

1 John 1-5

Sunday 7/12/2015

Well, you guys asked me at camp what my favorite song was, and I think it is changing. I lied to you when I said it was "In the Garden." I forgot about "Beulah Land." I told you guys that. That is probably my favorite one, but this one is quickly becoming my favorite song. I have a little bit of a disclaimer to give you guys today. The last couple of times that I preached, there were about 15 people in this room because Bob was gone, and that made me feel real comforting. Today there are over 200 of you here, and I am a little bit nervous.

I just want to let you know that what I am going to do today is kind of recap what we went over at camp and what Brother Dean brought us to camp. He talked a lot about faith. There is nothing that I can say, especially after being in the presence of my pastor here. There is nothing that I am going to be able to say to you kids that Brother Dean already did not go over. When I was preparing this message, I thought to myself, "Okay, we are going to go into faith, and what is going to happen after camp, and what are we going to deal with after camp, and what did I deal with after camp last year?" It is very humbling that Bob asked me to come up here and give this message today, and I really appreciate the opportunity, so I am going to do the best I can with what God gave me.

The other disclaimer I wanted to give you is that I am an emotional guy. I come by it honestly. I am a crier. I will cry at some point in time during this message. It comes honestly. My dad cries. My grandpa cries like crazy, so it is going to come. I am really jealous because I talked to Dean up here, and when he is at camp, he gets emotional. Tears of joy have come down his face, and he kept talking. I am like, "How do you do that?" Because when I start crying, my voice starts shutting down, and it is just not going to happen.

The other thing I want to tell you is that this is Joe Christensen talking to you today. I am not going to try to overdo a message. I am not going to try to get real theological with you because I am not that way. The last time I got to preach up here, I pretty much failed, and I do not want to do that this time. I really made a fool of myself. But at least this time, hopefully, we will get a little bit of things out there, and we will have a good time in the Bible today.

I. Introduction and Sermon Theme

What I want to talk to you a little bit about is what we went over at camp, just to let you guys get all up to speed. Our theme of the camp was faith. We talked about several things in faith, and my message today is going to be about joy because one of the things I struggled with really hard after camp last year was joy. It is a struggle because as soon as you have a spiritual highlight like you have at camp, a lot of things come in. The devil will really influence you, and he will really attack you. I lost my joy. This year was a hard year for me, and realistically, you guys blew me away at camp and really rejuvenated me, and I really appreciate that.

II. Recapping Camp: Faith in Action

Things we learned at camp: Brother Dean brought to us faith. We talked about justification by faith for those of you that were not there. I told myself I had to talk slow because I had to fill up a lot of time. But as soon as I get up here, I start talking nervously, like one of those disclaimers at the bottom of a commercial that has all that legal stuff, and the guy talks real fast. I am going to start talking a little fast. I have to talk like Steve Bracken: nice and slow, nice and slow. I have to really lay it out there. No? Talk a little faster? Am I doing good? Am I talking too fast right now? No? Okay.

➤ Justification by Faith

Justification by faith. That is the first thing. He gave us a lot of good examples of justification by faith. He brought us two examples: about Abraham and about the lame man in John 5. He gave that awesome message about Dr. Jesus. When we download those messages, you will be able to hear them, and it will be phenomenal. It blew my socks off. I was not even wearing socks; I was wearing sandals, so it blew my sandals off.

When he was talking about this, I was thinking, "I am going to talk about joy. I am going to talk about how to keep your joy and having full joy." I was thinking to myself, "Man, every time he gave an example, it was right there. It was perfect." I was thinking about it. When he was giving the example about Abraham, when he went up and he had justified by faith to believe that God was going to give him children like the stars in the heavens and the sands in the sea. All it took for Abraham was that justification. He believed God that He was going to come through with him. Even though he was 75 years old and he was not going to have kids then for another 14 years until he was almost 100 years old, he believed God, and he trusted in God, and he was justified through that.

I thought, "Okay, in my life, when God comes through for me, there are certain times that I remember," and I will talk about this later on, "but you have to think about the joy that came along with that kind of stuff." I think to myself, the joy when God gave me that prayer. If I was Abraham, the joy that I would have felt when God gave me that promise. I guarantee Abraham was joyful. When God gave Abraham that promise, I cannot imagine how joyful he would be.

Then I think about how joyful he was when he went up with his son, when God told him to sacrifice him. I have three boys; I could not do it. It would not happen. God knew that he would be able to handle it, so He gave him that burden to bear. Can you imagine when God Himself came down and stopped his hand when he was going to plunge that knife into his son's chest to sacrifice him? I guarantee there was some joy there. I guarantee that man said, "Thank you, Lord." I guarantee he got on his knees and praised God for two or three days before he came down off that mountain. The Bible does not talk about that, but I know I would have. I know I would have. Now Abraham knew in the back of his mind, he trusted God so much that he knew even if he did that, God was going to raise him from the dead because that was the picture that we saw at camp. But my goodness, I could not even imagine.

Then we talked about the lame man in John 5 and about how he told us all about the story. You guys all remember when the pool started to churn and when it started to move, when the angel of the Lord came down, the pool started moving. This man, for 38 years, could do nothing. He was

totally lame. He could not do anything. He trusted everybody else to do something for him. He probably could not even feed himself. He tried to get in that pool. I think every one of those 38 years he tried to get in that pool to be first. He probably was laying there some days with his hand right over the pool, waiting for it to stir, and he could not get in that thing. I think the second he saw Jesus Christ come, Jesus healed him, there was some joy. There was joy that did not end. I guarantee it, for however many years he lived on this earth, he was joyful. He probably told everybody about it. I wonder if he ever ran into the Apostle Paul. It would have been a Christian nuclear bomb that went off between him and Paul running into each other. I do not know if it happened or not, but I tell you what, the joy that those two men would have had together. I guarantee he proclaimed the name of Jesus every second he got and every chance he got. That was because he had a personal fellowship with Christ. We are going to talk about that in a minute.

➤ Standing by Faith

The next one we talked about, after justification by faith, was standing by faith on the second day, and he gave the perfect example about David. David went through some trials in his life. We all know him. He failed. He is a perfect example of every one of us in this room about the ups and downs. There was some joy in David's life. I guarantee you that. I cannot imagine. I know for me personally, if I would have failed like David failed, then he knew that there was a punishment for the way he failed with what he did with Bathsheba and Uriah the Hittite. He failed those guys, and then God had enough grace to spare his life and still bless him. He had some things that he had to deal with, with losing the son, but man, I can imagine the joy. I can imagine the joy.

I think about when he was a young man and he was tending to his father's sheep that whole time, and he is thinking, "I am out here. I am worthless. I do not know. It is just me and You, God, but You have something planned for me. What? I am out here tending sheep? This is kind of weird." I know this perfect fellowship that he had with God, but can you imagine when he came to get anointed? The joy he must have had just to be finally used of God, and the joy he had when he killed Goliath, when everybody thought he could not do it, and he was talking about it, and he slung that rock and nailed him, and he said, "See, that is for You, God. I am joyful." I cannot imagine he just walked around bumming like this the rest of the time. Man, he killed a giant. He killed a giant. God only knows how big that thing was. He could have been 18 feet tall for crying out loud, and he killed him with a stone, and then he went over there and cut his head off. There was joy with that. There was joy with that.

➤ Walking by Faith

Then we talked about walking by faith. Is my zipper down? You guys laughed, huh? Man, when you guys start laughing about something I say, I get real paranoid because I have said some stupid things up here. But then we talked about walking by faith, and I will say stupid things up here. Just get with me afterwards and correct me. I am not above that.

We talked about Noah, and this is one that really gets to me because I have thought about this before, even before Brother Dean brought it. Noah, when he was on that boat, building that boat

for 100 plus years, getting scoffed at, getting ridiculed, and getting laughed at, can you imagine the joy he had when he got to get up every day and yell, like Brother Dean said, "Repent! Repent! Repent!" And he got to yell it and scream it and preach every day, and all he had to do was repent and get on the boat. That was his whole sermon: "Repent and get on the boat. God is coming for you." I do not have the voice like Dean did. I heard him all the way down to Arkansas when he was doing it. He had joy in that.

Then can you imagine the joy he had? I am sure there was some sorrow too. When they ridiculed him day in and day out, "What is rain? What is this? What are we going to get persecuted for?" Nobody believed him. And then when God came through for him at the end and that rain started coming up, I bet you there was some joy there for Noah because he got to save his family. He got to save his family, and he knew that God came through for him, and he knew that he was not doing everything for vain.

Then I think about the last one. Oh, I am sorry. There was another one. This one is probably one of my favorites here: the young man with the five loaves and the two fishes. A little boy, just like most of you guys that were at camp. A lot of you guys that were at camp, you feel like, "I cannot do anything for Christ right now. I am just a kid. There is nothing I can do for Christ." But God used that little boy with those five loaves and his two fishes. And can you imagine after he was used and they fed the multitude, they fed the 5,000 with those two little loaves, how much joy there was in that kid's life? Man, I mean, I cannot even imagine it. I cannot even imagine it. And that was walking by faith.

➤ Tried by Faith

The last point that he had was tried by faith, and Joseph. I guarantee there was joy in Joseph's life too. When he got to finally see his family after all those years after being sold into slavery, and the fellowship that they had, and everything that they got to do together, there was definitely joy. So I was thinking about that, and it worked out perfectly because I just want to talk to you guys today about that.

III. The Struggle for Joy After Spiritual Highs

Now here is the problem. We have been at camp; we have had a good time. We all got as close to God as we probably are going to get all year long with the fellowship and the camaraderie that we had. But now what? Here is the problem: now what? We have to go back to the world. We have to go back to our daily lives. We have to go back to all the things that just drag us down and the things that just get between us. But there is a way out of that, and that is what we are going to talk about today. The beautiful thing is, when you are a child of God, you always have a way out. God always provides a way. And you can have that balance even through the struggles with a Christian life.

So we go from a week of constant and close fellowship with God, a Christian high, to our everyday regular lives, and it can be a struggle, and it can be a letdown. Like I said before, this year has been hard for me. I have changed jobs; I work at midnight; it is hard, and it has been a struggle for me. We have had a lot of stressors, and I know every time that you have something

high in your life, you are going to have a low in your life. Like Bob said today, it is just that constant, that consistency in your life and the balance in your life, and you have to keep it going.

But today I want to talk briefly over the next few minutes on joy and the joy that we found at camp. I have a couple of little outlines that you all know; we have all heard them here before, but I want to give a little bit of a different spin on it. Like Bob always says, the price of repetition is learning, and Ecclesiastes 1:9 says there is nothing new under the sun, so I am not going to preach anything new. I do not have anything to worry about there. Did I say that right, the price of learning is repetition? Did I say that right? Okay.

IV. The Source of True Joy: Fellowship with Christ

One thing I want you guys to know before we get into this is that for a Christian man, joy is something that you can lose, unfortunately. You should not have to, but joy is something that you can lose. And for an unsaved man, it is impossible to get. The biblical, true biblical joy for an unsaved man, if you are unsaved here today, I am sorry, you cannot have joy. You cannot have biblical joy. And we will talk about that here in a little bit.

By the world's standpoint, people associate joy with either wealth or happiness or family or friends or their job or something like that. But that is temporary joy. There is a joy that we can have as a Christian that is a different thing altogether. One way that I know this, and Brother Dean talked about this as well, is it is discouraging to see how the world loses their joy so much. It is discouraging how they never can have it. Just one point and example of itself, like Brother Dean talked about, was the suicide rate in this country is astronomical. Man always tries to put something into his life that is unfulfilling, something that does not satisfy, like the song we were just singing. That is why in America today, over 105 people kill themselves every day, because there is no joy. There is nothing to look forward to. What is there? What is there for us if there is no joy? And that is what an unsaved man looks at. I know it is kind of morbid. It is something you guys really do not like to think about. But people just cannot figure out how to keep or get joy in this world. And that is what we want to talk about a little bit today.

Today, I am going to bring you to the Scripture here. I am going to talk in 1 John, 1 John chapter 1. We are going to go to a couple places here in 1 John. I want to talk to you a little bit about this. It is a fitting place that we are going to John because John was a very close friend to God. He actually heard the heartbeat of God when Christ was on the earth. John loved Christ. He did. He had joy. He had unbelievable joy just by the friendship that he had with Christ. I want to give you three small points here about what we can learn about joy in this short little book and how we can get it and how we can keep it.

I want to read here 1 John chapter 1, beginning in verse 1.

1 John 1:1-6

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

Let us pray. Dear God, Thank You for this time that we can get together in Your book, Lord. Help me, Lord, to just give the message to these people that You have given to me, Lord. I know it is very basic, it is very mundane, it is very routine, Lord. But if You are in it, nothing is that way, Lord. Help me to just use the words that You are going to give me to preach to these people, Lord, today. And hopefully, it will be an inspiration to them, Lord. You know I am not worthy to stand behind this pulpit, Lord. I am not worthy to stand behind anything that You do, Lord. But just use me today, and with that, Lord, I will be humble to You and make myself a steward for You, Lord, and just get through today what we need to get through. We love You. Thank You for Your Son, His death on the cross. We all can go to heaven someday and be with You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

All right, I want you to bring your attention to verse 4. It says, "And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." Like I told you before, this is kind of a conditional thing. You can have joy, but sometimes you can lose it. I want to tell you right now, your joy is found through your fellowship with Christ. When you have a fellowship with your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, that is when you get joy. When you are constantly reading your Bible and you are constantly in prayer. The second you get out of those two things, there is no more fellowship, there is no more joy. That is the basic bottom line. That is what he talks about up there in verse 3. It says, "Also, you may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is who? It is with the Father and who? With the Son, Jesus Christ." If you do not have that, you do not have joy. There is no joy in your life.

Then it talks about here in the very next verses, it says, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." And that brings me to my first point.

V. Joy Through Walking in the Light

- 1.) There is no joy in the world. There is joy when you walk in the light. That is when you have joy. When you truly have joy, it is when you are walking in the light.

At this point, I am kind of going to break. We did a little skit up at camp. I want you guys to see this to kind of prove my point. I am going to move this back a little bit so you guys can get up here. This is a skit that we did at camp. When I saw it, I thought, "Oh, man, this is perfect.

Everybody in the whole wide world ought to see this." This really brings the point home when it comes to light versus darkness. I want to tell you right now that light versus darkness, that is the oldest example in the Bible. It is the easiest one for any man to understand in the whole wide world. You want to talk to someone about salvation, you just tell them light versus darkness. And they know it. They get it. You do not have to have any other example. This is just light versus darkness. Go ahead, Darren. Oh, no, hold on. Do not get worried about lighting candles in the Christian church. It is going to happen every once in a while.

[Skit Begins]

"Hey, Angela, you could be way more popular than what you are. If you quit hanging out with all those church friends that all they talk about is their Bible verses and start coming to some of the parties with us from school, you would be so popular. You would have so many friends, and you would really look cool. Look at me."

"Hey, Maddie. So I hear you might be getting a new job. That is awesome. It is okay if it is going to take up a little more of your time. You are not going to be able to come to Bible study all the time or come to church every Sunday. I mean, success is a great thing. I mean, you have to pay your bills. You have to get some savings going on in case you need something down the road. It is okay. God will understand. He will be so happy that you have got this new job, and it will be all right."

"Woody, you are such a good football player. I cannot wait for the high school football team tryouts this year. I know you are a shoe-in for quarterback. You have got it. You hands down have got it. I sure hope you are going to try out, and you are going to do great. You are going to get it. And I know it is going to be a lot of practice. You are going to have to miss some of the youth activities. You are going to have to miss some Bible study just because you will have games on those nights and stuff, but it is all right. God understands. He knows you are talented, and it will be all right. You are going to go out there. You are going to win some games for your school, and you are going to do really great. So do not worry about it. God understands."

"Olivia, you are so uptight. You really need to get out there and live life a little more. You need to get out there and meet some new people. All you do is stay home and listen to Bob Alexander CDs about Sunday mornings, Proverbs. You are like studying Bible verses, and you should get out there and meet some new people. There is so much life to live. There are so many fun things you could be doing. You need to get out of your Bible stuff. You spend too much time in your Bible."

"Danny, I know you are tired. You work hard. You have school. You have so much homework, so many tests. You are on the football team. You are in the choir. It is all right if you miss this Sunday. God is not going to care. He knows that you are working to help raise money for college. He knows that you are playing sports. You are studying to try to keep up your grades. It is okay. Sleep in this Sunday. Because guess what? It is all going to start over on Monday, so you better get some rest this weekend, and Sunday is the only day you have got. Just miss church. It will be okay. It is going to be okay. It is going to be okay if you miss church this Sunday. Because God understands. He knows you are tired. Look at me. Look at me. Danny, it is okay."

God understands. Look at me. Look at me, Danny. Olivia, what are you doing? You are not going to have any friends. Come on. Come on. Do not do it, Woody. Do not do it. You are going to be quarterback. You are going to get a scholarship. It will pay for your college. Do not do it, Woody. Do not do it. Do not do it. You are not going to go to college now. Matty Dagle, do not do it. Do not do it. Matty, you are going to be successful. You are going to have so much money. You are going to be able to buy whatever you want. Do not do it. Do not do it, Matty. Angela, you cannot do this. Do not do it, Angela. Let it shine. This little light of mine. I am going to let it shine. This little light of mine. I am going to let it shine."

[Skit Ends]

Well, you can see why I thought that was such a good example about letting your light, walking in the light. I am going to brag on my wife a little bit. I do not do that too much. I am a bad husband; I know it. My wife, I am going to tell you guys, you guys as a church, as a whole, you all have a great way of letting your light shine. Sometimes you do not even say a whole lot about Christ. It is just the way that you live and your example to the world.

My wife, before camp, I am hard on myself. My wife is a lot harder on herself. She was just sitting at work one day; she was an example at work. She always talks about Christ. She is not shy to talk about Christ, or friends, or coworkers, not shy to invite people to church. She is not shy about it at all. Two weeks before camp, a gal at church was wanting to have a place for her kid to go to summer camp. My wife said, "Hey, our church is putting on a summer camp. Maybe you should send them to camp." She is like, "Oh, yeah, I guess that maybe sounds like a good idea." She wanted to know a little bit about it, so she gave them the flyer. The gal said, "Yeah, I think I will let them go to summer camp this year." I am going to tell you what, those two little boys that came to summer camp, both of them, twins, they both got saved because of her light and because of your light. You guys think that you cannot do anything for Christ. Let me tell you something. All it does sometimes is just you taking the time to live a good example in your life, to set a good example. That is what comes through with it.

We talk all the time about witnessing for Christ and being a light for Christ. This is not even in my sermon, so I am kind of freelancing here right now. We talk all about it. We talk about the three ways that for soul winning is the working of the field and trying to get people. That is what you guys do out here, and the planting. That is what Brother Dean did this year, and then the watering. I tell you what, we got water this year. We did not even have to worry about the Word of God. We got a lot of water this year, and people grew out of that. There were some souls that were saved.

Light versus darkness, like I said, this is the best and oldest example in the book. Everybody can understand light versus darkness. You turn off a light switch, and you are in darkness; you turn on, you are in light. You guys all know me. I love to go hunting. I am terrible at it. I am very bad at it. Thank God you went with my dad so you can kill a turkey this year, but I would not have got it for you. I enjoy it. I like going out and spending time in the woods, but there are some times when I am out in the woods, when I go down into my tree stand in the morning, it is pitch black. It is pitch black, and there are some things that I have learned when you are in pitch black

darkness and you do not have that. It is the same thing spiritually when you are in the darkness. There are a lot of things that come into your life.

- 1.) You have fear in your life. It brings fear. When you are in darkness, you are scared, guys. It is a scary thing. You go into your tree stand at night in the pitch black; you cannot see your hand in front of your face. It is a scary thing. Every little noise you hear, you think it is Bigfoot coming after you through the woods, especially when you are bow hunting. You do not have a gun on you because you cannot do anything with a bow. You are just bait, is all you are.
- 2.) The other thing you have is you have no direction. When you are in darkness, you cannot tell right, left, up, down. It is pitch black. You cannot tell where you are going. I remember one time I was going into my tree stand. I forgot my flashlight. I am one of those guys that do not like to use it because I think I am going to miss the 30-pointer when it comes in. But I am going down into my tree stand, and all of a sudden, I have no light with me, and it is pitch black. I cannot find it. Trees all look alike at night. You cannot really find them, and you are walking into stuff. All of a sudden, man, I had coyotes all over me, and they were just surrounding me. One brushed up against my leg. One was coming and barking behind me. It scared me to death. I had no direction. I was scared. I was scared to death. I had no direction. I could not find my tree stand. I could not do anything. I am screaming and yelling. The only thing that got me, there are two ways at that point. There are two ways. You either hunt close enough to a road when a car comes by, and you get those little headlights, and it gives you just that glimmer of light to tell you where you are at, or you stand by a tree and wait until the sun comes up. That is about the only thing you can do.
- 3.) The other thing, you have no skill and no defense in the dark. It is the same thing spiritually. When you get out of the Bible, you get fear. Fear settles in. You get no direction. When you get out of that fellowship and you start losing your joy, you have fear. You have no direction. You have no skills. You have no defense. They start dwindling. I remember a long time ago, right when I first started coming to this church, I was in a Bible study. I was really into it; I was just on fire, on fire, on fire. I was doing everything I should, telling everybody I was staying up until two, three o'clock in the morning, reading every one of Ruckman's books that I could get my hands on. And this guy came to church. He is kind of off and on, off and on, off and on. And he came up to me, and he could not remember because he had been with Bob for a long time. He is like, "Man, do not ever leave. Do not ever, do not ever just stay with it. Stay with it. Stay with it." Because as soon as you leave that joy and you leave that fellowship of Christ, man, that stuff starts leaving you, and you start forgetting those things.
- 4.) The fourth thing I saw in there with darkness, when you do not have light, you have got no hope. You have got no hope. There is nothing that you can hope for. And that is a scary thing in and of itself.

But how do we keep, how do you walk in the light? Walking in the light is as simple as reading your Bible and praying every day. That is how you do it. That is how you have joy. That is how you have fellowship. And when you have fellowship with Christ, you have that joy. That is what I was talking about. If you do not, an unsaved man, earlier I was talking about an unsaved man

cannot have that joy. You cannot get that joy because an unsaved man cannot have fellowship with Christ. He cannot do it. An unsaved man cannot read his Bible and get comfort from that. An unsaved man cannot pray to God and get comfort from that because they do not have that fellowship. It is a scary thing.

I was talking about earlier, I am kind of a self-taught kind of guy. I really did not get a whole lot out of school. I kid around with my mom all the time. If they did not test us off of what the pictures displayed in the history books, I would have failed out a long time ago. I figured if I could just see the pictures, kind of get a concept of what was going on, I would know it. But thank God there is the History Channel, and I can get a little bit of an education now. I am kind of a dorky guy. A lot of you guys, man, you can remember stats from baseball games. You can remember movie lines. You can remember, I mean, you guys just have a sharp mind. I do not. I do not really have that. I am kind of a dork. I listen to talk radio all day long, and I do not know, I am kind of like an 80-year-old man trapped in a 40-year-old body.

The thing that I learned just the other day is a guy named Nikola Tesla, I think his name was. I never knew who he was until I watched the History Channel. That guy, he was kind of a mad scientist. He came up with the idea that he was going to send out electricity for the world to have wirelessly. I think the world is just kind of catching up with that right now with the little things that you charge your phones on and stuff. You do not have to connect it to you; you just sit on it. I think that is kind of what the concept is. But what he did is he got these big generators. He got these big generators, and here are conductors, whatever they were, and they would conduct electricity into a coil. It is kind of like a hose that you put your thumb on it at the end; it shoots electricity out. You shoot the water out; this shoots electricity out, and the coil goes up and gets smaller and smaller, and a coil goes out. You can still Google it when you get home. It is a pretty cool little thing. But he was going to set these stations up all over the world, and it was just going to hit these stations. There was going to be power out there for everybody. It was a great idea. I think the government probably shut them down on that. That is my conspiracy theory because there is no money on that if you have that.

I remember there was a picture of him that I saw, and he was holding a light bulb. He was holding just a bare light bulb, and it was all powered on. There was light there. There was light to this light bulb. And I thought to myself, "Well, everybody could not figure out how he powered this light bulb." Everybody was stunned by it. They are like, "How did he do that?" And it is neat because they did the test, and they are holding it back. And here is this fluorescent light, and this guy is holding it. And he is like 20 yards away from it. Tesla powered the light bulb up from over a mile away from his conductors. I mean, he did a really good job at it. But that is how we should be. Nobody understood how this guy got the power, how this guy got the light, how this guy did these things. But that is the same thing I thought about it spiritually. That is the same thing. The world should see us. They should see us as a light to the world. They should see us walking in the light, and they should see us as a big powered-on light bulb walking down the road.

Everybody is like, "How did they have that power? How did they have that light? How did they have that ability to be something for, they have joy in this world. How can a man have joy in this world when I cannot have joy in this world? I think I have joy. I have all this money. I have all

this power. I have all this fame. I have all this credit, but I do not have any joy. How is it that this guy who does not have anything can get the joy?" That is how it is. The Holy Spirit working in us, having fellowship with God, gives us that joy. Light versus darkness. Like I said, it is one of the easiest examples, but here is the thing that I am going to say about that. I talked to you about how a Christian can lose his joy. Unfortunately, it can happen. But the great thing about God is He always creates a way to get that back. Verse 7 through 10, there are four conditions to fellowship. I am not going to get into that today. If you want to know what those are, you can talk to Bob on Thursday night or ask that Thursday night, but there are four conditions there to fellowship. And God always provides a way for us to get back into fellowship and get that light bulb turned back on for Him.

VI. Joy Through Not Loving the World

All right, moving on. The second point I have, not only does joy come from walking in the light, the second point I have is joy comes from loving not the world. If you look at 1 John 2:15, it says,

1 John 2:15-17

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Now, if you establish a fellowship with God, you are going to have joy. But this verse warns you about establishing a fellowship with the world. I am guilty of that a little bit as well. But when you have that fellowship with the world, you are not going to have joy because there is not going to be any hope because the world is just here to take you down, to tear you down. It talks about three different things in here. It talks about the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. That is what I want to talk about a little bit.

A couple of weeks ago, Danny gave us a great verse out of 2 Peter 1:4. It says,

2 Peter 1:4

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

When you are a Christian and you have that fellowship with Christ, and He gives you that joy, and you can have that joy throughout your whole Christian life, you have escaped that. When you are stuck in the world and you are stuck in first gear and you are stuck in the mud of this world, you cannot get out of it. You are trapped. You are trapped in this world. You cannot get through it. That is why it says in 1 John and verse 17 here, "the world passeth away and the lust

thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." The Bible says we are to set our affections on things above, not on the things of this world. And that is exactly what it is.

But I want to talk to you guys a few seconds here about:

- The Lust of the Flesh
- The Lust of the Eyes
- The Pride of Life

When you go back to Matthew 4:2, Christ was in the wilderness, and He was tempted on these three exact same things. When He was in the wilderness and He was tempted for 40 days and 40 nights, it says that afterward He was an hungered. Personally, I do not know about you, there are a couple things that when I let my, when we are talking about the lust of the flesh, when I let my flesh get worn down on a couple things, one of them is being hungry. I really get tempted. I really get tempted, man. When I try to starve myself and try to go on a diet, what happens every time? You go to a restaurant, and there is that big old Sunday surprise that they give you, and you get tempted. It is the same thing in the world. I am not going to go over the other things here. That is not the point of it. But in verse 3 of that chapter, in chapter 4 of Matthew, the devil knew he may be able to tempt God because He was fleshly at that point, but he did not have a chance. He did not have a chance. Christ had a fellowship with God. There was no way He was going to let us down. There was no way that He was not going to get that and make it through those temptations because of our sin, for our sins.

But we find in Romans about the world, we find in Romans, the book of Romans talks about the old nature versus the new nature, and it talks about our flesh, and it talks about how corrupt our flesh is, and it talks about the lust of our flesh. I tell you what, there is not much in the flesh that I did not do before I got saved. You say, "Oh, I did this, I did this, I did this, I did this, I was sinning, I was doing this, I was doing this." Yeah, I probably did it too. We probably all did. Every one of us on some level or another did before we got saved. But the thing that you are going to do is you are going to feed that nature that you love, that you want to have a fellowship with. You are either going to feed your old nature, or you are going to feed your new nature. That is something that, man, when you have that lust of the flesh, it is a tough thing. Our flesh, that is one of the infirmities we have, is our flesh. We do not know how to pray. We have an infirmity of our flesh. It is terrible. It is a terrible thing to try to overcome. David, when Brother Dean was talking in camp this week, he was talking about David. And David had an issue with that as well. But he overcame it. He overcame all that. Your flesh will win out every time you fall out of fellowship with Christ. I guarantee you that. Every time you fall out of fellowship with God, you are going to lose that joy, your flesh overcomes you, and you are going to fall out of fellowship with Him. So do not lose your joy. Do not lose that. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit that lives inside of you and feed that flesh. It is not worth it. Your joy is way more worth it.

The second point here, the lust of the eyes. I think the best probably example of this is Samson. The first thing he said in the Bible is what? "I have seen a woman," right? What did you say? Yeah, I saw one. Okay. The lust of the eyes, man. That is it. I thought I was wrong there for a second. Got me nervous. But the lust of the eyes, man, that is something that tears every one of

us down. I think scientists nowadays think that they have got the corner on the market, and they say, "Oh, the eyes are the windows of the soul, and everything that you see affects your body." Yeah, well, the Bible told us that a long time ago in Matthew 6:22-23. Your eyes will steal your joy quicker than anything, guys. Boy, oh, boy. I am telling you, your flesh is bad, but your eyes are worse.

Man, when you see, and that is something that the devil brought to Jesus when He was in the wilderness. "Look at all these, look at all these kingdoms. Look at them all. They could all be yours if you just bow down and worship me." Christ, "I do not have to worship you. I do not have to worship you. My eyes do not have to tell me that. I know better." But man, when it comes to our eyes, holy cow, I tell you what, you can have just read about 12 chapters in your Bible, memorized each verse, been on your knees for 17 hours praying for the lost souls of men and for you to get right. And you can be flipping through the channels of your TV at two o'clock in the afternoon, and something will hit your eyes, and it affects you. Man, I tell you what, I remember last year we were at camp, and I had to go into Walmart to get something for camp, some supplies, and I am walking up and down the aisles. And the first thing I see is some dirty magazine right there on their shelves, not like Cosmopolitan or Playboy, or God only knows, I do not know what it was, but some woman on there half dressed. It is just, you see it, and it affects you. And I went back to camp, I said, "I do not want to leave camp again. I do not want to do that." Instantly, instantly I got affected. My eyes saw that and affected my soul, and it affected my joy because for a split second, I am looking at that, and I am thinking my flesh took over. And those are the things that the devil gets you with every time, every time. TVs, magazines, movies, books, people, places, things, you all see those things, and it affects your soul. Again, in Matthew 6:22, it says, "Your eyes are either light or dark," and that is because you have fellowship with Him. What you should be looking at is His Word every day. You should be looking at it every day to keep your fellowship and to keep your joy. That is what you should be looking at.

The third part of that, the pride of life. Now this is where we kind of, pride of life, yes, that is what I said, pride of life. This is where we kind of get back to the camp theme here with faith. Now I know some of you, we always like to have these little three-point outlines, and one of them that we have heard time and time again with faith is faith, fact, and feeling, right? We have been drilled into that. I hope we have anyways, and I know that Ruckman wrote a book on it. Bob talks about it all the time, but the detective in me sometimes, I like to look at what is the opposite of that? What is the opposite of that? And when I was looking at this verse, I saw pride, and when we were doing our volleyball devotions this year, I looked at this kind of in depth, and we talked about it, those of you who were on my volleyball team, and we talked about the contrast to that.

And to me, the contrast of faith:

- Faith: Faith is your trust in Jesus Christ, putting your faith in Him, putting everything on Him that He will get you through. The opposite of that to me is pride. Pride. "I can do it. I am good enough to get myself to heaven. I am good enough to get through life. I am good enough to deal with my own sins." Dean talked about it at camp. There is Dr. Self-Reliant.

Remember when he was talking about Dr. Jesus? "I can do it. I can do it. I can do it." You are not good enough to do anything. You are altogether evil, and when you bring pride into it, you will fall every time. If I could have done anything to get to heaven on my own, Christ would have never had to come to the cross and die for my sins. This is the big thing. You look in Isaiah 14, talk about the devil. This was Lucifer's main issue. This was Lucifer's main issue, is pride. "I will ascend into the heavens. I will be like the most high God." All those things that he wanted to do, it was all pride driven. When you have faith in Christ and faith in what God can do for you, man, you will not lose your joy. The second you bring pride into it, you absolutely will. You will lose it faster than anything.

- Fact: The second part of that, fact. We have faith. The contrast to that would be pride. We have fact. What happens when you get out of your Bible and you stop reading and praying every day? You do not have fact anymore. You do not have the principles to build on. You do not have those things that you can really ground yourself in. You start getting confused. You get confusion. That is what happens when you lose your joy, is you get confusion. This is similar to how you learned at school. You learn little things, not me, but everybody else. You learn little things. You get those facts. You get those facts. You start building on top of those things. That is what you should be doing when you are reading your Bible and when you have fellowship with Christ. You should be every day learning a new principle in that Bible. You should apply that new principle. You should be learning. You are building that up. We talked about that at camp. The problem is when you do not do these things, you go back to the world, you forget your fellowship with God, you start trusting yourself through pride, and you forget the facts that you learned. You start getting confused. You start letting pride seep in. You say, "I can do it. I can do it. I can do it." I tell you what, the worst feeling is an unsaved man when I was unsaved. The worst feeling in the world is coming up to a problem and dealing with something or someone and not having any idea how to handle it. That is a terrible, it is a scary situation. It goes back to the whole point of, man, what else do you have to live for? Not much because you do not know how to handle anything. You are confused. You say, "Oh, I can deal with this. I do not need to read the Bible. I do not need to get into God's Word." You get confused, and you start living by pride and confusion. You just start making one bad decision after the next bad decision after the next bad decision, and that leads us to the last thing.
- Feeling: Faith, fact, feeling. Well, if you do not have faith and you substitute it with pride, and you do not have fact and you substitute it with confusion, the feeling, the feeling, you do not have feelings anymore. You get callous. You get callous. That is what happens when you lose your joy. You get callous. You become callous to God. You become callous to the ministry. You become callous to your church family. You become callous to what God called you to do. You lose your joy real quick, real quick. But when you have all these things, just like when you have faith, fact, and feeling right, you will not screw up Bible doctrine. When you have all those things right and you have it in order, you will not screw up Bible doctrine. You will not get messed up on your salvation. You will not get messed up on tongues. You will not get messed up on those things. But when you do them this way, when you keep them, you also keep your joy because you do not lose that. You do not lose that.

VII. Joy Through Christian Victories

Okay, point three, coming down to the end here. Point three. Look over here in 1 John chapter 5, verse 3. It says,

1 John 5:3-4

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

This is the only time that faith is mentioned in 1 John. It is the only time faith is mentioned in 1 John, and it is mentioned with the word victory. This is the third thing. You get joy when you get victories in your life. As a Christian man, Christian woman, you get joy when you get victories. This is where I am going to start maybe getting a little bit excited. I hope I do, but some of you guys are yawning and getting a little tired. We have had a long week. It is acceptable. No big deal.

But I remember my first victory in life. I remember my first victory. I remember when I came to church when we were over at the old place at the Pavilion, and we were sitting in almost hard plastic chairs, and I remember getting a victory in my life. I remember the message that Bob was preaching. It was about the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God. Do you think that is a salvation message? Probably not much of one. It was a good message. I mean, I learned a lot, but boy, I was under conviction so bad. I was unsaved, and I knew it. Now I had a lot of religious, Dr. Religion. I knew a lot of religion because I grew up in a Christian home, but I was unsaved.

I tell you what, my first victory that I got was the day that I was sitting in that seat. I cannot call it a pew, but when I was sitting in that seat, and I started getting conviction, and I started realizing, "I am unsaved. I am lost. I am going to die, and I am going to go to hell. If something happened to me right now, there is no saving me." And I started getting conviction. Boy, inside there was a battle, and there was a battle going on. I mean, big time for my soul. And the devil, the devil crept in. He said, "You got saved when you were four." And I am sitting there, and I am not kidding you. I am sweating. I am nervous. I am like, "I cannot do this. I am just going to be an embarrassment. It is going to be an embarrassment to my mom and dad. They all think I am saved." The devil just kept telling me, "Joe, you are fine. You are fine. You are fine. There are no problems with you. You are going to make it to heaven. Do not worry about it. You got saved when you were four." I say, "Well, I remember going in a room. I remember Mr. Rain saying something. I do not remember what it was. I remember maybe I had a booger in my nose, and I might have picked it." I think four years old. I mean, I was just so naive to sin and why I needed Christ. I thought, "No, I am fine. I am fine." But boy, it just kept going back and forth, back and forth. And Bob is talking about the kingdom of heaven, kingdom of heaven, kingdom of heaven, kingdom of God, whatever it was. And he could have been talking about his favorite recipe for all I know. But all I know is I was under conviction.

So I am sitting there, I am listening, Bob talked, and the second that he started giving his message, boy, I remember that victory. I say, "I am done. I am done." I was so beat up. I was so beat up inside that I finally say, "Lord, I am going to trust in You today. I am going to get this thing settled. I am going to do this." And the second that they started singing that song or doing whatever they are doing, and Bob is giving his invitation, man, I remember raising my hand, and I was bawling, and poor John had to take me in the back, and he had to try to show me. I said, "I just want to get this right right now. John, I do not care what you are saying. I want to get this right right now." And that was my first victory. That was my first victory. And let me tell you something today. You guys can have that victory. You can have that victory.

When you look in the Old Testament, when you look in the Old Testament, and this is the example of it, I looked at almost every word that said victory and every verse that had victory in it, and every verse in the Old Testament that talks about victory, almost without fail, you could substitute the word joy in it. Can you imagine all the battles that the nation of Israel had? All those battles that the nation of Israel had, they were victorious in them. And you can almost read right into there that joy is part of that. That is the victory that I got when I had my first victory as an unsaved man. I trusted the Lord as my personal Savior.

I remember reading somewhere, it was one of the books I read. I do not know, maybe Bob even gave this example at one point in time. But we go down to the City Union Mission. We preach to those guys. We give out food. We try to help out all those guys down there. And that is a great thing that we do. But there was a guy, there was a preacher that was going down there, and he was talking to some of these guys. And he was talking to a director, and the director, he told his pastor, he said, "None of these men, none of these men that are here, have ever had a victory, not one victory in their life." That is a sad thing, man. That is a sad thing. Because all they have to do, like me, is just have that first victory, and it just rolls on from there.

But I remember the second time I had joy. The second time I got joy is when I came to church shortly thereafter, and I had a passion for souls and men. I really did. I wanted at that point just to really do something for God. I really had a passion for the ministry. I wanted to do something. But I do not, like I talked before, I do not really have any good skills. I am not a, some of you guys just amaze me the way you do things, the way you talk, the way you can, everything you do. I talked to Logan, we were at camp, did I not, about your trumpet playing. Man, he is an unbelievable trumpet player. He just started. I could not do that with 17 years of practice. I mean, it just does not happen.

But I remember I wanted to do something. I wanted to do something. I wanted to get involved somehow. And I said, "Lord, I cannot do anything. I cannot talk to anybody right now. I cannot even lead anybody to Christ because I do not have it." But I remember that there was somebody that came to church, and they were not saved. Someone told me about it. One of your friends, one of your family, whatever. And I prayed for him the entire church service. That is all I could do. That is all I could do. I could just pray for him. And during the invitation, Bob probably felt that as well and or knew about that. And he gave an invitation. And let me tell you something. I am sitting there praying the entire time for them. And when that guy got up and asked Christ for salvation at the end of that invitation, I had unbelievable joy. There is joy in that. There is joy in

victory. That is a victory, guys. That is not something that you can get from this world. That is a joyful victory.

VIII. The Ultimate Victory and Heavenly Joy

And since then, man, I have had so many victories in my life, so many victories in my life, just knowing that Christ is on my side. But all those victories, all those things that come from being a good Christian man, trying to do right, trying to be in the Bible, trying to have a good, healthy relationship with Christ. All these victories fail in comparison, fail in comparison to my last victory that I am going to get. And if you are saved here today, it is going to fail in comparison with what you are going to receive. I am going to tell you what that victory is. That is finishing the race. That is finishing the race, guys.

You will get joy someday in heaven, someday in heaven. I am going to receive crowns. Someday in heaven, you are going to receive crowns. And sometimes when I sin, I think hard. I think hard about the judgment seat of Christ. When I sin, I think about Christ on the cross and how I put Him there. And then I think about the victory that I am going to get at the judgment seat of Christ. I am hoping. It is a scary thought. I may just be burnt up and burnt into eternity, but let me tell you something. There is going to be a joy. There is going to be a joy when I get to heaven, even if it is one crown God gives me. And I look at Him and I say, "Lord, it is not anything that I did. It is nothing that I did." The devil, he has pride. He is going to see me. He is going to see me get that one little crown. If that is all I get, maybe I will get a million crowns. I do not know. Maybe you will have a billion of them. Maybe you will have, maybe it will just be five. I do not know. But man, when you get those and you turn them over, you say, "Lord, I am not worthy. I am not worthy. You were the one that got the ultimate victory. You were the one that paid the price on Calvary for my sins. You were the one that died for my sins. I am not worthy to have these. I am not worthy to get any of these crowns. I am going to give them back to You, Lord."

And when I can look back at that devil and say, "Pride did not get me. Pride of life did not get me. Pride of life got you, boy. It did not get me. It got you, devil. It did not get me. I am going to give them right back to God. I am going to say, 'You are the one that is worthy of the honor and glory, not me.'" And that is going to be a victorious thing someday. That is going to be a victorious thing. I mean, I do not know if I am going to be able to do backflips up there in my spiritual body or not, but I am going to try one because I have never been able to do one down here.

2 Timothy 4:7

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

And man, I tell you what, when you get those victories in your life, you are going to get joy, and you are going to keep the faith, and you are going to be able to live a victorious Christian life. You are going to have joy like never before. You are going to have joy like never before.

IX. Closing Remarks and Announcements

I want everybody to turn to, if you have got a hymnal, I want everybody to turn to "Faith Is The Victory." It is 402, I believe. I want to close with that. I want to sing that song. And I am going to actually lead it. Talk about making a joyful noise. This may not be it. You might get a laugh out of me. All right, everybody stand, listening. "Faith Is The Victory." Just like we did at camp, real loud. I am going to have Zach make you do a hundred victory jumping jacks if we do not sing loud. All right, here we go. Ready?

Encamped along the hills of light,
Ye Christian soldiers, rise,
And press the battle ere the
night
Shall veil the glowing skies:
Against the foe in vales below
Let all our strength be
hurled;
Faith is the victory, we know,
That overcomes the world.
Faith is the victory!
Faith is the
victory!
Oh, glorious victory,
That overcomes the world.

To him that overcomes the foe,
Fine white raiment shall be given;
Before the angels he shall
know
His name confessed in heaven.
Then onward from the hills of light,
Our victors will
vanquish all the host of night,
In Jesus' conquering name.
Faith is the victory!
Faith is the victory!
Oh, glorious victory,
That overcomes the world.

All right, I am going to turn it over to Bob here. Everybody can be seated, and he will dismiss us shortly.

Thank you, Joe. I appreciate that and all that you had to say today. Folks, we work together here. I told you that when we came into the whole program here of families working together with your children. Our ministry here is for you to help you. And God gave us a great week last week. We had a week where if your kids went to camp, they had something take place in their life that hardly ever takes place. They had a whole week without one influence from the world on the outside. No TV, no video games, no newspapers, no radio, no nothing except the Word of God. And right now your kids are probably in the best spiritual shape they have probably been in maybe for the whole year. They love the Word of God. They love everything about God. They want to be at church. They want to grow. They want to get learned. They want to get taught.

Now we did everything that we could do. We know we are not under the illusion that the responsibility of your child's spirituality does not lie with us. It lies with you, the parents. All we are here for is to help you do your job better. And we did that last week to the best of our ability. And now it is up to you, the parents, to keep going what God did last week by your own life, by your own testimony, by the choices you make, by the things that they see in your life, to help them continue on. This church here is for you to learn the Word of God, but it is for your children to learn the Word of God. When we get a little bit farther into the end of the year and the kids go back to school, we get into our fall program. I am going to have Zach take a Sunday and talk about the program to help your kids throughout the school year and work on from there, just like we have been doing. And we are here for you. But right now today, these kids are probably in the best shape spiritually that they could ever be in, a whole week without any influence from the world. And now they are yours to take home and to carry on that thing. And we are here to help you any way we can because we love you, and we thank God for you. We thank God for what

God did last week. We look forward to the young men and the young ladies going to be baptized and renewed fire in their hearts for the Word of God and all the things that God has done. So thank you for your support. Thank you for sponsoring the kids that went to camp. I can say almost without a doubt, every kid that was sponsored that was not saved probably got saved. And that is to your credit for your unselfish giving. And we thank you for that.

Do not forget tonight at six o'clock, we would like to invite you out to the Funhouse Pizza out there in Lee's Summit. This will be our final time with Dean and his family, and we will have supper together and just have a good time and have some fun and just relax a little bit. It has been a hard week, and you can kind of kick back and relax. I will see you out there in the foyer. You see all the bread on the table. Help yourself to all that. That all came from Hy-Vee this morning. So take that and be glad for you to have it. Do not forget next week, we will be back on our series on our second installment on "The 18 Steps of the Death of America" based on the Supreme Court ruling a couple weeks ago in same-sex marriage. And we will be back on that next week. So thank you for being here today. Let us have a word of prayer, and we will be dismissed.

Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You. Thank You for all You do for us and what You have given us. Thank You for today. Thank You for the message. Thank You for the kids. Thank You for the hard work that went into last week with all the counselors and all of the workers and all the team and everybody who did what needed to be done. Now, Lord, they are the greatest bunch of people on this planet. And Lord, this is the greatest church on this planet simply because they believe a book that You have given us, and we know that You are faithful to that book. And oh dear God, help us to be as faithful to You as You are to us. And we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for a sake we ask it. Amen. Do not forget to restart next week.