

Enjoying God Sermon Series

Mother's Day Joke:

Things my mother taught me:

- My mother taught me about RELIGION.
"You better pray that stain will come out of the carpet."
- My mother taught me about TIME TRAVEL.
"If you don't straighten up, I'm going to knock you into the middle of next week!"
- My mother taught me about LOGIC.
"Because I said so, that's why."
- My mother taught me about FORESIGHT.
"Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you're in an accident."
- My mother taught me about STAMINA.
"You'll sit there until all that spinach is gone."
- My mother taught me about WEATHER.
"This room of yours looks like a tornado went through it."
- My mother taught me about the CIRCLE OF LIFE.
"I brought you into this world, and I can take you out."
- My mother taught me about ANTICIPATION.
"Just wait until we get home."
- My mother taught me about GENETICS.
"You're just like your father."
- My mother taught me about WISDOM.
"When you get to be my age, you'll understand."

I understand! I understand! Thank God for mothers!

Enjoying God...

- I. Introduction to subject.
 - a. Over the past few weeks I have been reading from John Piper (a noted pastor and author) and came across a statement that shook me to my core. This statement rattled everything in my life; from the way I spend my time to asking myself what really matters in my life.
 - b. *"God is most glorified in me when I am most satisfied in Him."*
 - i. At first glance this statement seems pretty simple. But as I began to read into what it was saying and trying to define what the statement meant, I discovered that it has repercussions that every Christian needs to come to grips with.
 - c. Last weekend, we got to learn about what worship is and how to do it in a corporate setting.
 - i. We learned that we are called to *"Worship (love) the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." (Mk 12:30)*
 1. We learned that the key is the heart.
 2. Did most of you experience worshipping God on some level last weekend?
 3. How many of you would even say, "Whew, I needed that! It was good to enjoy God on Saturday, Sunday, etc."
 - ii. Now I wonder if you picked up on the flaw of that statement "It was good to enjoy God on Saturday, Sunday, etc".
 1. We enjoyed God during worship services.
 2. But what about the rest of the week? What about yesterday morning? What about at work on Friday?
 - a. If you are like me, you don't spend all your time thinking about God, much less "enjoying" Him all the time.

- b. In fact, you probably are caught up in the many demands of life.
- 3. But if worship's key is the heart; then worship's place is not just in the church building. If that were the intent of the command, then we would have heard, "Love/worship the Lord with all your heart, mind, soul and strength whenever you are gathered together as a church body."
- 4. But instead, we were called to worship and love Him in all we are and all we do.
- 5. Which brings us back to the statement I shared earlier, "*God is most glorified when I am most satisfied in Him.*"

II. Satisfaction – that is a big word.

- a. Definition of Satisfaction: is to fill up the measure of a want of (a person or a thing) - to gratify **fully** a desire.
- b. What happens when a need of yours is satisfied?
 - i. It means that a need has been MET.
 - ii. It means that a thirst has been quenched, a hunger met, a hurt healed, an emptiness filled.
 - iii. So what would it look like to be "most satisfied" in God?
- c. Let's start with an understanding of how we were made.
 - i. Did you know that we were created to seek happiness?
 - ii. God created you with a place in your heart that only He can fill.
 - iii. It is a hunger for happiness. He created us with a need to be met.
 - 1. Did you know that the framers of our the Declaration of Independence believed in this so strongly that it stated that the right to "pursue happiness" is an inalienable (God given) right or gift?
 - iv. I am going to use some words interchangeably: "pleasure, happiness, joy.
 - 1. The world around us is PREOCCUPIED with the pursuit of pleasure and happiness to the EXCLUSION of all else.
 - 2. The Christian's reaction to that worldly perspective has been to become dour faced, frowning people in reaction to the world's perversion of a God-given gift.
 - 3. And then we miss out on God's special gift!
 - v. Why did God make us to experience pleasure and delight. Why did He give us this capacity.
 - 1. **Because God made us to find our ultimate pleasure and delight in Him.**
 - a. Ps. 37:4 "*Delight in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.*"
 - b. Ps. 35:27 "Let those who delight in my righteousness shout for joy and be glad."
 - 2. Do those statements sound like someone is unhappy?
 - a. NO! They sound like someone who has discovered an inexhaustible source of joy and happiness.

III. Competition for Satisfaction.

- a. **Pleasure is not God's competitor..**
 - i. **Idols are.** Idols are substitutes for God.
 - ii. Idols are things that take God's place.
 - iii. Idols are things that give us more pleasure and delight that God does.
 - iv. What we take the MOST pleasure in we will make a god out of.
 - 1. Pleasure is not evil.
 - 2. Pleasure, joy, happiness, delight...these are emotions or states of being.

3. They are neither good or evil.
 4. The goodness or evil in pleasure is found in what that emotion attaches itself to, not in the experience of the joy.
- v. Our problem is that we commonly try to find satisfaction in something OTHER than God.
1. Why do we seek satisfaction in something other than God?
 - a. **Tangibility** – we can see, feel, touch.
 - b. **Deceitfulness of counterfeits** – the world tells us “this will satisfy!” “this will make you happy!”
 - c. **Sin** – (choosing less than God’s best) – satisfies for a SEASON. (Hebrews 11:25 *“He chose to share the oppression of God’s people instead of enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin.”*)
- vi. Lasting satisfaction will never come from anything apart from God.
1. Jn. 4:13-15 *13 “Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” 15 The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”*
 2. She was tired of thirsting...and Jesus showed her that her immoral life, trying to meet her needs on her terms had not satisfied her, and would never satisfy her.

IV. Valuation

- a. At this point we need to look at the positive nature of joy, happiness and pleasure.
 - i. **We all value most what we delight in the most.**
 1. Whatever we take the most joy or delight in, is what we value the most. Just look at chocolate! Or a hobby. Or if it is our family? Or our car?
 - a. If it is up there on our delight scale, then we value it greatly. We protect what we value. We prioritize what we value.
 - b. If I don’t value something, I don’t protect it like something I do value. I have some RC equipment. I protect them. I have a coin collection...it stays locked up. I have a gun collection, it stays locked up. The valuable things are protected. And I take delight in these things. If I did not, I would sell them and get something I do enjoy instead.
 2. Pleasure **is a gauge that measures how valuable something is to us.**
 - a. If I enjoy something greatly, you can bet I value it highly. I enjoy gardening. It brings me great pleasure. I will spend all sorts of money and time at it. I derive such pleasure from it that anyone who comes to my home will instantly be able to tell it is valuable to me.
 - b. If you don’t enjoy something you won’t value it highly. That is simple as that.
 - c. **Pleasure is the measure of our treasure.**
 - i. Why do you think that Jesus said, *“Where your treasure is, your heart will be also”*?
 - ii. I can look at a person’s checkbook and tell you what they value the most by what they spend their money on.

V. Delight

- a. “*Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.*” (Ps. 37:4)
 - i. Greek and Hebrew: to be happy about, to take exquisite delight, to celebrate!
- b. It does not say to delight yourself in religion.
 - i. How could anyone find delight in religion?
 1. I want to genuflect some more! I want more religious rituals.
 2. Religion will not satisfy or bring lasting delight to you any more than sin will.
 - a. In fact, sin will at least satisfy for a season...what amazes me is that people try religion for a lifetime.
 3. At least folks that play with sin eventually find out it leaves them high and dry.
 - ii. We are told to delight ourselves in the Lord not in religion!
 1. When we find our delight in Jesus, our end result will be happiness!
 - iii. The Lord is our highest good.
 1. When we delight ourselves in Him, when He is our greatest pleasure, when we value Him above all else and ENJOY Him, we will experience happiness.
 2. We will experience the deepest desires of our heart.
- c. Delight vs. Duty (comparison)
 - i. What is duty? – what you do because you are supposed to.
 1. It is buying a mothers day gift for your mother or wife BECAUSE you SHOULD.
 2. You do it because it is the *right thing* to do.
 3. It is obeying the 10 commandments because you SHOULD.
 4. It is coming to church because you are supposed to.
 5. But duty always comes up short.
 - a. It misses the mark.
 - b. It is action without heart;
 - c. It is doing the right thing for the wrong motives.
 6. Obedience to God is important.
 - a. But God doesn't want our sacrifices.
 - b. He wants our hearts.
 - c. He wants our love. Not our duty!
 - ii. Illustration
 1. If I bring a dozen roses to Jennifer and she opens the door and hugs me and says, “Thank you...you shouldn't have!” If my response be “Well that's the sort of thing that a husband is supposed to do. It's my duty to bring you flowers.” What do you think she will do? She will dump the vase on my head!
 - a. But if I reply, “My darling, I love you and I can think of nothing more than to do this. It is my pleasure to give you flowers.” She is going to be honored.
 - b. My **delight in doing an act dignifies the act.**
 - i. The delight in doing the act is what makes the act have meaning.
 - ii. Over and over again in the bible the people of God are warned about “just going through the motions” of worship, sacrifice, good deeds, religious works, etc.
 - iii. But when one does the deed *because* they are “in love” with God, in response to God's love; then the deed has meaning like the giving of roses to my wife with intent and purpose to show her my love and devotion instead of duty.
 - c. Delight is a greater indication of love than duty.
 2. If a friend says, “I really enjoy being with you.”
 - a. Would you accuse him of being self-centered? No.

- b. Because your friend's delight in you is an expression that he values you highly.
 - iii. The same is true of God.
 - 1. God gave you and I free will so as to give us the opportunity to love Him as a CHOICE and not as a DUTY.
 - a. Legalism is filled with duty.
 - b. Some of you have come from legalistic backgrounds.
 - c. You know the oppression and the lifelessness that legalistic duty brings.
 - d. Why do we prefer duty over delight?
 - i. Because it is easier.
 - ii. Because it is easier to try to repay a forgiven debt than it is to accept it with gratitude.
 - iii. Because we get to count up and keep score and feel "good" about ourselves – but we only get an empty container in the end.
 - 2. But if God is the source of great delight, then that also means we treasure Him.
 - a. Our actions become symbols and expressions of love.
 - b. Our obedience is not driven by duty but by a desire to express our love for Him.
 - c. It is in this heart-focus upon God that we worship and experience the PLEASURE that God intends for us to know and derive from our relationship with Him.

VI. The emotion of enjoyment!

- a. Imagine being able to enjoy what is the most enjoyable with as much energy as it takes to enjoy it continuously without interruption.
- b. This is not possible on this earth because three things stand in our way:
 - i. **Nothing has a personal worth great enough to meet the deepest longing of our heart.**
 - 1. We will go from joy to joy, finding it in different objects.
 - ii. **We lack the strength to enjoy the best treasures to their maximum worth.**
 - 1. Last week's food at the Meet, Greet and Eat: I recall saying, "I wish I could eat more! This is all so goooooood"
 - 2. We cannot perpetually enjoy good things here on earth because we have a limited capacity to do so.
 - iii. **All joys here come to an end. Nothing lasts.**
 - 1. We cannot make anything last forever. Everything ends. Houses wear out, our bodies lose their strength, our clothes wear out, our cars eventually break down and rust. Everything we enjoy passes away.
- iv. But in Christ, we aren't set on passing joy derived from this world.
 - 1. Jn 17:13 *And now I am coming to you, and I say these things in the world so that they might have my joy in their hearts in all its fullness.*
 - a. No greater treasure can be conceived of than the Son of God.
 - b. Our joy is actually His joy! His prayer is that we experience His joy in our hearts IN ALL ITS FULLNESS.
 - 2. Our ability to savor Him will not limited by our physical capacity or weakness.
 - 3. God's delight in His son will be in us and be ours to experience.
 - 4. This will never end! Their love for one another (Father and Son) never ends!

VII. Philippians (3:8) *"For I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ."*

- a. What does Paul want us to believe is WORTH the loss of everything else? Christ!
 - i. This is liberating...that the enjoyment of God, our satisfaction in Him is to be the most important goal of my life.
 - ii. It endorses the fact that I was created for joy.
 - iii. It tells us that it is good to experience joy.
 - iv. We are not just free to pursue my joy found in God, but we are commanded to do so.
 - v. Indifference to the pursuit of joy in God is indifference to the glory of God. That is sin.
 - 1. My sin stands in the way of finding and experiencing my full satisfaction in God.
 - a. It opposes – by making other things look more desirable than God -- and perverts of God -- by making me think I am pursuing joy in God when in fact I am more in love with His gifts than with Him my pursuit

VIII. Duty vs. Love: Lets get honest with the struggle we all have.

- a. This is not a guilt trip sermon.
 - i. If most of us are honest, we look at ourselves and we realize that we don't seek our satisfaction in God.
 - ii. If we are really honest, we don't even WANT to seek our full satisfaction in Him.
 - iii. We are comfortable when we find a certain balance between our religious duties and our daily lives.
 - iv. If we are really honest, Pressing In, Seeking God, Finding Our total pleasure in Christ seems HARD compared to duty-oriented, willpower religion.
 - v. At least we can achieve enough duty oriented tasks to allay our guilt and keep us from feeling like total failures..
 - vi. I find myself frustrated because I do not desire God with the passion He demands and deserves.
- b. Real Christianity – that is experiencing and seeking and enjoying God above all else is hard.
 - i. It requires a complete re-evaluation of my priorities.
 - ii. It requires a complete death to my own priorities, desires and goals and places them at the foot of the cross.
 - iii. It requires that I stop and look at my life and look at the cross and realize that I can't repay the debt I owe; and not only that...God doesn't want my payment!
- c. There is hope, but not in trying harder.
 - i. The hope we have is in the grace of God.
 - ii. God alone can transform my heart to do what I cannot make my will to do.
 - 1. He can make my heart to want what it really SHOULD want.
 - 2. It's funny, but only God can make a depraved heart desire Him.
- d. Many of you feel the same.
 - i. You can see the truth but you too are miles from experiencing it, at least on a regular basis.
 - ii. We all slip back into our comfortable religious duty mode because we can count it, we can measure it.
 - iii. Maybe you are thinking:
 - 1. I am not experiencing that kind of joy – I recall experiencing it, but it has slipped off somewhere in the past and the busy-ness of life.
 - 2. Maybe you are thinking that you don't have that kind of satisfaction – you find yourself desiring comfort and security more than you desire God.
 - 3. Or maybe you don't know if you have ever felt that kind of desire for God that God says will completely fill you with joy..
 - 4. Or I never knew that Christianity was more about desiring and delighting in God than about just living the way God wants me to.

5. How do you get a desire you don't have?

- e. **Salvation is the awakening of a new taste for God**, if it is not – then it is nothing but an emotional or religious experience with no eternal value.
 - i. Ps. 51:12 *“Restore to me the JOY of my salvation”*
 - 1. The New Birth is the creation of new desires not just new duties.
 - 2. Duty is a substitute for Love (of God and others), like a crutch which is a substitute for a leg.
 - 3. Some will say “religion is a crutch”
 - a. I say “AMEN” You are right it is! But a new birth is no longer a crutch. It is a new set of legs!
 - 4. Becoming a Christian is the creation of new delights not just new deeds.
 - 5. Becoming a Christian is the creation of new treasures not just new tasks.
 - ii. Ps. 20:14 *“Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love.”*

IX. God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.

- a. I hope that you have discovered this morning that our desires not just our decision really matter.
- b. We don't need more of us saying that “Christ is valuable” or singing that “Christ is valuable.”
- c. **Christ will be glorified in the world when Christians as so satisfied in Him that their goods and lives are counted as LOSS - and they lay down their lives for others in mercy, mission, and martyrdom.**
- d. When all of us say, “To live is Christ and to die is gain.” (Phil 1:21) God will be glorified.
- e. Will you choose to seek Him!
 - i. To treasure Him? To worship Him? To make Jesus your highest good, your greatest pleasure?
 - ii. Let's pray.

X. Song: In Christ Alone!

Jane Fonda's testimony:

I'm living in Georgia and I'm having this feeling of being led and I find myself so curious about this faith that these people all around me are practicing. I felt my emptiness being filled up with reverence.

Q: This is the hunger that you talk about in the book --

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And finally **that hunger is being satisfied**.

A: With what I was really searching for all along. **It was spiritual hunger**. I was learning to be satisfied by spirit, (whereas before) I had been trying to satisfy the hunger with other things. And so, you know, like many people, I could have sort of settled with being spiritual.

Q: You mean, settled with being spiritual, as opposed to becoming religious?

A: Correct. It would have just been meditation, but it became prayer.

I think it's partly that I live in Georgia; it's partly that it's my culture. You know, I wasn't attracted to Buddhism although I really respect it. I wasn't attracted to Islam although I really respect it. Or Judaism. I'm attracted to Jesus.

Thirsty Notes:

"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

2 Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?

Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.

3 Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live.

I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David. - Isaiah 55:1 – 3

The verses above in Isaiah 55 are an invitation to the thirsty. Play along with me as we question the author of these verses. He says, "Come, all you who are thirsty."

"Alright, I am thirsty, I will come. But where do I come to quench my thirst?"

"Come to the waters."

"Yes, that makes sense; if I am thirsty I should come to the waters, but where are the waters?"

"Ah, excellent question. 'Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live.'"

Do you see it now? The water is in the Word of God. Drinking comes by listening. The Bible is our source of true refreshment and quenching of our thirst.