Embarrassing.

[35 : 54] And difficult. When you grow up in a church. For decades. And everyone knows who you are. You've lived in the church. All your life. Now you're a pastor. You.

And I engage. Before the service. I'm going around. Saying hello. To people. As many people as possible. Talking. And then you get married. Which means. Oh Debbie.

This is. I have no idea. All these people. Who I know. And talk to. I have no idea. What their names are. Which you can hide. Until your wife is with you.

And you have to. This is Debbie. And you hope they pick up the cue. And you are. And why don't you say it. So I know who you are. Can be easy.

Just believers. Or people that pass through our life. No. They're. They're. They are. Our forever family. And we can't love. And be engaged with everyone equally. But how we're thinking of them.

[36 : 51] Who they are. In our lives. Paul saw fellow believers. Through the lens of the gospel. I am sure of this. That he who began a good work in you.

[43 : 47] Of your heart. For us. Whatever is. The full measure. Of what we should take. From this weekend. That is what. You would bring to us.

That you would. Encourage us. By helping us see. Some early impact. That our hearts. Would be able to. Take joy. In seeing.

That you are helping us. What seems hard. May we just keep looking at you. And that you would help us. And Father.

I ask. That you would meet. This precious congregation. That you would build in them.

Deep rootedness. Maturity. Broad love. And then bring to them. Not a few. But many.

[44 : 48] Whom you. Would save. Bring. So many. That they would be able to. Give birth. To other.

Beautiful churches. Of people. Who love you. Protect them. And build them up. In the name of Jesus. We pray. Amen.

Thank you. Kyle. If you would stay up here. For a little bit. I am just going to. Thank you. Kyle. I was really eager. For this pairing. And for you to come.

And be our speaker. Because I love our church. And. Wanted them to be served well. And. But also because. I love you. And. Wanted you to meet. My church family.

And. And. And I. Thank you for serving us so well. Reminding us of the surpassing joy. We have in Christ. And. I can attest to the fact. That speaking at retreats.

[45 : 45] Is not easy. For a number of reasons. Because even when you speak on passages. You preached on in the past. Because you grow as a preacher. Over the years. And because it's a new context.

And different groups of people. It takes significant reworking. And doing four sermons in one weekend. Is not easy. And. And two. Because you don't know the people. They don't know you. It's hard to.

Preach with. Affection. And love. And passion. The same way you do with your own local church. But. But here in this case. It was clear. That you have prayed for our church.

And. And. And you love our church. And. And even in. The. Between times. When you're not preaching. You are ministering to our church. Counseling different members.

And so. Thank you for. For that. That. I'm profoundly grateful. For how you cared. For the church family. That I love. This weekend. So. Here's a small gift. Thank you.

[46 : 42] Thank you so much. Yeah. Let's give a round of applause. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. It's an excuse.