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SPEAKER

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I Found Joy

PART

8

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I Found Joy In Sacrifice

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Philippians 2:19-30



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Good morning. It's good to see you. Welcome. My name's Dave, one of the pastors here, and we are excited to be able to just dive into God's word. If you're a guest with us this morning, we say a special welcome to you. We are so glad that you have joined us. Also, I know, we're in a series through the book of Philippians entitled, "I found joy."

I know many of you will be tempted this week to find your joy in other places, especially at the State Fair. It starts up this week, and some of the food that you eat at the State Fair, so this is a warning for you, just to encourage you from the start, you won't find joy. You'll find heartburn, most of the time, there. I did a little research, this is one of your pastors wanting to serve you in this way, of the new food items on the menu. One that stuck out was the turkey leg with stuffed mac and cheese. That is sick. What is that? What is that? Are you kidding? So just wisely enter those gates, as you go. I know our cardiologists in the city are grateful at this time of the year, as November and December will be many in the office.

Here's what we want to do, Philippians, Chapter 2. If you have your Bibles, you can turn them on, or open them up. If you don't have one, underneath there in the seat, it'll be on page 922, 922. It'll be the larger number two, as we look into this word.

In a culture that is growing more self-centered, year by year, and yet more depressed and sad at the same time, one has to think that these things are connected. Selfies are on the rise at an alarming rate, and self-worth is plummeting at a staggering speed. Culture's path to joy, it's shallow and temporary, while Christ's path to joy is satisfying and lasting. The Christian life, it truly is a paradox. The way up is down. Joy grows not when you consume, but when you give. In a world that screams, it screams to get others to sacrifice for you, the word, this morning, will shout to us that to turn our eyes to Christ, who has sacrificed for us. And in that sacrifice, we learn to live a life of sacrifice, and joy grows during that time.

One of the things I really enjoyed studying in theology, in school, was the concept called a man-centered theology and a God-centered theology. A man-centered theology, for instance, if this music stand was the center of the world, a man-centered theology would desire, humanity would desire, to put themselves at the center of the world, and everyone revolve around them, and at any cost, their joy would be at the expense of those around them. What this does is, it leads to a life of self-preservation. It breeds a selfishness that actually smells. No one really wants to be around that.

Yet a God-centered theology would have God and his son, Christ, at the center of everything, and everything orbits, in a sense, around that, in all of him. And this particular mindset, focusing on his son, it creates, it starts, it cultivates a servant heart that sacrifices in light of his sacrifice. And joy is filled, and it's somewhat contagious.

This man-centered theology and God-centered theology, it can even be understood in what one of our profs unpacked back in the day. It's called the dog and cat theology, the dog and cat theology. I'll show you a picture of our dog, really quick. He was doing his quiet time the other day. I don't have a cat, so no pictures of cats. If you're offended by this story of dogs and cats, especially cats, you can send me an email this week at brian@pray.org, and we'll talk through it, okay? We'll work through it.

So here it is. I'm just going to sum it up really quick. The dog, you love the dog, you pet the dog, you groom the dog, you take care of the dog, you give the dog a bone. And the dog is so overwhelmed that he looks up at you and he says, "Wow, you must be God." The cat, you feed the cat, you do Fancy Feast, whatever you do with cats. I'm allergic to cats, don't like cats. You take care of the cat, you groom the cat, you feed the cat, and the cat looks up at you and says, "Wow, I must be God." Safe things that happen? All right? Again, it's brian@pray.org, if you're offended by that.

Listen, we race through life, jaded in a sense, because of selfishness. God's calling us to live a life of sacrifice, of having him at the center of our life. Jesus even says, "Listen, it's more blessed to give than to receive," as recorded in Acts. When you do this, when you live a life in light of his life and sacrifice, there's a tree that will take root in your heart called joy. And it will grow, even in the midst of pain and in the midst of suffering and in the midst of trials. It will grow when you posture yourself in this way. It'll start to produce fruit in your life that is actually compelling, as well as contagious, to a world that's looking in all the wrong places for joy.

Paul lays out for us, in Chapter 2, some amazing things. Let's pray and read this great text. Father, we love you. Thank you for your grace this morning. Thank you for your kindness to us. Thank you for this word, for preserving it for such a long time. We pray that you would open the eyes of our heart to lean into these things and learn together, we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.

I want to show you quickly, before I read, just a map, really fast, that shows you. If you notice, the bottom right-hand corner is Jerusalem and Caesarea. Paul would normally take a lot of his mission trips from this area, through the waters up into Galatia. He would travel by foot into cities called Ephesus, this is modern-day Turkey. He'd make his way across the [Basra] Strait there, in Turkey, into Greece, into Philippi, there you see at the top, make his way back down to Athens, oftentimes coming back home, regathering, and heading back. But in the far left corner is Rome.

In this setting, he's found himself in Rome, in prison. He's actually, on one of those trips, planted a church in Philippi. He loves the people there. There's a man that comes from Philippi to Rome to see him, to bring him an offering, actually to help the mission. He's a missionary, Paul is, church planter. From Rome, he writes this letter back to the people at Philippi, who are called the Philippians. Okay, there's your context.

So in Chapter 2, we learn of the ultimate sacrifice a few weeks ago, incredible passage, that pastor laid out from Chapter 2, verses 5 through 11, which is just a tremendous text. It's as if in light of that sacrifice, the ultimate, Paul wants us, to show us, really two individuals, two individuals, that have lived a life of sacrifice. So this is what the text says, in verse 19, verse 19. If you're not familiar with Bible study, you're not a Christian, and you're on this page, if you see the larger number 2, find the smaller number 19, that's your verse, that's where I'm going to start reading.

It says this, "I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know Timothy's proven worth. How, as a son with a father, he has served me in the gospel. I hope therefore to send him, just as soon as I see how it will go with me, and I trust in the Lord that shortly, I myself will come also. I have found it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier and your messenger and minister to my need, for he has been longing for you all, and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. Indeed he was ill, near to death, but God had mercy on him, and not only on him, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. So receive him in the Lord, with all joy, and honor such men. For he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me."

So two truths this morning, church family. Let's unpack it together. The first one is this, it's joy in Jesus. There's a relationship in Christ that produces a depth of joy that's like an anchor through good times and bad times. It motivates. Joy in Jesus, it motivates us to sacrifice for the good of others. Joy in Jesus motivates us to sacrifice for the good of others. Notice what Paul does. He's going to lay out two individuals, Timothy and Epaphroditus. From Timothy, this man that in Acts 16, we learn where he is introduced to Timothy, he finds Timothy, he probably led Timothy to Christ. Timothy's dad was not a follower of Christ. His mom and grandmother were followers of Christ. Then Timothy joins him. Then at this season of life, as he's writing this, he's probably been with Paul for some 10 years.

Little is known about this other brother that is named Epaphroditus. It's only mentioned briefly in the scriptures. He was a faithful servant at the church at Philippi. He had brought this offering from the church to find Paul in Rome. What he does is, he looks at these two and he highlights some incredible characteristics. Here's what I want to do. I want to look at three characteristics from Timothy and three from Epaphroditus, of those who sacrificed for the good of others. Okay?

The first one is this, from the life of Timothy. Those who sacrifice for the good of others are authentic in care. They're authentic in care. Notice in verse 20, he says, "I have no one like him, who will be," notice the word, "genuinely concerned." Timothy had walked with Paul. He had ministered with Paul. He had demonstrated such authenticity of care for the welfare of the church.

He had learned this from Paul. Paul will write, actually, in Corinthians, that he has labored and has a deep love for the people of God. Timothy has learned this from Paul, and he is displaying this in such a way that Paul is writing to the church at Philippi, which Timothy was probably there when it was planted, when it was birthed, and he probably knows some of those folks there, at that church. He's authentic in care.

I'm sure Timothy had learned this over the years, probably as Acts told us from Mom and from Grandma. His grandmother had taught him the way, and the scriptures. There's something about an authenticity of care that's found in moms and grandmothers. There's a nurturing factor that I'm sure Timothy was influenced greatly by, especially probably his grandmother. We love grandmothers around here, so much. I know I love and miss my grandmother. She was a strong lady. She died when I was 18 years old. She had the sweetest name and demeanor. She stood about five foot one. I'll never forget the moment that I wanted to be taller than her. That happened pretty fast. Her name was Ruby. There's a generation of sweet names we don't use as much. But she had three sisters. All right, here we go. Are you ready? Three sisters, their names were Ina, Myrtle and Leila.

When my grandmother had my mom, about a month later, my grandfather, named Lucien, left for the war in Germany. When he left, he actually landed at Normandy, and survived that. For three years, he was at war. So when he came home, his daughter was about three-and-a-half, almost four years old, my mom. The sacrifice that he had made for the good of others was remarkable, but also, the nurturing care, because my grandmother moved in with the aunts, the sisters, and they all nurtured and cared for my mom. There's an authenticity that's seen in the life of Timothy, that's evidenced in grandmothers, and may be evidenced in you and I.

Not only is there an authenticity in care, but there's also a reliability in the task. Notice the text. Look at the Bible, in verse 22. Verse 22 says, "But you know Timothy's proven worth." Proven worth. Church at Philippi, you have seen him. He was with me. You have witnessed him. He has done everything for the sake of the mission. He has proven himself over and over and over. He's reliable. He's like the new board on the back deck that's deteriorating, and you walk out and you can only replace a board at a time, and there's some that are cracked and there's some that don't look well. And you instantly, you don't even have to decide, you just instantly, when you go, intuition takes over and you step on the newer board. Because you know it's reliable. You know it's going to hold you. This is who Timothy is. He's reliable in every task that's asked of him. Are you reliable? Can people depend on you? This is a characteristic of those who sacrifice for the good of others, in light of the one who has sacrificed for us.

But notice third, he was loyal in service. He was loyal in service. Notice in the Bible, notice in verse 22. In verse 22, he says, "You know his proven worth." Then he actually describes the proven worth. He says, "How as a son with a father, he has served with me in the gospel."

There's a loyalty that's displayed here, in this characteristic, that is so loyal, that after a season of faithfulness, that someone would actually call you family. Do you see that? Now, he may have been his spiritual father who led him to Christ. But he's not related. Paul and Timothy aren't related. And yet, he's telling the church at Philippi, "Listen, as a son with a father, he has served." You don't earn that reputation overnight. That's a loyalty and reliability over a season of life in ministry, that he was able to say this. He calls him family, in a sense.

Are you cultivating this type of loyalty and service, maybe in your job, maybe wherever you find yourself? Do people view and do they see you as one who would sacrifice for the good of others in the way you are loyal, wherever God has you, displaying in hopes, reflecting in hopes, over a season, building trust in hopes, that you'd be able to speak of the sacrifice of Christ? Sometimes we have to live a certain way to earn trust and sacrifice for the good of others, in order to speak of the sacrifice that Christ has made.

From Timothy we learn these things, but from Epaphroditus, notice a few things we learn from this brother. Not mentioned very much, don't know a ton about him, probably not the pastor of the church, but maybe just a servant, a fellow worker in the church, loves the mission. Notice a few things from verse 25. Verse 25, he says, "I have it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus," and notice what he says. He says, "My brother and fellow worker." So those who sacrifice for the good of others, they're unified in mission. They're unified in mission. They're don't have their own agenda. They're unified in mission. So much so, I mean, Paul probably hardly knows this brother. This brother has collected the offering that's been taken to support missions and the church planter that Paul is. He has been delegated with the task to deliver that to Rome.

Paul says, in the small interaction with this brother, he doesn't just say the church name, but he actually calls him, he says, "My brother." He uses the pronoun. There's a personal relationship there, although they don't know each other. It's there because both are unified in the mission of getting the gospel to the ends of the Earth. He says, "My brother." And then he says, "My fellow worker." He hasn't necessarily worked with him, and yet he calls him. This is what I love about going on mission trips here from Providence, all around the world. There's an instant connection with brothers and sisters around the world, because of the same king that we follow. We call them our brothers and sisters. We say, "Our fellow workers." Yet, we hardly know them, on one sense.

He says, "A fellow worker. A fellow soldier." He's displaying such tenacity of focus that he calls him a fellow soldier. Then he goes back. He changes pronoun. Do you notice what he does? He says, "He's your messenger, and your minister, but he's my fellow laborer in the gospel" He's so unified in the mission.

Proverbs 27 says, "Where there's no vision, the people cast off restraint." This is why God has led us to a plant vision right now, where we want to be planting our lives in the church and planting the gospel in the city and planting churches in the world. It's simple. It's really simple, and yet it's profound, the impacts of it. What a vision does, it restrains you, in a good way, right? You want the seatbelt to work when you hit the wall. You want it to restrain you. A vision restrains all of these personal preferences that rise when there's no vision.

Epaphroditus, his preferences never propelled him above the mission. He was unified. But notice second, he was also humble in concerns. He was humble in concerns. Notice in verse 26, verse 26, just walking through the text, he says, “For he has been longing for you all,” now watch the text. You got to watch this. You’ll miss it if you just read by it, “And has been distressed because you heard that he was ill.” Notice that. There’s a humility among those who sacrifice for the good of others that expresses itself in not wanting others to know maybe about things that could cause them distress. This is what the text says. He says, “For he’s been longing for you and has been distressed.”

Why was he distressed? Because the church had heard that he was ill, and he didn’t want to put undue pressure on the church. The church had already sent him, and he didn’t want to put undue pressure on the church family back home, to let them know that he was ill. But he was ill. They had found out about it, and he’s kind of stirred up about it. This is what humility ... pride, what my heart does when I go on a mission trip, I get sick, I call back and let everybody know, “Hey, look. I want you to feel it with me.” That’s what sometimes pride is. Humility is concerned about the joy and the welfare of others. This was his life. Is this your life? Are you unified? Are you humble in your concerns?

But notice third, in verse 27, he says, “Indeed, he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him and not only on him, but me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.” His sorrow would have increased if Epaphroditus had died on the trip. Yet, there’s this courage in adversity that comes when you sacrifice for the good of others. Oh listen, yes, he was ill, but God had mercy on him and somehow, some way, spared his life. I mean, think about this brother, who sacrificed for the good of others.

Let’s just do this journey, really quick. Let me show you this map, this map from Philippi to Rome. That straight line at the top, if Air Greece had an airline back in the day, this is a short flight. This is a little bit south of from here to Atlanta, probably. This is a short flight, couple of Diet Cokes, some cookies, they don’t have time to do the meal, and he’s getting off. But there’s no airlines, back in the day. There’s no Uber, back in the day. The Uber was called your feet. So I actually pulled it up and plugged it in MapQuest, for modern day, if I had to walk this. It’s 827 miles. You notice, all the little ... it’s not just straight. The only straight line is the boat across the water. But it’s pretty intense terrain. I mean, the MapQuest, it was about 17 pages long, because you had to turn left, turn left, turn right, turn right, missing mountains and hills, and going ... it probably would take at least a month, if not two months, to walk this. Let that settle you for a second.

Now, he’s also taken a collection. So there’s no armored trucks back in the day, with the brother who’s got the vest on, when he delivers into Starbucks, in the bag, and got some money. You’ve seen him. You pass by him. No, there’s no ... so he’s got a offering that he’s taking to Paul, to support and encourage and help him. Ultimately, Romans tells us, he wants to get to Spain. He wants to get the gospel to all ... as far as he can get it. He makes his way.

Now you know, Epaphroditus has to think, like if someone on this trip finds out that I've got money and cash on me to support a missionary, that death was probably an option for this trip, for someone to rob him. Yet, there was great courage in adversity. He persevered.

He persevered like a dear friend of Providence's named Reverend Matthews. Reverend Matthews is the father of a friend of ours named Finney Matthews, who grew up in Southern India. Reverend Matthews, one of the most joy-filled men I've ever met. I was in India years ago, and had the opportunity to do ministry with this brother. He's 81 years old now. He may die this week. He's extremely sick. I've been texting with his son, who is here in the States, back and forth to India.

But Reverend Matthews, when I was over there, there was such a joy and laughter on his face that I actually wanted some of that. Yet he was in one of the hardest places. He grew up in Southern India, moved to Northern India, where persecution is much more intense, and in his lifetime, has been a part of a ministry that's helped plant 2,000 churches. In the last 15 years of his life, most of it he's been sick, he personally has baptized 7,000 people, in the rivers throughout India.

I remember when we went, we were in the car and he's just laughing all the time. We're on the way to this incredible opportunity to share the gospel. It's a large, outdoor field. The Hindu military were in the back. And it's a lot of people. So as we're on the way there, he's telling me, he's like, "Brother Dave, I'm so excited about this place." I'm like, "Well, why?" He's like, "Well, because the last time that we were in this location, we all got arrested." I went, "Wait, brother, you should have told me that beforehand. We would have sent Phil or somebody else. I wouldn't have come."

There was just joy in his life that gave him a deep courage, so much so that even this week, word has come that as he is in and out of sleep, one of his caretakers, not a follower of Jesus, says, just trying to get some, where he's at mentally, he says, "Do you know where you are, Mr. Matthews?" Mr. Matthews responded, says, "Yes, I'm going to heaven. I'm on the way. You should also get ready, to make sure you go there." Even in his death, he's saying this. There's a courage in adversity.

Hebrews 13 says it like this, says, "Do not forget to do good, and to share with others. For with such sacrifices, God is pleased." Did you think about that? There's a way to live in light of the sacrifice of Christ, that we sacrifice and God is pleased with that? So in application, let's practice sacrificial acts so they become a normal way of life. Let's practice sacrificial acts so they become a normal way of life.

But notice the second truth. Joy in Jesus not only motivates us to sacrifice for the good of others, but joy in Jesus mobilizes us to share the greatest of all sacrifices. Now, notice in verse 30. In verse 30, we learn that Epaphroditus is nearly dead, and he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life. Notice those three words, "For he nearly died for the," notice what he says, "work of Christ."

For the work of Christ. What is Christ doing in the world? What Christ is doing in the world is, he is redeeming people from the minion of darkness. He is opening their eyes to be able to see things through the spiritual lens of new eyes, a new heart. He, in his sacrifice, is forgiving sin and freeing people from addiction and giving people a sense of joy that is unique and that grows and that sustains as an anchor, even in the midst of trial and temptation. This is the work of Christ.

And Epaphroditus was so committed to that, because he had experienced that, that he is on the way. He gets to Paul, somehow. How does that work? Did he get arrested to get there with Paul? Did he go to visitation hours to meet with Paul? How did he get the offering to him? These things, we're not quite sure. But we know he got there, and he found him. And Paul's writing this letter back to the church at Philippi, and hopes to send it back with Epaphroditus, which would be a 1,600 mile trek, by feet, round trip. And he wants to continue the mission, risking his life to complete what was lacking in their service. To me, what was lacking in the church at Philippi's service to Paul was only the fact that all of them couldn't be there physically. Yet, one was standing in the gap.

There was a brother who understood the urgency to be mobilized to get the gospel to all people. His name was Jim Elliott. And Jim Elliott, along with four other friends from Wheaton College headed, in the 1950s, to Ecuador, to reach an unreached people group there. Yet years before, years before Elliott went, he would journal. Some of his journal entries are profound. He would say things like this, seven, eight years before he even went and was martyred, he said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose. I wish not to live a long life, simply a full life." If you want to live a full life, live a life of sacrifice for the good of others and the gospel going to all people.

A non-believer this morning, let me just speak to you really fast and quick here. If you're a non-believer, we're so glad you're here this morning. But listen, the joy of Jesus has to melt your heart before it mobilizes your feet. It has to melt your heart before it mobilizes your feet. You have to see the worth of Christ, before you could sacrifice to be a witness for Christ. So listen to the glory of God's word, from Romans, that says, "God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement through the shedding of his blood, to be received by faith."

See, the Bible starts, in Genesis 1 and 2. It's looking good until three chapters in, and humanity messes it all up. They weren't satisfied being with God. They wanted to be like God. They disobeyed and sinned, into the heart and DNA of every human being, there's a propensity to choose wrongly, naturally. Even in Chapter 3, God's grace is evidenced, in killing of a lamb to provide clothing to cover Adam and Eve. That was a foretaste of multiple sacrifices that would come throughout the scriptures that would say that, "Without the shedding of blood, there's no forgiveness of sin," and year after year, decade after decade, century after century, and for some that are still blinded. Because I've been in countries in the past years who have seen goats and lambs sacrificed for the forgiveness of sin, blood put on an altar. All of those of days of old were to point to the sacrifice, the lamb of God, who has come to take away the sins of the world, to that sacrifice where his blood was spilled on a cross.

The writer of Hebrews would say it like this, “Day after day, every priest stands and performs his religious duties. Again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But, when this priest, Jesus the Christ, had offered for all time, one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.” Listen, this morning, this is the most glorious news you will ever hear in your lifetime, “But when this priest had offered for all time, one sacrifice for sins, he, Jesus the Christ, sat down,” symbolizing finality, “at the right hand of God.”

In light of that sacrifice, of what he has accomplished, it motivates us and it mobilizes us. This is why Romans would say, in Chapter 12, “In view of God’s mercy, offer your bodies as a living sacrifice.” Notice he doesn’t say a dying sacrifice. He doesn’t call us, in a sense, to die physically. No, he says, “In view of God’s mercy,” so there needs to be a rear view mirror in your heart that’s constantly looking back at the mercies of God. Chapters 1 through 11 of Romans does that, and that’s why 12 transitions and says, “Now, in view of his mercies,” all of his mercies displayed for 11 chapters of the greatness of Christ’s righteousness being given to us, in light of our sinfulness. He says, “Offer your bodies. Offer your physical bodies, a living sacrifice.” You know why it’s hard to be a living sacrifice? Because living things move around, and you move off of that altar in a sense of serving and sacrificing and giving. That’s why you have to have in view, daily, the mercies of God. The mercies of God moves you, mobilizes you, motivates you to live as a living sacrifice.

Let’s leverage our life to get this news to all people. Let this land on you this morning, really quick. There’s 151,600 people who will pass into eternity, every day. Every day. That’s 6,316 since we’ve been together, this hour. The sacrifice of Christ and what he’s accomplished, you have to be gripped with that, before you go. These are realities, but they won’t move you. They’ll call up some compassion, but it’ll last as far as lunch. But if you’re gripped with the sacrifice that the lamb has made for you, and in view of his mercy, in view of his mercy, Monday, you’ll offer yourself as a living sacrifice. Tuesday, you’ll offer yourself as a living sacrifice. Wednesday, you’ll offer yourself as a living sacrifice. And more of those folks will enter into the kingdom of God, because your heart’s been melted, and your feet have been moved.

Let’s participate in the mission to tell everyone about the greatest sacrifice. Let’s participate in the mission to tell everyone about the greatest sacrifice. Listen, we love to hear stories about how God moves in ordinary people to go and tell others about an extraordinary God. So, I want you to watch the screens, quickly, of one such story.

Marianne: I think in actuality, most of us underestimate how God can use us. I know I did. You know, if God can use me, trust me, he can use anybody.

We first came to Costa Rica in 2018. I would say I was a little bit of an unwilling heart, because I really didn’t think that I had anything to give in terms of any kind of skills or talents that might necessarily be desirable or needed. But when I saw that they were going to be serving a community that was very much immersed in Catholicism, which was the faith background that I grew up in, I felt like maybe God was opening a door.

When we were going from door to door, and putting information about the VBS or trying to have a conversation with people, they're coming to the gate, some of them are opening the doors, some of them are allowing us into their homes. I think that's God at work, because we're building a bridge.

Somebody at the local government had asked Pastor Tony or someone else from the church, "What is it that's going on at your church? Because we know that all the Americans are here. I don't know what you're doing, but it's the talk of the town." If that curiosity is what gets people in, that's fine. But when they're here, they're going to be hearing about the word.

I thought when you sign up for vacation Bible school, you're going to be doing crafts with children, or running around with children, but God had a different plan, and it was to work with the mothers. We knew we had to start with something quite simple, as even just, what is the Bible. Not only what is it, but how do you read it? How do you find chapters? How do you find verses. That's where we started, last year. So what we did this year was really looked at, what are the children going to be learning? Because we wanted whatever work we do with the moms to really compliment that.

Christ has something to say in each one of us through his word. So that's what we're really trying to get the moms to see and to really leaf through the Bible themselves and see, "This is what the children are learning about, and this is where it comes from, and you can read it for yourself, too."

I think that we're tempted to think, "Someone else would be better." Or, "I know her. She'd be really good at working with moms." But God isn't sending you. He's sending his spirit through you. So when you step out to go on a mission trip, you have to be prepared for the fact that God might be working in you as much as in the people that you're serving."



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