

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

October 6, 2019

SPEAKER

Brian Frost

SERIES

I Found Joy

PART

7

TITLE

I Found Joy In Being Different

SCRIPTURE

Philippians 2:12-18



© 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Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold.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, it's great to see all of you. I have some great news for all of us. And that is that Christ rose from the dead. When he rose from the dead, everything changed. You see, prior to him doing so, he endorsed the Old Testament is absolutely true, and he authorized the new to be written for us as a record of what it really looks like of how we lived and then how we are to live in response to how he lived. And for 41 years now on this date, this church called Providence has opened the Bible every Sunday now for 41 years to hear what God would say. And on this 41st anniversary, we're going to do that same thing. So if you're new with us, we're glad that you're here. We are people who believe in Jesus Christ who died and rose again. And we believe that the Bible is his authoritative word. It's a kind word. It's for us. He is for us. And so I hope that this time will be encouraging to you.

There's a lot of people as you know who have not and do not love the Bible. Hunched over his desk years and years ago with pen knife in hand, Thomas Jefferson, he began to read and slice with his knife the different pages and sections of the Bible that he didn't like. You can see that actual Bible here on the screen. And what he sought to do was to create a version to his own liking. And so when he found within the Bible things he didn't like such as the wrath of God and the reality of hell, well he just cut them out. And when he found miracles that God intervening in the world to do things that you and I, that we cannot do, he just cut those out because he didn't believe in miracles.

And when he came to passages, even like the one that we're going to read this morning, that talks about sin and God's call upon our life to repent of sin and God's righteousness to hold us accountable if we do not repent of our sin. Well, he cut those out as well.

And so just imagine the unwanted fragments of God's written word scattered at the base of his trash can. And if you're like me, you rightly gasp of such a thought of such arrogance and such pride. And yet I want to encourage us as a church family, not only today, but for the rest of our life, not to share his offense by ignoring in our Bible the very passages he sought to remove from his. They must be applied, and they must be read, and they must be obeyed. And so let me pray for us as we read one of these passages.

Father in heaven, we love you. We need your help. So I pray that as we prepare our hearts to take the Lord's supper, we ask God, would you address our hearts first? Would you, through kindness, would you lead us to repentance? And would you help us to see this morning the absolute greatness, the glory of Jesus Christ who rose from the dead after living a righteous life in order to save us from our sin? Would you help us to see that he is perfection of what we're about to read? That there's nobody who has ever walked through earth like him. And so we look to you in faith. Would you speak through weakness and give us grace? We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

So in your Bibles, I would love for you to look with me at the second chapter of Philippians, and we'll be in verses 12 through 18. If you're new with us, we're just walking right through the book. The book talks a lot about joy, which is amazing because the man who actually wrote it, his name is Paul. He's sitting in prison. He doesn't know if he'll ever get out, and he doesn't know if he will be martyred for his faith. He is uncertain about his future and yet he is rejoicing in his present because he is near Jesus, in particular in his heart. He's walking with Christ, and Christ is, as we'll read, is walking with him. And he is so desirous of the church back in Philippi. There's a city, it's called Philippi, and there's a church that he had gone to about 10 years prior to him writing this. And he had planted the church. He'd share the gospel. People trusted Christ. They got together. Now these people hear that he's in prison and he has physical needs, and so they take a love offering and they send it to him. And when he receives it, he's so overwhelmed with thanksgiving that he writes them a thank you note, and we call it Philippians.

And within the note, he is so desire is that they're in Philippi, that they as a community of faith, that they would live in a manner worthy of the gospel. We actually read that in 1:27 he says, "Whatever happens," he says, "let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel." And we talked a few weeks ago about the word worthy is really a term of measurement. If I had a scale up here and it had two hands than we put one weight on one side, in order for it to be level, you have to put something of equal weight on the other. So when he says, "Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel," what he's saying is this is we're going to place the good news that God loved us so much that he sent his only son to die for us and to rise again. And we're going to put that on one side and then we're going to live our life with enough weight and gravity and seriousness and joy and holiness and a hope that other people look and it weighs the same. That our practice would weigh as much as our proclamation.

And it's in this hope that he writes verse 12, "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now not only as in my presence, but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing. That you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation. Among whom you shine as lights in the world holding fast to the word of life so that in the day of Christ, I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Even if I enter the poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise, you also should be glad and rejoice with me."

Now, this is not the rumblings of an irritated God. This is an expression of his kindness that would expose our sin so that our joy can be magnified and so that other people would listen to our lives and observe our lives and think the gospel must be credible.

So what do we do? What does joy motivate us to do? Two things this morning, it's going to be a short sermon. Then we're going to have the Lord's supper, and then we're going to sing like we mean it. We're going to sing a bunch at the end of the service. You ready?

Joy motivates us to work out what God has worked into our heart. Joy motivates us to work out what God has worked into our heart. He says, “Therefore,” in other words and a lot of what Jesus did and dying on a cross and rising from the dead, he’s received a name as above every name. He says, “In light of that truth,” he says, “as you have always obeyed. So now not only in my presence, but much more in my absence.” He says, “You’ve got to work out your salvation.”

This is actually a great encouragement to them. What he’s saying is this. He goes, “You know what? Not only do I see it, but now I hear it. I hear that your love for Christ and your desire for him to be pleased with you, for his pleasure, to well up, it causes you, it propels you to show preference to his desires that are written in his word. To such an extent that you obey him, whether anyone in the world is watching or nobody’s watching because you know that you have a relationship with him. Because whether I’m there at my absence, my presence doesn’t matter. You’re a people of integrity.” That’s what integrity is. We obey when nobody’s watching or everyone’s watching. We are who we are because there’s one person that we care about the most. We have a relationship with him and he says, “I see this is happening in your life. Now, keep working out your salvation.”

Now it’s so critical. So many people have been confused on this and think, “Looks like he’s telling us to work for salvation,” but don’t forget he’s not writing unbelievers. He’s writing what it says in 1:1, “Our saints in Christ Jesus.” He’s not telling non-Christians to work for their salvation. He’s telling Christians to work out their salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “By grace you’ve been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. It’s not a result of work so that no one can boast.” He’s telling us, the church, he’s telling believers to work out our salvation. It was oftentimes used to work out something that was hidden within. So let’s just say that you inherit a gold mine. Now the gold isn’t just sitting out front. It’s dug. It’s deep down. It’s buried down into the rocks. What do you have to do? There’s gold in the hill, but energy must be applied in order to work that gold out. Or let’s just say that you inherit a field. Within that soil, there is capacity to bear fruit and yet it requires that the land be tilled and worked and planted and watered. You have to work it out.

All the capacity is there. And so what he’s saying here spiritually is this, is that we cannot work out what God has not worked in. But the good news is that says that for in God he is working in you. He’s energizing you, but energy must be applied.

You see, the gospel says that you and I were first created in the image of God to bear good works. We were created in the image of God to be like him and he does good. But we sinned against God and so he wanted to recreate us. He wanted to save us, and so he sent Jesus from heaven to earth. He died on a cross for our sin. He was buried in a grave, and he rose from the dead. And he says, “If you’ll trust me, I’ll take away all of your sin. And I’ll give you my righteousness.

And not only will I give you my righteousness, but I'll actually plant my spirit within you so that you, within you, will have the capacity to bear fruit, fruit that looks like love, joy, and peace, and patience, and kindness, and goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control."

Those fruits, that capacity for that fruit, it's in you. You may say, "I'm not a patient person." It's in you. You have to work it out. You may not be a joyful person, but it's in you. You just have to work it out.

Second Peter chapter one tells it this way. He says this, he says, "His divine power," that's God's divine power, "has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. "In other words, when you trusted Christ as your savior and Lord, he gave you a complete Bible, the whole Holy Spirit. He gave you everything you needed. It all came standard so that you could live a life of godliness before him. And yet you have to work it out.

So what's our faith response to what he's done? He says this, "For this reason," in other words, because he's worked in you, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue and your virtue with knowledge and your knowledge with self-control. We're always moving. We're always seeking to progress. It's sort of like riding a bike. God works in us, and so one pedal goes down and just as one goes down, there's momentum now for the other leg. And now he says, "Now push. You have to push." And even your pushing on the other, you have to understand, he says, "And I'm energizing that leg." But you still have to push.

Are we working out our salvation? Are we working out the fruitfulness? Are we working out the relational skill or are we working out the integrity and the honor of what it looks like to follow Jesus Christ? It's all in us. He's done it all for us and he says, "You have to work it out." So let's examine ourselves this morning, specifically looking for actions inspired by faith. What do I mean by that? Well, it all begins with God. Jesus died on a cross. He rose from the dead. He invited you to believe. Have you this morning responded in faith by committing your life to Christ. That is a action inspired by faith. Jesus has given us within the scriptures his wisdom for living. Are you responding? Did you respond this week in faith by reading it, by applying it to your life.

Jesus within the scriptures, he's called us to make disciples. His call is a store up treasure, not an earth, but in heaven by giving generously to kingdom causes. He's called us to serve other people at their point of need. And the question is, are we responding in faith not to work for our salvation, but to work out the benefits that are available to us once we got saved. So joy motivates all of this because ultimately when people see a life of one who believes God, it's such a place, such an extent that they respond in faith to what he said. What you find is alive. It's distinguished, not by ease but by honor, by love, by compassion, by generosity. And you see that just stirs joy within our heart.

The second thing is joy motivates us to be different than the world. Jordan motivates us to be different than the world. He goes on in verse 14 through the end of our passage, he talks about the world and he says that the world that we live in is crooked. It's where we get the word scoliosis. The word scoliosis is where the spine is twisted. And he says that where it's crooked and twisted, in other words, the world, its framework is so bad that it cannot hold a light due to the weight of its own sin. And so he says, "I'm asking you because Jesus first asked to shine as lights in this dark world." Jesus said, "You're the light of the world. The city on a hill cannot be hidden nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket but on a stand and it gives light to all in the house."

So let me just ask you to ask yourself, is my light recognizable? Do I live in such a way that people recognize that I'm different? Let's just say for the sake of illustration that the person next to you, sitting right next to you right now, whoever it is, is they have a responsibility to take a blind test. And the test simply is to identify if they can identify who of two people is a follower of Jesus Christ. And so that person, without knowing who they're looking at, they are given two different reports of two different lives. They look at what they spend their money on and what they spend their time on, what they read, and what they watch, what they sing, and what they say, how they treat people, and how they handle their responsibilities, how they have responded to trials, and how they make their decisions. And the question is this. If that report, it's in the person next to you, it's in their lap and they're looking at it. And one person is you and another person is somebody who has rejected the authority of Jesus Christ. Would the person sitting next to you being able to distinguish who's the Christian, who's the follower of Jesus, who's the one who loves like Jesus, and lives like Jesus, and leads like Jesus because he serves or she serves like Jesus?

You see what Paul is saying is this. He's saying that we draw people to Christ, not by loudly discrediting what people believe, but by showing them a light that is so appealing that they want to know its source. And so let me give two applications you find a right in the text of how we can be a light to the world.

First is let's trust God's plan and God's pace. And this is such a hard thing for us. One day we'll recognize that not only his plan for our life but his timing and how he drew that plan out, it was actually for our benefit. But when we're in the middle of it, we're just convinced that he's either wrong or he's slow. And the natural instinct when we feel that way is to grumble and complain. And so this is what he says. He goes, "God has a will and he's working in your life, therefore do all things without grumbling." The word murmur. It's an emotional response or disputing. That's reasoning. It's an intellectual response. And so it's not just about God, nor is it that we take up arguments that are rational and intellectual about the goodness of his plan and the goodness of his pace. No, but what we do is we trust him.

And why is this so important? Well, when you look at the Old Testament, you see a people called Israel. And most of the old Testament, what we find in Israel is the people who love to grumble. It was like a sport. They were just so good at it. They walk around and say, "You know, I hate this food, and I'm so tired of camping."

And I want new leaders.” And God says, “Look, I’m training you to trust me.” And they say, “Yeah, but I hate this food. And I hate camping. And I want new leaders.” And they said, “Look, I understand it, but the people around, they’re making judgment calls on your appreciation of following me. So I’m asking you not to grumble.” And they say, “Yeah, but I hate this food. I hate camping, and I want new leaders.”

You see, he says this, it’s amazing. He says, “Do all things without grumbling or disputing that you may be blameless and innocent.” Think about the number of things he could have put before the word that that we would go, you know what? Like love your husband or your wife that you may be blameless. Treat people with respect that you may be... No, he said, “This is the one I want to give you right now that you not be marked by complaining and murmuring against God.”

Just imagine a family, they gathered for breakfast and dad says, “All right, circle up. Let’s thank God for the food.” He prays and thanks God. And all of a sudden he eats a bite of the eggs and they’re cold, and he starts complaining about the eggs. And so his little daughter, she says, “Dad, let me ask you something. Did God hear you say thank you for our breakfast?” “Of course, he always hears us.” “Well, did God hear you complain about the breakfast that you thank him for?” “Well, yeah, he does.” “Well, which one does God believe?”

What I’m trying to say is our complaints are very confusing to people who are considering the reliability of Jesus. When the people of God who say they’re following God or complaining about their leader, it is very trying to people when they’re looking at our practice and seeing if it is loud and as weighty as our proclamation.

And the last thing is let’s hold fast to the word have God. He says, “As you shine, as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life.” Now we live in a culture where people can now protect their moral convictions that are pretty rootless. I said, rootless not ruthless by the way. Rootless. And how they protect him is simply by calling a hate foul on anyone with a conviction that threatens theirs. One of the ways that you know that your moral convictions are really shallow is if someone disagrees and you think they hate you. It’s cowardice.

The reality is though is the Bible that we hold up, it happens to threaten every skinny conviction that’s birthed in the basement of our twisted desires. And those who speak of it will be called hateful, and yet he says, “The way that we shine is the old fast.” It’s a participle, meaning it’s how you get the verb done. This is how you shine. You hold up the word of God. You acknowledge it. It’s the authority of your life. You read it. You apply it. You repent when your life is in violation of it. You hold it up because it is the word of God.

You see, the word of God is like oil to a lamp. You starve the wick of oil and you’ll extinguish the light. And so I urge you to hold fast the scriptures for the sake of joy.

Jesus said, "These things I've spoken to you that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full." He wants you to be joyful, so hold fast to his words. And he finishes and it's a beautiful thing that leads to the suppers. He says, "I'm probably going to die. I don't know, but I may die. And even if I do, it's going to be like a drink offering." Now, a drink offering was one that you poured over a sacrifice that was already on the altar. And what you are signifying is I'm giving everything. And so this is what he says, it's amazing. He says, "You know what, I may die, but even if I do, it's going to be like a drink offering." But a drink offering is poured on something. And what does he say it's poured on?

He says, "Your sacrificial offering." In other words, this is what he's saying. He's saying, "Look, church in Philippi, if you'll trust Christ and work out your salvation and you'll stop grumbling and repent of that, if you hold fast the word of God, it's going to be like a sacrificial offering that you hold up to the Lord in order to honor him. And even if I die, it's like pouring water over that. It's like pouring a drink offering over it. That the Lord is ultimately going to be glorified, even if I die." He says, "And because of that, even if I die, I have gladness in my heart and I rejoice and I welcome you to have gladness and rejoice." And I believe the reason he can say that is because he knew that Jesus was the embodiment of everything that I've just talked about.

There's nobody who's worked it out like Jesus. There is nobody who went through this earth and went through such abuse without complaining or disputing. He held up the scriptures and then he gave his life not only as a sacrificial offering, but as a drink offering where he gave everything to us. And the night before he did all this, he was with his disciples in a room and he held up the bread and he broke it. He gave thanks and he says, "This is a symbol. This is a symbol of my body that's going to be broken tomorrow as I suffer. And take an eed and remembrance of me." Then he held a cup, and inside the cup there's liquid that looked like blood. It was wine. He goes, "This is a symbol of a new covenant that's going to begin with my own blood when it shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins. As often as you drink it, drink in remembrance of me."

And so we have an opportunity this morning to do just that. On this anniversary, on this day when we've paused long enough to say, "God, we want to be amazed at what you have done. We recognize what you have done." This supper helps us to do three things. It helps us to examine. We're supposed to examine our life. It helps us to remember what he's done. It helps us to proclaim what he's done. You see, if you come up here and you take the bread and cup in the sight of others, what you're doing is without words, you are proclaiming that you admit that you are a center, that you're in need of Jesus Christ, that you believe in him, and confess him as your Lord. And so as the proclamation.

So this morning, if you have never trusted Christ, I beg you to do so today. We would love to talk with you. And if you have, you're welcome. But if you're still contemplating, then the Bible actually says that you need to use this time to consider your life and to consider the claims and the accomplishments of Jesus Christ but not to take of the cup. For the take of it is to say that you believe in it and you treasure it.

But for those of us who know Christ, I want you to know you're welcome to this table. And how we're going to take it today is a little different. I'm going to have you come forward. Now physically you cannot come forward, I want to just ask you to raise your hand, and we'll have somebody who will bring these two elements, the bread and the cup, to you. And you can take them right there where you're at. But what I'm going to ask you to do, the first song is just instrumental. It's a time for you to examine yourself and so don't come too quick. Think and pray and confess your sin.

When you're ready, I want to ask you to come up these two middle aisles. And I know this is the middle aisle, but we're going to call this the center aisle. Okay? These are the middle aisles. And so I want to ask you to come down these two aisles here and you can then have these elements served to you by our leaders. And you can actually take them here or back at your seat. But then if you can just make your way back through the center aisle or the outer aisles, that'll help us move everyone sort of around.

And so what I want to ask you to do right now is to think. In fact, I'm going to ask those who'll be serving us, if you want to just come right now, just stand here at these tables. And as they come, I'm going to pray for us. And then after I pray, you pray. Ask God to examine your heart. Remember what he's done. And then when you're ready, we welcome you to the table. So let me pray for us.

Father in heaven, we love you, and we thank you for your love for us. And we pray now, God, that you would encourage us, that you would remind us of what you have done, that you would help us to see what we're about to do is ultimately important. I pray for those who have yet to trust Christ. I pray right now that you would help them, Lord, to see that there is nobody who loves like Jesus loves. And so would you lead them to trust you today? Would you examine us now we pray. As we take this, God, would you help us to sing to you as an offering that we give to you out of a full heart. And we pray this in Jesus' 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.