

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

February 17, 2019

SPEAKER

Bryan Nelson

SERIES

Overwhelmed

PART

4

TITLE

Help, I'm Addicted

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 63



© 2019 Providence Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)

Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.

Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.

Well, as Daniel told you at the beginning of this service, we are four weeks into a sermon series called Overwhelmed. This week, our topic is Addiction. Before we jump into that though and in Bryan's absence, I want to remind us of some things that he said the very first week that we gathered under this topic about what we want to do as a church each of the weeks as we address these difficult topics that we've been talking through.

Number one, we want to expose our brokenness. We want to be honest about the reality that things are not as they should be. Number two, we want to expose Christ's power. We have a hope in someone who is stronger than our brokenness. Then, thirdly, as a church, we want to expose places of help. You're not alone, and there are great resources that are available to you including the community of faith that we represent as his church.

As we look at addiction today, these are also at the forefront of what I hope to do in the time that I have. There's simply no way that we can adequately cover every possible angle of each of these week's topics and today is really no different. What I want to do with our time this morning is to try and frame a conversation about addiction in a larger biblical context. This isn't going to be a sermon about alcoholism or drug abuse or gambling or pornography. They're the usual culprits culturally when addiction is mentioned.

However, I want you to know that this morning is for the alcoholic. It's for the drug addict, the habitual gambler, or the person that's caught in a cycle of sexual sin, but it's also for everyone who is consumed by maintaining the image controlled by their cellphone, riveted to social media or obsessed with playing Fortnite. Addiction is a difficult topic because experts across various areas simply don't agree as to what it actually is or what the source of it is. Some people believe that it's genetic, and some people believe that addiction is a disease while others take a psychological approach, and they argue that addiction is an emotional or behavioral response to other factors in our lives.

The truth is that addiction is likely all of these things in some shape, form or fashion. I was reading this week, and there was a website where people who face all kinds of addictions were writing an answer to a question was it feel like to be an addict or to be to be living in an addiction. One guy said this. He said it's like digging for buried treasure in the thing that I want is that treasure and I dig and I find that treasure, and I think, "Hey, I'm going to dig a little further and find a little more treasure, and then then I find that treasure and I dig a little further and there's treasure there and I think well I'm going to dig a little further. The next thing, I know I look back and I've dug myself into a hole and I can't get out of it, but I can't stop digging."

Pretty powerful picture of what it feels like to be trapped in a cycle of something that you cannot seem to get a grip on or overcome, but I believe there is a way out. But I think that it starts with understanding something about how we're made, not about what is wrong. In our core, I believe that we were made to be satisfied. Fundamentally, we were made to be satisfied.

As we talk about addiction this morning, I don't really want to try and convince you that what you're doing is wrong if you find yourself in a cycle of addiction. I actually want to show you that there is something infinitely better. I want to do it by starting with Psalm 63. If you want to open your Bible, you can do so. If you do not have a Bible, there should be one on the seat back or under the seat in front of you, and we would love for you to take that as our gift to you if you don't have the word, but we're going to be looking in Psalm 63.

This is what David writes. Oh god, you are my god. Earnestly, I seek you. My soul thirsts for you as my flesh faints for you as in a dry and weary land where there's no water. So I've looked upon you in the sanctuary beholding your power and glory because your love is better than life. My lips will praise you, so I will bless you as long as I live, and in your name, I will lift up my hands. My soul would be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips when I remember you upon my bed and meditate on you in the watches of the night for you've been my help, and in the shadow of your wing, I will sing for joy.

My soul clings to you. Your right hand upholds me, but those who seek to destroy my life, they shall go down into the depths of the earth. They shall be given over to the power of the sword and shall be a portion for jackals, but the king will rejoice in God. All who swears by him shall exalt for the mouths of liars will be stopped. I believe Psalm 63 is a picture of finding ultimate satisfaction in God.

I think that's what David says when he says your love is better than life, my soul will be satisfied in you as of rich and fat food. I'll find my delight in you, and I'll praise you. Now, why in the world could David speak of satisfaction in God this way, I think, because, fundamentally, David knew that we were actually made to be satisfied and that satisfaction was meant to be found in god and that's how we were made.

If you look at Genesis, we were actually created. God created us to be satisfied in him, to find satisfaction. We were made by him, and we were made for him, and we will only find ultimate satisfaction in him. When god made man, he made man in His image to reflect who God was and he placed him in a garden, and he gave him ... God gave man stewardship over all that he made in God's place basically to stand in God's place over all that had been created. Then, he made a declaration of affirmation over man.

He looked at man above all he created, and he said, "This is very good." They were accepted, and they were satisfied and who they were. We know this because the scripture tells us in Genesis that after God made them and placed them in the garden and gave them the command to stand in his place and rule in dominion over all he'd made and they declared goodness over them, they were naked, and they were not ashamed. In other words, they were content in who they were.

They were satisfied to the full. This is why Paul would remind us in Romans chapter 11 from him and through him and to him are all things. It comes from this fundamental truth that we were actually made to be satisfied. To long for satisfaction is actually a reflection of how we were made. When you long for satisfaction, that is part of God's design for you, but we have a problem. We have a problem.

We were made to recognize and to reflect and to be drawn to glory found in the one who made us, and be satisfied in it, but without believing that the true source of our satisfaction comes from the one who made us. We begin to seek it and everything else.

This is what the reality of the scripture teaches us even in Genesis at the fall. Sin leads us to seek satisfaction in anything else. We were made to find it in God, but sin leads us to seek it in anything and everything else. Genesis chapter three is a sorrowful account of the fall of man and what plagues us today is found in what transpired in this page, just three chapters in to the Word of God. This is what the writer of Genesis tells us about the fall and about sin.

Starting with verse four, the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.” To give a context, Adam and Eve were in the garden. They were given ... Everything was for them and for their delight, the scripture tells us, except for a single tree that God commanded them to not to eat of. They find themselves next to this tree. In doing so, they find Satan there in the form of a serpent, and he begins to question Adam and Eve about what God has said is true about the tree, and he causes them in this exchange to begin to doubt God’s goodness to them. This is why he says to the woman, “You will not surely die for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you’ll be like God knowing good and evil.”

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, saw that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and she ate. She gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate. Then, their eyes were opened. They knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together to clothe themselves. Sin confuses the truth. It turns it on its head. It makes what is true seem not true and what is not true seem true. It makes it really hard to see what’s right. It convinces us that what is more appealing is actually the lesser thing, the thing that’s not good for us.

I want to see if I can get you guys to see how this works. If you’re a child or a child at heart, then you’re welcome to respond. I want you to look at two images, and I want you to tell me what’s more appealing, the first image French fries, or image number, two broccoli. Which is more appealing? The French fries, right? Sin confuses the truth. One of these things will lead you to heart disease. The other is one of the healthiest vegetables you can eat.

Sin confuses the truth. It makes it really hard to see. I’m not trying to make light of the reality but what I want you to see is that it flips everything on its head. What happened in the garden is we were meant to be satisfied and guide, but sin crept in and caused us to believe that satisfaction found in God was not good enough, and in fact not only that, but God was actually attempting to keep us from pleasure. That’s really our struggle with God even now. How can what you say is true that thing that I want surely that I know what’s right that’s better than you are?

We think that God is actually trying to keep us from pleasure, but the opposite is true. He's actually trying to give us everlasting pleasure. That's the promise of the scripture. CS Lewis said it this way in the way to glory. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards that are promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong but too weak.

We're half-hearted creatures fooling about with drink and sex and ambition while infinite joy is offered to us. Like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by an offer of a holiday at the sea. We're far too easily pleased.

Sin confuses us, and it creates internal conflict about what is more satisfying. Like Adam and Eve, we begin to doubt God's goodness and believe our ultimate contentment is found apart from him, and we may not even acknowledge that God is real or good. We simply now because of the fall and because of sin in our lives, we seek satisfaction in everything else even if we don't know God or if we do, we doubt his goodness and we believe contentment is found somewhere else.

We race to imaginary high towers for safety and security like the man that Brian has told us about before in Proverbs 18. The name of the Lord is the strong tower. The righteous run to it, and they're safe. But a rich man's wealth is his strong city and like a high wall in his imagination. We think that the thing that will bring us pleasure or safety is this other thing other than God and it's actually it's wrong. It's in our mind. It's a false sense of safety. It's kind of like believing a nylon tent will protect you in grizzly country.

It seems absurd and yet we feel a false sense of safety from something that is lesser. When we find ourselves in that place, sin in general brings it on, and addiction is no different. It flips the truth on its head. It makes what you want to be this desire for the lesser thing and confuses the truth and hides it in darkness. The effects are devastating. I want you to watch this video right now of a testimony from a family here in our church.

Speaker 2: I have a history of kidney stones. I've suffered with issues with kidney stones since I was 17 or 18 years old. In the year of 2011, had several kidney stones, had several procedures to remove kidney stones, to help pass them and, in that time, had large amounts of opiates prescribed to me for the pain. Before I knew it, I couldn't go a day without them.

Eventually, led to me stealing packages from UPS where I worked at the time that I intercept awhile at the sorting facility, broke into them and swiped oxycodone, hydrocodone on a couple different occasions and, yeah. It grew and grew the amount of opiates that I was taking in a day. There was no end to it. I'd like to say that in some of the prayer meetings that I had with other men that that's a time that the Holy Spirit speak within me and then I said, "Hey, I'm struggling here. I need help."

But that's not how it come to light. It came to light April 11th, 2012 is a date that I don't think I'll ever forget. I was brought into a meeting at UPS and was asked had I ever taken anything from UPS packaging. The FBI was involved, the DA's office. Whenever they asked me the question had I ever taken anything from UPS packaging [inaudible] said, "Yes, I have."

At that time, it's like God hit me in the face with a two by four, just praying like, "Lord, do whatever you got to do to me and me. Just preserve my family. Just preserve my wife and my kids." I'll walk whatever I have to.

Speaker 3: One of our kids is type 1 diabetic. I remember when he first told me, of course, it didn't sink in right away but my first thought was like, "What are we going to do? All of our insurance is going to be gone." Just not knowing how we were going to move forward.

Speaker 2: Through his grace, the FBI allowed UPS to handle it in-house. I lost my job there. They fired me. They did not press charges. The DA did not pursue anything.

Speaker 3: I would say that when I found out on that date, April 11th, 2012, I felt like my whole world fell apart. But now looking back on it, I realized that everything that was fake fell apart, but the things that we've gained from walking this road to learning who Christ is personally is priceless.

Speaker 2: Not only did he preserve us, but he brought us to a whole new place. God extended His grace to us, and we just had a place now. We can't help but to extend it out.

Bryan Nelson: Everything that was fake ... Everything that was fake fell apart. Sin, addiction, it confuses the truth. The thing about addiction and about sin in general is it's wearisome. It promises joy but, ultimately, it robs you of it. Then, it replaces it with hollowness or with guilt or with an unsatisfied appetite that says just a little bit more, just a little bit more will do, but it doesn't. Even if and when you begin to hate it that very thing that you long for, you'll then find that you're chained to it. It's never satisfying, not really.

In Psalm 63, I think that David felt a little bit of this tension in his own heart. We see him proclaimed that God alone satisfies, but we also see him wrestling with his own heart to believe it. In verse six, David says he remembers god upon his bed and meditates him in the watches of the night.

Now, to understand the significance maybe of what he's saying here, it would help us to know a little bit about how we believe this Psalm was pinned and what is believed is that this Psalm was pinned when David was in the Judean wilderness. There were two times in David's life when he found himself in the wilderness. The first time was before he was King, and he was in the wilderness because Saul, the first king of Israel, was hunting him down like an animal. He fled to the Judean wilderness to hide.

The second time in David's life that he was in the Judean wilderness, he was king. He fled to the wilderness because his own son, Absalom, was hunting him down like a wild animal. He hid. Regardless of which time in David's life this Psalm was pinned, this is the reality. He was under duress. In a sense in this moment of duress when he could not sleep and he lay awake and he meditate on God, he wrestled with his heart to hold on to the truths that he knew were real. This will become really important for us in a minute when I give you guys some practical applications to walk away.

But for now, I want to ask this question. Why would David be convinced that he could believe that God alone was satisfying and only in him would he find satisfaction? David writes in verse two. The answer I think is there. He writes in verse two. I've looked up on your sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. David had seen the glory of God and that had changed everything. It had caused him to now know that he must wrestle with his heart to believe what he'd seen and knows is true.

Without a vision of God's glory, we're left to seek satisfaction in everything else. Remember, we were made for it. We were made for God's glory. We were made to recognize it and to celebrate it. We were made to rejoice in it to long for it and to praise God for it. But with an absence of understanding the glory of God, we seek that kind of satisfaction in anything else and we glory in things that are lesser.

How do we catch a glimpse of the vision of God's glory like David? Well, for us, we have a remarkable picture. The glory of God is in the picture of the person of Jesus Christ and His gospel. He's freely given that to us in his word. Because of that, even though God made us to be satisfied in him alone, but sin clouded that vision and causes us to seek that satisfaction in other places because of the glory of God and Jesus Christ, Jesus rescues us. Then, he redeems our desires.

He rescues us and redeems our desires. What a gift. In Romans 8, Paul speaks about ... Romans 8 is such a rich passage of Scripture but to get there, you got to get through six and seven which will tear your heart up, but you get to Romans 8 and he talks about what Jesus came to do. How does God rescue us from this and how does he redeem our desires so that we can find satisfaction in what we were made to be satisfied in?

In Romans 8 verses 10 and 11, he says this. 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 Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who dwells in you. God says when Jesus comes, he does radical surgery, and he changes our heart's disposition, and he places his spirit in us.

Jesus did what we could not do. Jesus actually lived a life that was fully satisfied in the glory of the Father. This is why it's so important that we understand we need Jesus. Jesus came to this earth as a man just like you and I. He was faced with all of the temptations the scripture tells us that are before us as well and yet he kept his heart centered on the glory of the Father.

In doing so, he went to a cross because we couldn't because our eyes had shifted away, and sin caused us to turn truth on its head. Jesus went to a cross to take the punishment that was really meant for us because sin had pulled our hearts away, and He gave His life for us. Then, literally, the dramatic supernatural happened. God then gives us Jesus's righteousness. This is the heartbeat of the gospel. When we believe that this is what Jesus did for us, he takes our sin, the things that we struggle with and wrestle with. He gives us his righteousness.

We're no longer a slave to it, but here's the reality. It's still a battle. The fight isn't over. As long as we live in this world, it's a world that is burdened under the effects of sin. The weight of sin will be tempted at every turn to yield our desires to our flesh, will be tempted to turn our eyes away from Jesus, and it'll be a life-long battle but we don't have to lose heart for this reason. Jesus didn't come to show us how to live a life that's satisfied in God.

We don't need a model to fashion our lives after. We need a Savior who rescues us from sure death. We cannot do it on our own. In the heartbeat of the gospel is that Jesus did it for us. He did it so we can fight. If you're here today and you believe that Jesus is Lord and yet in your heart of hearts, you're wrestling with sin and you're plagued with addiction over any kind of thing, know that Jesus gives you the ability to fight. He's placed his spirit in you for that reason, so the truth is no longer upside down, but it's seen clearly.

We wrestle with our hearts like David to refocus our affections and we ask God for help. It's why David could cry out in Psalm 51 after great sin in his own heart, God created me a clean heart and renew a right spirit in me. I can't do it on my own. I can't do it for myself. You must do it. When our hearts are rightly adoring God, he restores our affections, but he does something even more dramatic.

He actually orders our affections toward all other things. In other words, a lot of times, we find ourselves addicted to things that actually aren't bad in and of themselves. Now, there's plenty out there that is, but I'm talking about the vast majority of us. If we have a proclivity to race after something, it's probably something that rightly understood is not bad for us, and yet our hearts, they throw satisfaction toward it.

When God comes and he rescues us from our sin, he now reorders our life where we can actually have affection toward those things in a right way. That's the promise of the word of God. God stepped into this world for that reason. Jesus offers that help to us and he says, "Fight," fight because I've come alongside you and I'll give this to you.

As we close out this morning, I want to leave you with four things that I think understanding these truths will help us to put this into practice whether you're just regularly affected by sin or you find yourself in a deep cycle of addiction. These four things are things that I would encourage you to consider.

The first is this. Let's turn to Jesus and confess our longing to be satisfied. God made you to find satisfaction. Your heart is it pulls you to look for that in everything else. Confess it. Run to Jesus. If you do not start here, then everything else beyond it makes no sense. If you're here this morning and you confess faith in Jesus but you're wrestling under the weight of a sin that you cannot get out from under, run to Jesus, and confess it. He already knows.

No one else in your entire life may know what's going on in your heart and in your life, but God does. He loved you. He loves you. If you're caught in a cycle of addiction, listen to me. Jesus loves you. He loves you, and His forgiveness is sufficient. Rest in it. Run to him, and confess it. Jesus says in John 8, "If you abide in my word, then you will truly be my disciples and you'll know the truth, and the truth will set you free. If the son sets you free, you are free indeed." What a rich promise.

If we turn to Jesus and confess our longings to be satisfied, then secondly, we need to cling to his promises of forgiveness and freedom. We must hold on to what he says is true about the gospel. Otherwise, we will let sin, and we'll let addiction convince us of another truth. If you're here and you've confessed Jesus as your Lord and Savior but you wrestle in your heart with some deep dark sin, then the reality of your life is that you probably are setting here thinking God can't forgive me of that. How can he forgive me? I keep running back to it. There's no way that the Lord will actually forgive me of it. I can't seem to get out from under it and he can't rescue me. That is not true.

You must cling to his promises. It's why we love the Bible. What are some of those promises? There are promises like Philippians 1. I'm sure of this that he who began a good work in you is faithful to bring it to completion. God will do it. Romans 10, just the reality of salvation in and of itself. If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved unconditional.

This is a promise of God given to you for you to cling to or an invitation like Matthew 11 verse 28. Come to me all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Guys, run to Jesus and confess your longing to be satisfied. Cling to his promises of forgiveness and freedom. Then, let's bring our struggles into the light.

John 12, Jesus says, "I've come to the world as light so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness." Darkness is a comfortable place for us to keep the things that we don't want other people to see. It's why we build houses with closets, basements, backyard sheds, and privacy fences. It's where we hide all the stuff that's there that we don't want other people to know about. That's the way that our hearts feel about the things that we wrestle with.

God says bring them into the light. Here's the reality. You saw in Jeremy's testimony if you are unwilling to, God will. Do you understand that? He already knows what you wrestle with, and he loves you too much to leave you there. If you will not bring it to light, God will. He'll shine a light into the darkness, and he will expose it for your good because he's also gracious and compassionate.

Let's bring our struggles into the light. In doing so, we begin to rob them of some of their power. We're able to shine a light and see triggers that lead us to seek lesser pleasures. God allows us to begin to wrestle with those things. Remember, it's a fight. We're going to wrestle with these things, but we do it by bringing it in the light. We wrestle with our own heart to hold on and believe the truths that are there.

Your struggles may not go away but fight, and fight, fight not by putting gloves on, but by resting in God. How's that for an admonition to do something? Don't fight by putting gloves on. Fight by resting in God and wrestling with your own heart to the truths that he says. There's been a rash of sickness that's going around why Brian isn't preaching today, colds, flus, pneumonia. How do you fight those things? Rest. Your best offense is to stop and let the medicine work.

You cannot wheel yourself out of addiction. If you could, you likely wouldn't be in it to begin with. Rest in the Lord, and let his power work. Then, finally, let's commit not to struggle alone. You are not alone. You've got Jesus on your side, but God also graces with other people. You have a church who wants to wrestle with you, alongside you. You have life groups. We have doctors and physicians, and we've got experts in brain and in psychology to help us to understand the depth of who we are, so we can fight.

Guys, don't fight alone. It's why Paul would admonish the Galatians to bear one another's burdens. We're meant to walk this together, so let's turn to Jesus and confess it. Let's hold on to his promises. Let's be diligent to bring those struggles into the light, and let's be diligent to fight together.

In doing so, let's lean on the grace of God and believe in his word, the promises that he said. You are not alone. It will be a fight, but God by His grace has set you free so that you can fight and you can know the truth. Let's pray.

Father, may we believe this. God, may we believe your word more than we even believe what our heart tells us in those moments of darkness. God, your promises that you would set us free from the sin that so easily entangles us, and you've done that through the gift of your son, Jesus Christ. God, would you help us to be honest with you about where we are and what we're struggling with? Would you help us to believe what you said is true? Would you help us to bring those things into the light and to let others walk with us? God, would you let us rejoice like David in Psalm 63? Because your love is greater than life, my lips will praise you.

Now, Lord, as we turn to lift our voices to you, may we do so with hearts that are proclaiming the truth of what we may be wrestling with internally, and may we find satisfaction in you and live in light of it. God, we thank you and we pray these things in Christ's name, Amen.



© 2019 Providence Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)
Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.
Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.