

## I. Introduction to John 16 and the "Little While"

Last week, as you know, we are coming through the Gospel of John, and we are in John chapter 16. We saw in this chapter last week how, in dealing with the nation of Israel, He is now moving back into what they will face in the Tribulation period. Chapter 16, for me personally, has always been an incredible chapter. It has always been a real help to me. I remember when I first came through John, and I was contemplating all the different future events in the Bible that the Bible lays out. It was other things along with John 16 that really helped me put my Bible, as far as the events, together and really showed me how it all works through church history and up into the Tribulation period and then on into the Millennium. John 16 just kind of brings you through that.

Of course, we know that it covers the first coming of Christ, and then we know the Church Age starts after that. We know that at the end of the Church Age, we go into the Tribulation, and at the end of the Tribulation, we have the Second Coming of Christ that day, and then on into the Millennium. That is approximately 2,000 years of history, and the events there that are transpiring. He is showing us in John 16 how God came to the Jews; they rejected Him. It moves into the church, you and me, but during that time, God never loses sight of the nation of Israel. All of it is keeping in the proper doctrinal format to show us and to guide us, as the Bible says the Holy Spirit of God will do, into all truth. Showing us the things to come, as we looked at a couple of weeks ago, and showing us really what is of God and what is not of God. God's simple patterns, and He leads us through the Word of God and gives us the truth that we can see it do the work of God, and then obviously, through the Holy Spirit of God, we give the glory to God.

I showed you that it was all built around one little phrase last week, and that little phrase was "a little while." Seven times in just four verses, God draws our attention to that little phrase, and I showed you that it will represent two things. It represents inspiration for you and for me in the Church Age, that there are seven periods of church history, and that "little while" is going to be the Church Age. Then I showed you that as He is dealing with the nation of Israel, this "little while" that you find here seven times is going to be a picture to the Jew of the seven years of the Tribulation that they are going to have to go through. I took you back to the Old Testament, and I took that phrase "a little while," and I showed you eight places in the Old Testament that really defined that phrase to be connected with Israel's time in the Tribulation period. Then we tied it into John 16:21, where He talks about the woman in travail, and we all should know that that represents the nation of Israel in the Tribulation period. He talked about the man child. The man child is defined for us in Revelation 12 as Christ, and then we see the literal birth of that man child in Matthew 2.

## II. The Concept of Joy in the Morning

Then we got into a great concept, and I must tell you before we go any farther in this thing, that this concept—and I have read it many, many times—but having preached it last week and talked about it last week, it disrupted my whole week. It really did. The idea and the thought of the

great concept that "joy cometh in the morning." I know that doctrinally, we talked about this last week, that that is the Second Coming of Christ. That Israel goes through the great nighttime of the Tribulation period, and then at the end of that, when the Day Star of Christ rises and the Second Coming of Christ, the morning of the Millennium, I get that.

How the joy of the Lord—and this was the thing, and we talked about this last week—here is the thing: this joy of the Lord, the Bible says that when it finally comes, they forget all that they have gone through. Folks, that is 5,000 years of heartache. That is, it just did not start in 70 AD. The Jews have gone through horrendous times for over 5,000 years. I get it; they went through it because of their own stupidity and their own hardness of their heart. I understand that, but I cannot tell you, there is no other nation on this planet that has gone through the turmoil and the heartache and through the absolute utter, almost complete destruction than the nation of Israel. We know why that is, because Revelation 12:1-5, the devil hates the nation of Israel. He hates the nation of Israel because Israel produced a man child that is going to reign and rule, the Lord Jesus Christ. He hates the nation of Israel because the nation of Israel takes the land and the Jerusalem that was once his way back in the past.

So I understand that, but the concept that I just, it just, we talked about the ability to forgive, but more important, to forget. He says and tells us that like a woman having a baby, she goes through the great agony and the pain of delivery, all the labor, all of the things that she has to do, the pain of that moment. But then the Bible says, once that baby is born, she forgot all about the pain, the man child. What He is telling us is that no matter what Israel went through for those 5,000 years, when the Lord Jesus Christ comes and establishes the Millennial Kingdom with the nation of Israel, they forget all about the tough times.

I talked about how that translates into your life and my life today. The bottom line, compared to what God is doing in our lives—your family, your ministry—what does everything in this life that is negative really matter? We get so focused off the things of God, lose the joy. We do not lose the joy; what we do is we just make the joy something else. We get the wrong joy, and we think that that wrong joy is going to make us happy. Actually, the wrong joy just leads to more problems. One bad decision usually leads to another bad decision, which usually leads to a lifetime of bad decisions if something does not change. The thing that just kicked me six ways from Sunday this week is the fact that what is our real joy in Christianity today? In your life, what is the real joy? I know the answer to that theologically, and I get that. You say, "Well, the Lord is my real joy." Is He really? That is the question. We live in a Christianity that tells God what He wants to hear. We live in a Christianity that tells God what we want to hear, but it does not necessarily mean that it is really true in our lives. I am telling you, it is experiencing that joy every morning.

*1 John 1:4 These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*

That is the real question today, and I thought about this all week: how petty we are in our lives when it comes to what God has given us or what He has done for us.

### III. The Spirit of Laodicea and Apathy

To me, the book of Colossians, here is the problem, and it is a legitimate problem. I have told you before how every book that Paul writes to the church will line up to one of the seven church periods in the book of Revelation. I have given you those before. We do not have time to go through all of those. The one I want to focus on today is the Laodicean church period. I focus on that because that is the church period that we live in today. When you come through the book of Colossians, you find that the book of Colossians is the book in the New Testament that Paul writes that lines up to the Laodicean church in the book of Revelation that we are in today. In the book of Colossians, you will find the word Laodicea five times. It is the only book in the New Testament outside the book of Revelation. Five times he makes a reference to the Laodicean church, and when I look at that and I do a little investigative study, I found an amazing truth.

Why did he mention Laodicea at all? Why did he say "Laodicea" five times? When you look at it and plot it out, you will find that Colossae was a major, major metropolitan city. It was a great place for trading. It was a hub for a lot of things that were happening, but just 11 miles south of Colossae was the town of Laodicea. I thought to myself, that is a great, for me that is an incredible thing, because you could be in the center of everything that is going on and just drive 11 miles south and be in the city of Laodicea.

Here we are in Blue Springs. 40 Highway is right over here. You realize that if you got in your car and you went out here and got on 40 Highway and were going to go back west, you realize that you are in Blue Springs, but before long, you would come into Lake Tapawingo, or whatever that place is. Then as you moved on, you would come into Independence. Then as you moved on a little more, down around I-70 someplace where the big Walmart is, you would be in Raytown. That is North Raytown. Raytown, I make a lot of jokes about it. I live in Raytown, but I live in the south end of Raytown, and that is different than the north and even the middle. I live in Raytona Beach, which is the very south tip of Raytown, and wonderful beaches, incredible. But you just keep on going down that way, you would then get into Kansas City. If somebody did not tell you when you are leaving Blue Springs, Lake Tapawingo, or wherever it is, and then you are in Independence, and then you are in Raytown, you would never know that you just went through five different cities. Most people do not pay attention to the sign that says "Leaving Blue Springs, Coming into Independence," or whatever. We do not pay attention to that. Why? Because we are so used to just going wherever we want to go. We do not pay attention to that we are going from one jurisdiction to another jurisdiction, one city to another city.

That is what is wrong with Christianity today. Laodicea is so close that many times we just drive through from one city into Laodicea, and we do not even know we have left Colossae. That is our problem today. We have ignored, missed all of the road signs that actually tell us that we are leaving where God wants us to be, and we are entering into where God does not want us to be. I do not care how spiritual you are, and many of you are very spiritual. I do not care how much you know about the Bible, and many of you know a lot about the Bible. This world's dirt is going to get on you. Unless you are going to do yourself in bubble wrap, you are going to get some dirt of the world on you. This is why the Bible tells us about our cleansing every day of the Word of God by washing and regeneration, and not only getting saved but staying clean. What happens is

we just kind of go through life, and suddenly we wind up in a world where suddenly, without knowing it, the spirit of Laodicea begins to impose itself on where your life is.

I see in Christianity today, I am just telling you, I see it. I see in Christianity today a real complacency. I see in Christianity today a real apathy toward what really Christianity is. I am going to tell you right now what happened. We moved into Laodicea, did not understand where we were, and then the spirit of that age has moved into our lives and begins very, when the Bible says over there in Genesis 3:1, "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field." That is an understatement. He does not show up in our lives and just tempt us with something that is so evil and bad. No, no, no. He just allows us to go from where we are at across to Laodicea, and then the spirit of this age begins to take effect on all of us, all of us.

Our so-called issues of life, the things that get us off track, the things that we get our nose bent out of joint about, the things that upset us—it may be something that somebody does to us. It may be something that somebody says to you or about you. It may be you did not get invited to a little thing you should have been invited to. It may be something so trivial that it really, in the great scheme of God's plan, means absolutely nothing. But you know what it does? It affects us. We get affected by what people say, the negative things that come our way. I want to tell you something: there are some real negative days out there for all of us. Those days that you get up in the morning, and from when the alarm goes off, nothing goes right. You are going to have things break. You are going to have things happen. You are going to have catastrophes in your life. You are going to have great disappointments. What overrides that? What brings us to the place where we can live above those circumstances? When the Bible talks about overcoming, I know we have overcome the world. I get that. That is salvation. But there is an overcoming after you get saved to overcome the things in this world that want to stop you.

We have entered, all of us—I am not preaching to you today; I am preaching to me more than I am preaching to you because I got so sick of myself thinking about this, I just had to take it out on somebody. We are so lethargic. We so kid ourselves that our Christianity that we have today is really okay. We do not give God what is right in our life. We give God what is left out of our life that we do not want. We look at the things of God and the Bible, and we pick and choose out of the Bible what we want to apply and then leave what we do not. Then we pretend that we are really doing what God wants us to do.

There is a spirit in this age. I have told you before, I read a book years and years and years ago by an old English guy, and somebody, John, gave me his name, but I forget the name. I cannot remember some of yours, let alone his. It is a thing where he said that the job of every Christian, the job of every Christian in the Church Age, is to identify the spirit of that age that permeates the world. Then, through the Word of God and the Spirit of God, with all the energy he has, he goes against that spirit. That may have been true in Philadelphia. That may have been true in some of the other church periods, but I am going to tell you right now, when it came to our church period, Laodicea, we did not go against that spirit. We embraced that spirit. We let it change us. We let it change our definitions of what it really means to be a child of God. We let it change the calling of God, the reason God saved every one of us. We let it change that God has

called some of you and God did not call some of you. We even actually believe that we have a right to refuse that calling after what He did for us.

I was thinking all this week, I just got to tell you, the spirit of apathy. I got into it a little bit on Thursday, and I had to shut myself down, and I was just going to blow the whole thing.

#### IV. Affluency and Misplaced Joy

The problem with all of us, every one of us, is affluency. We live in the greatest country in the history of the world. No question about that for some reasons, but it is the worst country in the world for Christianity. That sounds like some of you are not going to like what I just said, but it is true. Hear me out. Do not just shut me off just yet, because there are a couple of places coming you are going to want to push that button. But I am telling you right now, this country, without a doubt, is the greatest country in the history of the world. We have more freedom. We have more things. You ought to compare sometime when you walk into a grocery store in a place like Romania, which I was there in the nineties and the eighties doing discipleship with churches. They had a store down there, I guess you would call it a grocery store. I wanted to see what it was like. This is after the wall went down. I got down there at 5:30 in the morning. The line was about 200 yards. When I finally got into the store, they ran out of bread long before everybody got any. There was nothing in that store except on the shelves about five or six bottles of canned something that somebody canned, nothing.

And yet I saw churches there. I saw pastors there. I saw men and women there that had come out of the communist regime of Romania. We had a great revival in a soccer stadium. There must have been 30, 40,000 people there. As I was sitting there listening to the man preach who came over with us, one of the pastors pointed to a building behind us that was open now, very high, and all the windows were full of people. He said, "Before the wall went down, that building was the KGB headquarters. And they would have never allowed what we are having here today." Not only were there 30,000 people, every window and every porch and every balcony was filled with people that wanted to hear the Gospel. You cannot ever get people to come to church today. You cannot even get people to come and hear the Word of God. Why? Because we have too many other things in our world.

It is the same guy. You are looking at a guy who has things in his life. You bet I do. And we all do. I am not downing that. But what I am telling you is this: What is your joy this morning? Really, bottom line, what is the joy that sustains you this morning? That is the question. Is it a new home? Is it a new car? Is it a new dress? Is it a new suit? Is it a new pair of shoes? In this life, we all have to answer this: What is the real joy? I am taking out now the brown lab. That is okay. The Bible says "joy cometh in the morning" (Psalms 30:5). What was your joy this morning when you got up? Was it, "I have got to go to church this morning"? Was it, "Wow, we went to a ball game last night"? Was it this, or was it that? When the Bible says "joy cometh in the morning," I know what it means to Israel. What does it mean to you and me?

Sometimes we lend ourselves to the negative spirits that are around us. Many times they come from God's people. It is not just the world. You get God's people to get negative about something,

and negativity by the devil is like COVID-19. It spreads to other people. It spreads by association. Many times God's people, they just get completely, completely off track, simply because somebody came up with a negative spirit about something. You listen to it. You have left Colossae, and you are down in Laodicea someplace yourself. You do not even know it. You are not doing anything wrong. You are not drinking. You are not running out in the world. You are not doing drugs. You are not doing fentanyl. You only get to do that once, by the way. You are just out there. You let something get into your life that stole your joy. We try to replace it with something else. Buy this, get this, have this relationship, find a boyfriend, find a girlfriend, find a wife, find a husband, find another one, wife or a husband. All of those things is not where the joy is found. But we live in a world today, a Christian world—forget the world, world—the Christian world where apathy has taken over. Nobody has the joy anymore.

I was thinking this week, which in some cases for me is not a good thing to do. I was thinking this thing of joy. Let me tell you, I have a lot of issues and a lot of problems. I give you that. But let me tell you about one that I will talk about. My biggest problem is, and I know why God did it. I know why He did it. I know why He did it, and I have accepted it. I am okay with it. I was born in the wrong time. I am telling you. I was born in 1950. I thank God that I learned what I learned. God showed me what He showed me, and I understand what my calling is. I am not up against God in any way of this. This is my own personal feeling that if I would have had my say in it, I would have been great in the 1700s. I would have been great in 1600s. I would have been great in 1800s. Why? Because people back there actually took a stand for the right things. I would have loved to have been there. Boston Commons, 1740 or so, around there. George Whitefield. I would not have had to have been a great preacher. I would not have had to do anything. I would have been, when George Whitefield preached to Jonathan Edwards, I would have been happy just to run the sound board. Just to be part of it.

Years ago, when I was teaching church history up there in Boston, I taught it all through the Boston, New England states, areas, church after church after church. I had heard that on a particular day that George Whitefield preached in Boston Commons, and 30,000 people came to Christ. I was told there was a plaque in the ground that commemorated that sermon on that day on that spot. It took me four trips to New England preaching, getting off in the afternoon, renting a car, going over to the Commons, talking to the park rangers, talking to everybody. Nobody knew where it was. Finally, I found it. Out there in an open area with trees around it, covered over, was a little plaque about that big, and I scraped the grass and the moss, everything off of it. There it said, "On this day in 1740, whatever it was, George Whitefield preached and 30,000 people came to Christ." That is where I need to be.

Modern day Christianity makes me want to vomit. It makes me like the angel in Revelation 3:16, want to spew it all out of my mouth. I am telling you, I was born in the wrong time. This is my problem. It is also your problem because I cannot preach Laodicean sermons. I cannot get up, get into the Bible, and just pick and choose what I think you want to hear. In the 1700s and the 1600s and the 1800s, you did not have to worry about that. 30,000 people that came to hear one man preach the message, and they got saved. Try it today. Cannot even get them to come to church. Now, why is that? Why have we maybe never had it, had it and misplaced it? Why are we down

just 11 miles south today in Laodicea in our mindset, our attitude, in the way that we look at things? What is the real joy in our hearts today? Honestly.

I know we have a lot of young Christians here, and I am kind of not preaching to you. I am more preaching to myself. You get five, six, seven, eight years to get it all figured out. I get it, and I will be honest with you, all of you are just doing drop-dead great. I mean, I am really proud of you. I really am. You are right on track. But I am talking. Look at the empty chairs this morning. Where are they at? What was a greater joy for them this morning than to be here? You say, "Well, I just do not like the way you are talking." You are going to like it less before I get through. I see people come to church and they sleep through my sermon. You ought to get an award for that. I have turned up the volume when I have seen them back there, and it does not even faze them. They are in a deep sleep. No, they are not in a deep sleep. They are just 11 miles south. Where are you today? Where am I at today? Where are we as a church at today? What is the joy of the Lord for you? What is the joy of the Lord for this church? What is the joy of the Lord in my life? That is the only thing that separates us from Laodicea.

I have some good news and some bad news. The bad news is, I can tell you right now, I am never going to get past this point to finish this sermon this morning. The good news is, I do not have to work on one for next week. The joy of the Lord. What gets us through? Is it your mom and dad's money? Is it your money you have in the bank? What gets you through? Have you ever been a place in your life—and I know some of you have—have you ever been a place in your life where if God did not come through for you, nothing else or nobody else was? Have you ever been in a place where in the simplest things of life, if God did not come down and turn the lock, nothing changed? Honestly, I think that is the best position for all of us to be in, but we have too much stuff.

I saw here a couple of months ago, maybe it is a couple years ago now, that a young man, 18 or 19, he killed somebody, shot him. Clearly on tape, everybody saw it. It was a slam dunk case. His defense lawyer, and the defense lawyer, his argument was that the reason why this kid shot somebody is because his parents had given him everything all of his life, and he knew nothing about the value of anything because they were rich people, and through the affluence of them giving him everything, that is why he did it. I do not have a problem with that. I really do not. Some people say that is not. No, I get that. I am okay with that. I really am, but the cure for that is the electric chair. The cure for that is lethal injection. The cure for that is if you are 18 or 19 years old, go into prison for the rest of your life and meeting Bubba. Not our Bubba. The really big Bubba. This world is nuts.

I am going to say this. It is nuts because preachers are not doing their job. I get that, but come on, folks. How long can we use that as an excuse? Do you not have the Holy Spirit of God inside you that is supposed to lead and guide you into all truth? What if you do not have a pastor someday? Do we just all run up the white flag and surrender to the world? You see, we can use excuses of terrible churches, terrible pastors, and all those things, but that only goes so far if you are really truly saved. You have the Holy Spirit of God inside you this morning. So it does not matter whether I preach good or I do not, really. It does not matter whether I use a King James Bible or I do not, really. It does not matter if we have Thursday night Bible study, really. What

only really matters is to you, what is your joy? Because when you do not have me, you do not have the book, you do not have a church, the only thing that is going to get you through is the joy. Our problem is we are 11 miles south, and we have allowed the spirit of this age to override the Spirit of Almighty God. I thought this week of the joy of the Lord. What is my real joy? What is your real joy this morning?

## V. Historical Examples of True Joy

I thought going back to the Moravian missionaries, Count von Zinzendorf. He had a great estate in Germany, and he was saved, and he opened up a training ground for men and women to go to the mission field. This is back in the 1500s, 1400s. The Moravians to this day are known for their aggressive missionary spirit. It is totally different from modern day missions that we have in Baptist circles today, which I think is a joke. I think it is laced today with missions with a Laodicean spirit that you can give yourself to God, just do not give it all. Unfortunately, that has permeated into every one of us. Let us give God something, but just not give it all to Him. My joy in the morning is going to be what I look forward to that will not be connected with the Lord.

I thought about the Moravians. When they trained them, Zinzendorf and Spangenberg was his partner. When they trained them, got them ready, they sent them on a one-way trip. They got a one-way ticket to where their desire was that they were going to serve the Lord. I thought about that. They went everywhere. One of the Wesley brothers came to America in the 1600s, 1700s because he heard about the great revivals that were taking place. He was not even saved. He flopped on his face, was coming back over to England, discouraged, when an old Moravian missionary got ahold of him in that ship and won him to Christ. They were everywhere.

We live in a world today, secular and Christian, that is against slavery. Slavery is the big issue today. We fought the Civil War, the Confederates. Now today, in the day and age we live in, where this world is going, we have got to change all the names of the forts down south because they are all African Confederate generals, and everybody is a racist and embraced slavery. Of course, that is the world today. Everybody, if you do not know, to me—and this is my problem—I have one word in my life that I look at everything that everybody tells me and everybody says. This is my stand. I look at one thing, one thing only, one word: consistency. Are you consistent in what you believe? You tell me that we are going to change Fort Hood. We are going to change Fort Bragg. All of those were Civil War generals on the Confederate side. Why, even in Kansas City, they wanted to take down statues of whoever was a general, Andrew Jackson, because he had slaves. You see, we are so hung up on the spirit of apathy and so screwed up in understanding anything connected with God. But here is the problem that comes into your life and my life: You do not escape it. You do not escape it at all.

So I look at a guy like that, and they say, "Well, you know what, all of our founding fathers, they had slaves. So we need to change their names. We need to get done with, do away with Columbus Day. We need to do away with anybody that is connected with slavery." But the inconsistency is that you will keep all your money that has the pictures of all these slave owners on it. Your convictions only go so far. When your convictions only go where you can play it safe, you are not consistent. If you really were consistent, you would want to change the names of the

forts. You would want to do away with President's Day. You would want to get upset with Abraham Lincoln. You would want to do Ben Franklin and George Washington. They all had slaves. If you are going to do that, and that is your absolute, firm belief, what are you doing carrying pictures of them around in your wallet? No, I do not believe that. So give them to me. I will properly dispose of them for you. Why will they not do that? They are not consistent. To me, one word validates everything I see, what anybody tells me: Are you consistent?

I talked to Jehovah's Witnesses one time. They hate America. They will not have an American flag. They do not recognize American days. They are anti-American totally and completely. They are anti-war. They are anti-everything America. So I talked with them one time, and I let him go on for a long, long time, lay out all the things that, obviously, I was not going to invite him to a Memorial Day picnic. Then I asked him, "Do you know how I know you are not a real deal?" He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Do you know how I know that you are a phony?" He said, "I do not know what you mean." I said, "Here is how I know you are a phony. You just laid out this total gas bag of what you believe and what your church stands for. Let me ask you a question: Do you pay taxes?" "Well, yes, I pay taxes." I said, "Do you know how much your tax money goes to the war effort? Do you know how much your tax money goes to the federal government for all the things you do not stand for? You see, you will take a stand when it does not cost you nothing. And you like to play the big guy, 'I am standing for this.' No, you will stand where you can play it safe. If you really believed it, you would be a missionary to the federal pen. But that would cost you something. Phony man, consistency, consistency."

When I look at the Moravians, I see consistency. Slavery. I would not own slaves. I am going to tell you right now, when you go back and study real history and not American profile Roman Catholic slash demonic stuff. Anybody know who John Jasper Ray was? John Jasper Ray was a missionary to the slaves. He was a black man. Many of the slave owners, though they owned slaves, many of the slave owners created churches for their people, created pastors for them, gave them everything that they needed, and would have this guy and other guys like him come and preach to them. You never get that on CNN. You will not get that in the woke crowd or with the squad. You get that in the truth of history. But who cares? I am just a raving old man up here. I may be a raving old man, but let me tell you something, buddy boy, I am consistent. Are you? The day they tell me I cannot preach the Word of God anymore is the day I will open up a prison ministry. Just that simple. I will not kowtow and say, "Well, you know, yeah, I am going to just..." No, no, no, no, no. You do not know if there are certain things in our lives as Christians that we die for. When we are faced with them, we are consistent all the way to the end.

The Moravians, you know what they did? Many of them, they sold themselves into slavery so they could be missionaries to the Africans that were in the slave trade. Where do you think their joy was? Let me ask you a question. If tomorrow you gave up your freedom, that you could not decide where you are ever going to go again, you could not decide anything about your life, somebody else now told you what to do, decided what you did. You had no say. You gave up every one of your rights when you put your signature on the dotted line and you sold yourself into slavery. Where is the joy in that? Could any of us here have the joy in our hearts if we

actually did that? Nobody forced them. They had a calling because of what God had done for them, and they realized something that we do not realize today.

You know that in Philemon, when Paul dealt with a runaway slave, he did not send him to the Democrats or a sanctuary city. You know what Paul said? He says, "You go back and you be a good slave because freedom is not designed by who your master is other than the Lord Jesus Christ." You know what those Moravian missionaries knew? You know where their joy was every morning? That even though as the world looks at it, as we look at it, and we would never, never do it, they knew they were free. They knew that "the king's heart is in the hand of the LORD" (Proverbs 21:1). They knew that their master would only do what God allowed him to do. They really had a relationship, and that is where their joy was. Where is our joy this morning? 11 miles south. We never think of doing that. I mean, if you went home to your family this afternoon—I know we do not have slavery today, but say we did, say we are back—if you went to your family today and said, "Hey, I am going to sell myself into slavery. I will probably never see you again, but this is what God has called me to do." Joy. What is our real joy? I am sure some of you have excuses already in your mind as to why this is goofy. Here, let me give you a little more piece of the puzzle. When we get to the judgment seat of Christ, maybe God will let you stand by side one of those Moravians, and you can tell him how stupid he really was.

*David Brainerd (1718-1747) I thought of David Brainerd, 1718 to 1747. He married Jonathan Edwards' daughter, who we all know was a great preacher. God called him to be a missionary to the American Indians. He contracted tuberculosis. He died at age 29, never having established one convert with the American Indians. He could have played it safe. He could have said, "Well, I really wanted to serve God, but God gave me tuberculosis, so I am going." When COVID-19 hit, we had people that left churches and have not been back since. Maybe God will let you stand next to David Brainerd, and you can now tell him how stupid he was. We sell his diary in the bookstore, *The Diary of David Brainerd*. In that diary, he talks about the woods of Pennsylvania and the deep snow drifts, and how he is racked with fever and pain from his tuberculosis, and how he knelt under those pine trees in the deep snow with a fever, melting his snow down to the ground, where for eight or nine hours he prayed for the American Indians. Never went himself. People look at that today who live 11 miles south, maybe some of you. You think what a waste that was, how stupid that was. Here is a man who has a justifiable disease that is terminal. He had the right attitude of heart. He had the right desire, but God gave him tuberculosis. He is a mean old God. So what would we do? I will tell you what we would do. We do the same thing we did with COVID. We blame it on the disease. We check out of church and never go back. Now this morning, wherever they are at, wherever they go, their joy is something else.*

He wrote his diary. After his death, a man by the name of William Carey, Robert McCheyne, Henry Martyn—they read the journal and the diary of David Brainerd, and they were moved to such a passion and compassion for what this guy's heart wanted to do, that the three of them, God used his life and his death and his tuberculosis, and died burned out at 29 years old, to raise up three of the greatest missionaries in the history of the world of missions, those three men. God only knows how many other thousands by what he wrote, but he never did. He got up every morning coughing his lungs out, weak, fever. What do you think his joy was? New bedpan? New

medicine? Maybe God will let you stand next to him, and we can tell him how stupid us living 11 miles south thought that really was. He could have played it safe like we do. He probably could have got another, what, 10, 15 years out of his life, maybe, if he had just played it safe.

*Adoniram Judson (1788-1850) I think of Adoniram Judson, 1788 to 1850. He was the missionary to Burma. He said, "I will never leave Burma till the cross is planted here forever." He labored in Burma for 34 years. In the first 12 years in Burma, he only produced 18 converts. In the first 20 years that he was there, he labored to put the King James Bible in the language of the Burmese. He was arrested by the government, thrown into a Burmese prison with all the filth and the stench and everything imaginable in a place like that for 20 months. He was tortured. He was starved. He lived amongst the filth that was unbelievable. During that time of those 20 months, his wife and baby both died. He never saw them again. What do you think his joy was? All he would have had to tell the government was, "I am done preaching." And he would have been a free man. All he would have had to say was, "You are right, I am wrong. I will never preach again. I am getting out of here, going back to America, getting my wife and baby, and I am heading out of here." And he would have been on a ship back to America. But that was not his joy. That would be our joy. Human nature would say, "Well, I came over here to do God's work, and God threw me in prison. I am done."*

Like Jeremiah did. Remember Jeremiah? He quit preaching. They took him and put him down a dung hole. But he got him out. He says, "All right, that is done. I am not preaching anymore." He actually told the Lord, "Lord, I am not preaching anymore." And God says, "Okay, if that is what you want to do, but I want to tell you something. Here is the rule: You cannot ever speak in My name again." He says, "Good, fine, good deal, good deal. I am done. I am going back to Jerusalem. I am going to get me a little bar down there on Sixth Street, and I am just going to have a good time." So he is walking down the street there. Here comes the parade. It is Gay Liberation Day. They all got rainbow signs. They are all talking about, "We love gay. We are gay. This is the way. Oh, wow. Way. All that stuff. Down with God, upward gay. God is a transgender. Oh, we love it." That old boy looked at that thing. A vein started popping out on his neck. He got madder and madder as they walked down there, trashing God and trashing everything about it, and this godless world, just like today. He stood there, and he walked, and he walked, and then he just could not stand it. He says, "You are not the saint of the Lord, you are all going to hell." God showed up and said, "Uh-uh-uh, I told you, you quit. You can never preach in My name again." You know what Jeremiah said? Oh, I wish this was our problem. Oh, God, I wish every one of us had this problem. You know what he said? He says, "Lord, I tried to quit. I tried to go 11 miles south. I tried to go away and never preach again, but that word was like a burning fire down inside me, and I could not stay." Wish we had that problem. "Yeah, Lord, there is a burning fire inside of me."

When he is in that prison, and when he finally gets out, and he thinks he is going to see his wife and baby, and then he is told that they are dead. Where was his joy at that point in time? When you and I go through things that could not even compare to this, where is our joy in the morning?

*Robert Moffat (1779-1843) I thought of Robert Moffat, 1779 to 1843. That is what I should have been born, man. I should have been with these guys. I am not saying I would have done what*

*they did. I probably would have just been happy to pull point guard on them. I do not care. I would have done, but back then it was real. Not real today. The proof of that is that you will hear what I am saying today, and right now you ought to see your faces. They are ugly. Right now you ought to see your faces of what I am saying, but 20 minutes after this service, you will be 11 miles south, and you will feel better.*

Go back to Adoniram Judson for a moment. He says, "I will never leave Burma till the cross is planted here forever." When he died in 1850, he had established 100 churches and 8,000 converts.

Robert Moffat, 51 years in Cape Town, South Africa. Buried his wife and three of his five kids on the mission field in Africa. Two stayed and became missionaries to carry on after his death. He did not lose all five of three of those kids at the same time. Where do you think his joy was in any of that? I mean, you buried the first one. I have never buried a child, and praise God, I hope God I never will, and most of you have not, some of you have, but I can only imagine how hard that must be. Here you are in a foreign field. Do you not know that when he put that first baby in the ground, or that boy or girl in the ground, do you not know the devil worked him over and said, "You know what, if you had stayed in America and played it safe, you would not be burying one of your kids"? Do you not know that happened? If you do not know that it happened, you do not know how it works very well. When he put the second kid down, right next to the little mound where the first one was. Where do you think his joy was at that point in time? When his wife died? Where do you think his joy was? Do you not know that he had friends in his life and people in his world that told him he should have just quit and cut his losses and go back? Do you not know that predestination was rampant back then in that time? Do you not know there was plenty of people that he associated with who said, "What are you doing, man? These people are predestined. You do not have to be here. If they are going to get saved, they are going to get saved." He could have played it safe. He could have justified him going back and quitting after he lost the first kid, second kid, his wife, third kid. But there was a spirit in that family that the other two kids, two boys, they went through all of that too. They saw and understood the calling of God in dad's life. So when he was gone, they stayed and carried on.

Let me ask you a question. When you are dead and gone, what will your kids be carrying on for you? That is an honest question. I know you do not like it. This is reality time. It is a fire extinguisher right here. If you catch on fire, we will put you out. Honestly, what legacy do you have? Can I say something? I do not care if I can or not, I am going to say it. You are not going to like this one. You are better off. I am better off. I am better off with our children dying and being buried on the mission field of God than to be left to the world. I know some of you do not get that. It is okay. When you get to heaven, maybe you can stand next to him and tell him how stupid he was. He should have left after the first one, certainly after the second one. Your wife, who is going to take care of the rest of the kids? He had every justification and logical reason to go and come back and to stop what he started because mean old God took his kids on the mission field after he surrendered to go to God. You know what kept him there? His joy. I am not saying it was joyful to bury those kids. Do not misunderstand me. I am not saying it was joyful to bury his wife. I am saying the joy of his life—and we cannot even identify this today—was the calling

of God in his life that he was doing what God wanted him to do. He knew if he lost these kids here in the mission field, this life was only temporary, and he would see them on the other side for all of eternity. You know the second problem we have? We do not believe this life is only temporary. Do not give me that cash. Why? Because we are living our lives like we are going to be here forever.

*Mary Slessor (1848-1915) Mary Slessor, a single woman to Africa. Most girls today, young girls today—this is not a criticism, this is a product of our society—they can never be a Mary Slessor. Some of you parents let your kids, your young gals, when they are 12 and 13, dress like they are 20 and 21. You wonder why they are bored crazy at 15 and 16. I am telling you right now, Mary Slessor was not crazy about boys. She was crazy about the Lord. I know that the natural response of things, everybody wants a husband, everybody wants a wife. It is a natural thing. You young kids growing up and want to get married, you want to find somebody that you can spend the rest of your life with, I am all for that. I think that is great. I think that is really good. The problem is most of you are looking in the wrong places. You say, "How do you know where I am looking?" Because I saw you about 11 miles south, thumbing a ride along the road to 40 Highway.*

*Mary Reed (1854-1943) I think of Mary Reed, 1854 to 1943. She was a missionary to India. She got sick. Had to come back to America. Checked in with the doctors in the hospital to see what was wrong with her or try to get her health back. They gave her the unpleasant news that she had contracted leprosy in India. She never missed a beat. She returned to India as a missionary to lepers. She spent 52 years caring for them, bathing them, feeding them. You know what her joy in the Lord was? Here it comes. Her joy in the Lord is that God gave her leprosy. She could have stayed home. She found out she had leprosy. She could have just checked into it in some place and just spent the rest of her life that she had and did the best she could. Eat right, do all the things that she is supposed to do. But no, she went back to the armpit of the world, India. For 52 years, she was a missionary to lepers.*

When COVID-19, I am going to go back to it again. When COVID-19 hit this country and Christianity, some of God's people never came back to church again. Why? You are 11 miles south, pal. It is okay. Not angry at you. I have all the respect for you in the world. I love you very much. I would do anything in the world to help you. My only prayer for you is that you get to stand beside her at the judgment seat of Christ and tell her how stupid she was. She should have played it safe. Why would you go back into that kind of situation again? Why? I mean, you already went once with the right attitude of heart to serve God, and God gave you leprosy. You know what we do? We just say, "Okay, God, I did the best I could. I am going back now and find me a sanitarium for lepers. And I am just going to kind of chill out and do the best I can. And I will pass out a few tracts there." Because the joy in her heart was the burden that God gave her to India. She loved God enough. She cared enough about God that she simply said, "Lord, if this is what You have given me, then I accept this as my calling. And I am going where I can do the best with what You have given me." That was her joy of the Lord. Now, you think it was not hard and tough through those 52 years? I guarantee you it was. We experience nothing like that. And we so easily quit. She had to carry people to bathe them, and their pieces, their ears were falling off,

their noses were falling off, their fingers would fall off. She held on to them and took them down and washed them and bathed them. You come to church, and somebody looks at you sideways, or you do not get what you want, and somebody does stuff, and you quit coming to church, or you get mad, or you grab an attitude. You know what your problem is? It is okay. You are a really nice person, and I love you, but you are just 11 miles south. That is where you are at.

*Unnamed Missionary to Haiti*I thought about the little girl we have in this church that most of you do not even know who she is. She has a little office upstairs here that we created for her. When we bought the church and I was coming through, there were some people here from the church moving their stuff out, and I saw this gal. I introduced myself to her, and I told her who I was and that we had just bought the church. She looked at me and she said, "Oh, she says, 'Okay,' she says, 'then I will get my stuff together and I will move out.'" I said, "Wait a minute, you want me to get your stuff together and move out?" She says, "Oh," she says, "Pastor did not tell you." I said, "No." She says, "I am a missionary to Haiti, and I am a single young lady, and I went to Haiti and I worked down there with a bunch of people teaching them the Bible and discipleship and all of the things, and then when the government collapsed, the American military had to fly down and airlift her out because she was in great peril and great danger." She cannot go back to Haiti now. So you know what she does? She has a little office up there. She comes here almost every day. She gets online and she probably teaches four or five hundred ladies down there the Bible. When you got kicked out and had to get airlifted out, it would have been an easy thing just to say, "Forget that. God, I went down there, and they said, 'You closed the door. You closed the door. You closed the door.'" When she told me that story, I said, "Darling, you are not going anywhere." Before, all she had was a little corner up there, I created a whole office for her. I said, "You come and stay and do what you have got to do." She slipped me a little note a couple of weeks ago and told me, "I just want you to know that we just delivered 500 Bibles down here to the Haitians." You would not even know where she was here. She is that kind of a woman. She is not married. Probably never will be. Why? Her joy is her mission to Haiti.

*John Paton (1824-1907)*I think of John Paton, 1824 to 1907. He went to the New Hebrides Islands in the South Pacific. When he went there, the island was filled with cannibals, very dangerous. He established a mission there to try to win them to Christ and to do the work. He had a total of five kids. His wife and baby died. He buried them. For six months at night, he slept on their graves so the cannibals would not dig them up and eat them. So the cannibals would not dig them up and eat them. Where is the joy in that? If we were in that similar situation, and we lived in an island of cannibals—which we live in a nation of them, not just an island of them—and you lost your wife and kids, and you know that you had to sleep on their graves for a period of time because these guys that you are trying to win to Christ would actually dig them up and eat your wife and your baby. Would you not think it was time to go home?

This is my problem. I should have been born back then. I am not saying I would have done anything great. I probably would not have, but that is okay. It is the mindset. I cannot stand it. I cannot stand God's people anymore who do not care, who get their nose bent out of joint about this, who break fellowship over this, who get upset with this, get upset with that. Look, there is a

calling here in Christianity. We have so much that we have lost the real joy. The real joy is not coming to church or coming to Thursday night and opening up the Bible, coming to Bible Institute, getting into the book to learn all you can. That is not the joy anymore. The joy is what I have in life. I get it. You are not talking to somebody who does not understand in this world we live in, and you understand in this world we live in, there is a lot of things that we do that it is okay, and there has to be a balance. I understand that. I am not talking about that at all. You have to figure out your own balance. My problem is, where is your joy this morning?

## VI. The Core Problem: Misplaced Joy and Self

What is our biggest problem in life as a Christian? I know we like to think it is the person sitting next to you, or maybe the person preaching to you, or the person that you do not like, have an attitude against, or how somebody snubbed you. All of those things are never going to go away until Jesus comes back. All of those things that we think of—the Democrats, the Republicans, Trump, Biden, Nancy Pelosi, Kamala Harris—all of those things that we look at and we think are the real problem today, they are not even remotely the problem that we have. You know what the biggest problem we all have? It is ourselves. You are the biggest problem you have today, and I am the biggest problem I have, and the real problem we all have is we do not know how to place the joy in the right place. It overrides all the stuff that is out there.

## VII. The State of Modern Christianity and the World

What you are seeing now is only the beginning of where it is going. Everybody is talking about the midterms, the midterms, the Republicans. Let me tell you something. It does not matter who does what in this country. This country is shot. I mean, you are talking now where, when your kids go to school, when they are little kids, when you should be teaching them in the Bible and teaching them the right things about God, you know what they are being taught in school? They are taught to question, are they really a young man or are they really a young girl? They are being bombarded with that. Kids are very impressionable. You have a thing now where drugs are rampant, guns in school, everywhere. Everybody that goes out, and most of the gun people who kill people in mass shootings are kids in school. You have places now in the Kansas City area where they are not only saying it is okay if you are a man or a female and you do not know which one you are. Now they are saying it is okay that if you want to identify with being an animal. Whether you believe this or not, it does not matter to me, but there are a couple of schools in this country that are actually putting litter boxes in the ladies' room so that is where they can go to the restroom because they think they are an animal. This is the world your kids are going to inherit if Jesus does not come. This is where we are at. In Europe, they are already talking about that you can legally marry your pet. This is where it is going.

The midterms are not going to change that. Getting a Republican president versus a Democratic president is not going to change that. America's problems are a lot bigger than politics. America's problems are that it is filled with God's people who have dumped the Word of God. Not the world; the world never had it. God's people who have dumped the Word of God. We were told that the Word of God in our graph was the salt of this earth, and the salt, earth now, salt has lost

its savor (Matthew 5:13). You have millions and millions and millions and millions of people in America who say they are Christians, who the spirit of Laodicea has put their joy someplace else, and they are all congregated just 11 miles south.

This is your biggest fear. This is the biggest fear for your family if you still have any remote connection to them. This is the biggest fear for every one of you here with your little kids growing up in this church. This is what it is going to take. This is what it is going to have to be. You are going to have to face it. You are going to have to deal with it. It is not going to go away. Our only redemption is if the Lord would come this afternoon, which praise the Lord if He would. But until that point, we are to occupy until He comes. Your biggest obstacle is where you place your joy. For Israel, it comes at the Second Coming of Christ. "Joy cometh in the morning" (Psalms 30:5). For you and me, it ought to come every morning. You get up every morning understanding your calling, understanding what God is going to do with you, understanding the price you are willing to pay, understand that nothing is going to get in the way of that, and come into the point where you develop that Philadelphia mindset within the Laodicean church.

## VIII. Conclusion: Redefining Our Joy

I hate the 20th and the 21st century. I love the people in it, but I hate where this is at. Your mom and your dad, even if they are saved, unsaved, you talk to older people, even if they are unsaved. You know what they will tell you? They will tell you they remember the way it was 50 years ago. They will tell you they remember when gas you could fill up your car with the change you had in your pocket. They will tell you how simple life was back then. They will tell you how everything today is absolutely out of control. You do not control much; your cell phone and your computer control about everything in your life. I look at your kids, even during church service, doing Bible study. They are here, out there, out here someplace. All they are is on their phone. I thought to myself, I never say anything. It is none of my business. But I think to myself, if they spent as much time in the Bible as they do on their cell phones, they would be Bible scholars, and they would be winning the world to Christ. That is their joy. That is what killed me all week this week. Forget you, me. Where is my joy? I mean, you give yourself to people, you give everything you have got, you realize that you only have a short time left probably, and you just pour yourself into it. Even in that, with all the people you have got to deal with and the stupid problems you have got to deal with and the petty stuff, that means absolutely nothing compared to eternity. Easy to lose your joy.

I think that is the first time in the history of 50 years in preaching I ever just preached the introduction. I never got the message. Good news and bad news, as I said. Bad news is I did not finish the sermon. The good news is I do not have to worry about one for next week. There is a difference in it. I want you to know, and I am done, I understand. I am not mad at anybody. I do not take things personal. The reason I do not take it personal is because I understand why it happens. I found a long time ago it is better for me just to preach a little harder, give a little more oomph to it, to try to get people to see the truth than it is to get the attitude towards somebody that that is where they are at. You do not fix anybody that way. Let the Holy Spirit of God fix them. You just preach a little harder, get it a little more, nail it this way, come at it from another

angle. But I am just telling you, this is our problem. We are just too far south, about 11 miles. The Spirit of Laodicea has just crept in like a morning fog bank on a New England coastline and engulfed all of us. It is a fight. It is going to take somebody who really has the calling of God in her life to make that fight count. This is why. History. Learning what real Christians paid the price for so you and I could pay the same price.

Father, thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We do love you. Thank you for all you do for us today. Thank you for the Word of God, for its truth, for its power. Thank you for these dear people, and I love them dearly. Lord, I know that we all struggle with the same things. I am not immune to it. Nobody is. But Lord, certainly, as one of the great founding fathers said, when they are up against the British, "If we do not hang together, we will certainly hang separately." We need to pull together and hang together. We need to redefine where our joy really is. That means we have to dump some things, and we dump some things. Maybe it does not. It is just a good balance with things. But we need to ask ourselves, what are the real important things of life? Then figure all the other good things that we want to do with our kids and our families and all the things that we do in the midst of that. We need to build our families through the Word of God, not around the Word of God. We love you. Thank you and praise you. In Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen. God bless you. You are dismissed. Do not forget, can Tandy get some flyers up here. Next week you have got the meeting right after church. Thank you.