

Dave: And Father, we come to proclaim that which is true. We know it's true. Your Son's name, Jesus' name is truly above every other name. And now as we proclaim it with our lips, I pray that will be true in my life. I think even about this morning and the times I put myself above Jesus. And so to sing that song, I also have to come and repent and say, Lord, would you make that a reality in my life as I humble myself? Would you allow the name of Jesus to be preeminent in my life.

I'm so thankful for those that you gathered this morning. It's so good to see them. And we gather with all kinds of needs and you know those needs. And so I pray, as we open your word, that you would minister to hearts. Father, I confess that I've got nothing to offer. As I empty myself, would you fill me up that I might be able to serve and shepherd and care for Your people well? And I know I do that best as I simply open up your word and say, here's what God has said. So would you strengthen me this morning simply to serve and make much of your Son, Jesus Christ? It's in His name I pray, amen.

Amen. Good to see you. Many of you are first timers and from all of us -- I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand because that's a no-no. That's why my mind glitched. So if you're a first timer, don't raise your hand, but we're so glad you're here and you found yourself at Hillside. We believe that Jesus changes everything. We're a simple people. We love the Word of God. We love to live it out in authentic community where we serve, pray for one another, care for one another and grow; be transformed into the image of Christ.

Jesus has, is, and will ultimately change everything. And

we've been looking at the book of Acts. That's the earliest record of the church that we have. Love looking at what Paul believed and preached about the resurrection and we believe the same thing and preach the same thing. Love to see how Jesus Christ came good on His promise. He said, I'll build my church. He's continuing to do that. If you'll look around, this is a continuation of that promise Jesus. Jesus saves us. He puts us in this group called the saints, the church, and then he sends us out to change everything. He does that in and through us.

So we're going to look at Acts. Let me read it to you today.

Forgive me. I have been struggling for months and months and months to read the Bible up here. And I always thought it was the lights. Ends up I'm just super duper old and I can't see anymore. So welcome to "readers."

[Laughter]

Listen, it's bifocals and then trifocals, I guess. It's so amazing. I can see it now.

[Laughter]

So we're going to enjoy the readers together. I feel so old. And somewhat mature. Because I've got gray here [on his chin] and I'm using readers. So I feel like I'm part of you old people now.

[Laughter]

All right. Enough on that. I mock because I'm insecure and I'm uncomfortable with it. So thanks for letting me do that.

[Laughter.]

Verse 44. We're in chapter 13, verse 44. Watch this. And before I lose any of you -- because when you're speaking, you've got about 30 seconds to gain attention -- for those of you here that don't know if you're a Christian or not, I'm going to walk through how Jesus Christ, when we're born again, he comes to dwell inside of us and he grows us. *He* changes *us*. He matures us in perseverance and he matures us in patience and he matures us and transforms us in humility and he fills us with joy.

I'm not telling you to go try to do these things. That's not Christianity. That's moralism. Christianity does not say, go try harder, do more, be better. It says, put your faith in Christ and he'll change you from the inside out. That's the good news. And so I'm going to walk through -- if you've got your notes pulled up, we're going to talk about perseverance and I'm going to talk about patience and I'm going to look at humility and I'm going to look at joy. These are the fruit of the living God living inside of you. It's what *He* does. Your job? Jesus, I'm a mess and I need you. Every day. It's called repentance. And where I'll die to the flesh, the Spirit of God changes me. That's the good news.

So I wanted you to know that. I didn't want you to leave thinking, I need to try harder. We all do. We're all a mess. Amen? Okay, some of us know we're a mess. The other are just unself-aware and they need more help.

[Laughter]

So that's the beauty of Christianity. Let me read it. Watch

this. [Reading Acts 13:44-45] or beating them down with their words. [Reading: verse 46-52]

So now, let's jump into this. If I had to describe this passage in a sentence, I would have to say, God now takes the gospel to "those" people. We don't talk like that today because it's inappropriate to talk about "those" people. You're like, I'm going to act like I don't know what he's talking about. Everybody has "those" people in our minds and in our hearts and in our lives.

Let me inform you of something. You are "those" people to some people.

[Laughter]

Anywhere I go, it doesn't matter which country, which region, which state, all people have "those" people and you are "those" people to some people. Sometimes, when I'm in groups, I can tell democrats are "those" people. It's like, man, God could never save "those" people. Other times I'm speaking to groups and it's republicans. Well, God could never save "those" people. Sometimes "those" people are white people. Sometimes "those" people are black people.

Sometimes "those" are the rich people. The one-percenters. Mm-hmm. You got some one-percenters here. Sometimes you're "those" people. Sometimes "those" people are poor people. Everybody has "those" people and everybody are "those" people to some people.

Today, God, in his amazing grace, is going to take the gospel to "those" people. Here it's the gentiles. So I would be one of "those" people. Now when he does, it's amazing the

response. The gospel always produces joy in the heart of those who believe it. That's going to be the end of the text.

Now, some of you think Christianity is about a decision. One day, you make a decision and you're a Christian and that's it. You work the rest of your life to try and *be* and good Christian. That's not Christianity. I'm going to show you today, through the life of Paul and Barnabas, when the Spirit of God comes to live in us, He matures us and changes us. He grows us into what it means to be enduring, persevering people. How he does it is amazing. I'll show you that.

But that's what Jesus does in us. He's causing us to be a persevering people. He also grows us into a very patient people. How he does it is amazing. I'll show you that. But you're going to see these doctrines lived out in the life of Paul. Perseverance, patience, humility and joy. I'm not going to leave you with a command. Acts isn't didactic in that way. It's not prescriptive. It doesn't say, go do this.

It *is* descriptive and says, look at Paul and Barnabas and how Jesus has changed them. And so I'm going to end this sermon by saying, enjoy Jesus. Delight in Jesus. Fall in love with Jesus. Spend time with Jesus. Because as you do, he'll grow and transform you.

Watch. Let's start out with persevering. Let me give you a big theological picture in this. God is joy and his presence is fullness of joy. Joy is a big deal to God. Super duper big deal. He commands you. Here's a command. You want a command? Rejoice always! Be joyful always! Why? Because God's joy. He loves it.

Now the small picture is this. Because of sins entrance into

the world, we're pretty hopeless. And hopelessness brings anxiety and worry and wherever there is anxiety and worry, I can't have joy. Because anxiety and worry sink my soul. Whether it's my mind spinning, my heart racing and my gut sinking because of anxiety and worry, it sinks my soul.

Joy's like a lifejacket for my soul. And I'm going to show you that. So God *is* the source of all joy. He wants us to be a joyful people. Sin is hopelessness. It'll drag you down.

In the gospel, the good news -- this is what this book tells us about -- The Joyful One, God, who is the source of all joy, entered this hopeless world. He lived in and through all the sin and its difficulty. He entered the most hopeless state; death. He overcame it. He rose from the dead so that we might have hope in Him. Nothing's greater than Jesus Christ and therefore nothing can steal our joy. And when you get that, perseverance can grow, patience can grow, humility can grow and joy is abundant and overflowing.

I'll show you. Watch. It's how he does it in the life of Paul. It's amazing. I'm going to walk you through kind of contradistinctions and juxtapositions to show you how he grows these things. And hopefully we'll be able to make sense out of our lives and stories as we look at Paul and Barnabas.

So let's start out with perseverance. To endure, to bear up under, to press through trial. Watch verses 44 and 45. This is astounding. I'm going to show you how life is filled with delight and difficulty.

Watch this. Verse 44. I can't see it.

[Laughter]

I'm so sorry. But if I leave them on, you're all blurry. I guess it's time for bifocals. But I'm not there yet. I can't get there. Verse 44. Now it's as clear as day.

[Reading: Verse 44.] Is that a good day? Is that a delightful day? Man, there's a lot to celebrate there. I mean, I don't want to expose too much, but as a preacher, if you show up and nearly the whole city is there, [takes bit, deep]

[Laughter]

I mean, right? Like, take a big breath. That's awesome. Like, you got a little bit of swagger going on.

[Laughter]

Because in America -- and I don't mean to imply western thought to eastern -- but it's not new. We measure stuff in numbers and size. More people, more better, amen? At any pastoral conference, the first question is, how big's your church? Because that's -- is life good for you or bad? That's dependent on numbers.

I'm going to tell you this. Some days are delightful. Some days really are delightful. Have you had one of those days? Those days happen when your alarm goes off because you remembered to plug in your phone and you wake up feeling rested. It's like, wow, I got a lot of sleep. Then you get up and go to the shower and there's warm water. That's a good day.

Then you get out and there's a clean towel. It's like, man, it

just keeps getting better. You go down and the coffee maker works and there's coffee beans in the house. And you walk out to the front and your keys are there and your wallet is there and you remembered to put everything right there. So you remember everything. You get out the car and it starts.

[Laughter]

And you're driving and you hit green light after green light. And you're thinking to yourself -- but you'll never admit it -- I should buy a lottery ticket today.

[Laughter]

Today is one of those days. I don't gamble. At least I don't tell people I do. But I should buy a scratch off.

[Laughter]

You get to work. Everything's good. Some days are delightful. On those days, do you demand that those remain? You see because -- well, let's look at verse 45. Verse 45 starts with a contrasting conjunction.

[Reading: Verse 45.] Do you know that some days are difficult? Some days are delightful and some days are difficult. Some days, like this morning, your alarm doesn't go off because you didn't plug in your phone and it died. You get up and, man, there's not much hot water. You don't know why. There's no clean towels when you get done. You lose your phone, you lose your keys, you lose your wallet. You drive out to work and it's almost every red light imaginable. You're just waiting. You're waiting minutes. I sat at one for like five minutes. I would've gone through it

but there was a police officer sitting right there next to me. So I didn't.

But some days are difficult. Some days are so difficult that because of all the red lights, you speed out to work. And then you get pulled over right by your business so you pull into the church parking lot, having been pulled over by a police officer. Some days are difficult. Some days are delightful. Do you know? This is life and it is intentional in a fallen world. God, in his grace, intends it that way.

There's a tension in every day, the delightful and the difficult, and that tension is meant to transform us. Do you demand that the delightful days stay and do you demand that the difficult days leave? You see? There's a tension in that and that tension was meant to expose what you desire.

Listen. Does not all of life teach us that each day has difficulty and delight? Think about a birthday party. Difficult or delightful? See, we would think it was delightful. For me, it's difficult. Let me walk you through why.

We do something weird in America. Everybody seems okay with it. So you get a birthday cake and it's delightful and it's white buttercream icing and it's delicious and it looks perfect and it's a perfect way to celebrate a birthday. But we're not okay with that. So we do something weird. I don't know who came up with it. It sounds like an alcoholic came up with it.

We've got a cake. Well, how can we make this better? Let's light it on fire.

[Laughter]

It gets worse, doesn't it? See, because as soon as we light this delightful cake on fire, then we invite some child to come spit all over the cake. And this is normal. Apparently this is a normal thing. I had a bad incident. Third grade, Mrs. Hoover. An unplanned, untimed sneeze. But it was the 80s. So in the 80s, someone sneezes all over a cake we're still going to eat it.

[Laughter]

Since that day, every birthday party, every birthday cake is a difficult thing for me because I watched somebody spit on it. So if you invite me to your birthday party and you spit all over the cake and offer me a piece of cake, you know what I say? No, thanks. And you guys are like, oh, you're so disciplined. No, I just saw you spit on it.

[Laughter]

Right? You watch. My pray is that COVID is going to change all of this.

[Laughter]

And all the doctors in the room are like, uh-huh. We're not going to light cakes on fire and allow people to spit on it anymore and now birthdays are going to be delightful. I spent way too much time on that.

Every day there is difficulty and every day there is delight. And it is intentional to expose what you demand. What you focus on. Do you demand that the delights stay? Do you demand that the difficulty leave? In that tension, God is growing you in perseverance.

Paul didn't find his worth or identity in the big crowds and he didn't find depression or despair in the rejection. Do you see that there? Paul's like, eh, life is difficult, life is delightful. I am going to consider it all joy when I encounter various trials and that the testimony of my faith is going to produce -- that difficulty and that delight -- is going to produce perseverance. Endurance.

Read through Romans 5. 4, 5, 6, 7. It's actually that tension of difficulty and delight that God uses to grow us in our character. Number one, God grows us in perseverance. If you want to know what God's doing today, when things get tough and they're difficult, when things are delightful and they're good, he's stretching you. He's growing you in perseverance.

Now watch what comes next. In verse 45, he's getting blasphemed. Watch what comes in verse 46 and 47. He's also going to grow some patience.

[Reading: Verse 46, 47.] Isaiah 42. Not only has God -- when he comes to dwell in you through the Holy Spirit -- not only does he grow you in perseverance -- that's why difficulty and delight are there -- he's also going to grow you in patience. This is one of the fruits of the Spirit like love, joy, peace, patience. He's going to grow you in that.

Do you know, whenever you pray for patience, what you can expect? You know this, right? You can expect problems to practice patience. You can expect rejection. What Paul experiences here is rejection and watch how Paul deals with the rejection. How many of you deal with reject really well? You're like, you know what? I don't do many things well, but

what I deal with really well is rejection. We don't, do we?

Before I jump into verse 46 and 47, can I explain why? I mean, it's been a 50, 60 year process. When you take any society and you remove objective truth -- that is, truth that exists outside of you, shared facts that we can all agree on -- when you remove objective truth, you're left with subjective truth. This is why you'll hear people talk about *MY* truth. And they expect you to say, well, that's true for you and that's great. It's not true for me.

Because in postmodernism, there *is* no objective truth. Well, once you're left simply with subjective truth, do you know you have to have people agree with you or else it tears down your very being, your very identity. And this is why you get tribalism. Political tribalism, religious tribalism. "I have to have you agree with me!" Because it's become very personal. The "I have to have people agree with me or I feel absolutely destroyed."

Watch what Paul does with rejection. It's amazing. Verse 46.

[Reading: Verse 46.] You've got to be kidding me. It's not personal at all. He's not like, oh, my goodness. I have to have you agree with me. Here's the truth I want you to hold onto. Not everyone is ready to submit to Jesus Christ. Not everyone's ready to hear the gospel. The Spirit of God has not yet done the work on some people's heart. They're simply not ready. What do you do when people are not ready? Do you take it personally?

See? Many of us with our children, with our family, when we share the gospel and someone's not listening, we turn into

spiritual Chuck Norris's. [Karate kicks.] Delta Force, right? Anybody?

[Laughter]

Delta Force. Anybody else? Chuck Norris? Jason, Steven. Pick your favorite ninja action actor. When someone disagrees with us, we will literally turn into spiritual ninja warriors who just kick down doors. If you take that into the physical realm, you know in Texas that's legal code for breaking and entering. It could be a felony depending on the intent on what you were doing while you were trying to break in. It's not a good thing. I've never been arrested for that but I'm not shaming anybody who has. I'm just saying it's illegal.

[Laughter]

It's amazing when you haven't been arrested for something, all of a sudden you feel righteous. It's like, "I haven't been arrested for ... " and now I'm looking for the people who have. Jeremy. Because that would be awful. I can't believe he would do that.

[Laughter]

That's how broken I am. Have you ever sensed yourself going spiritual Chuck Norris? "I just *NEED* my child to believe! I just *NEED* my coworker to believe!" And we turn it into an argument. We're trying to win an argument when Jesus has called us to win souls. We're not to go out and argue. We're out to give an answer. "Here is what God has said."

If somebody looks at us and says, "no way! And I think

you're dumb and I think the whole Bible is dumb and all of that's dumb," okay. Some people aren't ready. But guess what? [Reading: We're going to go to the gentiles for so the Lord has commanded us, I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES THAT YOU MIGHT BRING SALVATION TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.]

Some people aren't ready, but guess what? Some people are. I don't know who they are, but as you walk in the Spirit, as He grows you in patience, I can guarantee you, He will put you around those people. Don't spend your time going spiritual Chuck Norris trying to kick down doors when Jesus is leading you another way. Rejection doesn't mean failure. Well, unless you're being a jerk for Jesus. And then I would say, stop being a jerk for Jesus. Then rejection is about you and not about the gospel.

But if you're not being a jerk for Jesus and being a spiritual Chuck Norris, trust Him to put you around the people who are ready for the gospel. It's beautiful. This is how he grows us in patience. All right. So one person isn't ready. I'll continue to pray for them. Lord, would you put me around someone who *IS* ready? I'll tell you what. He'll do it. It turns out to be a beautiful picture.

Instead of going Chuck Norris on people, it's like going Bob Ross.

[Laughter]

I've told you before. No, listen. The guy may have been high or maybe on opioids. I don't know. But I love watching the guy because he doesn't see rejection as failure. He'll say, ah, man. We made a little spot on the canvas. It's a

happy mistake. Let's turn that into a bird.

You see when a Christian can grow in patience, you can see rejection as simply redirection. The Spirit of God will grow you in patience and put you around people that are ready. Let me tell you how you can do this. I know I deal with a lot of parents who say, "I just need my kids to believe. I need my kids to repent. I've been trying to kick down the door and they just keep putting up walls." Well, yeah. When you try and kick down doors, guess what people do? Yeah. They'll double down on putting up extra locks and blockades.

But when you can simply be present, the Spirit of God will walk you through it. Here's where you can rest in this. How can Paul look at this whole Jewish community and say, okay. You've rejected it. I'm going to go to the gentiles. And how can Paul be okay with that? I can tell you how. Guys, this whole mug is rigged. I probably don't tell you this enough. This whole entire system -- when I say "whole mug," this whole world -- is rigged. You understand -- this is why I don't freak out. I think postmodernism, I think moral relativism is one of the greatest times to preach the gospel.

So I don't argue with anybody. Some of you will email and want to argue after the service. I'll say, here's what I believe the Bible and here's why I believe it. And when people want to argue, I'm not interested in arguing. I say, this is what God's word said. If you don't like it or don't want it? Okay. Let me know how it works out for you. Like, literally. I don't fight. My anxiety level has gone down. My panic level, my stress level, my worry level.

You see, this whole mug is rigged. Whatever you sew, you're going to ... ?

Hillside, if you want to live by the flesh, I am for you. I love you. I'm your shepherd. I pray for you. I wake up thinking about you and lifting you up to the Lord. If you want to come to me and say, "Dave, I'm done. I'm going to go live in sin," I'll say, "this is what the Bible says."

"I know. I'm done with that. I'm going to go do my own thing." I'll say, okay. You see, you're free to make choices, but you're not free to make your consequences. Your consequences will follow you. And they always lead to death. And you *WILL* reap what you sew. And so if you're sewing to the flesh, life will be miserable.

And one of the joys, one of the glories of being a pastor in one place for 20 years? You get to see people come back after a 15, 18, 20 year jaunt and they say, "my life is ruined." And then guess what? I don't have to be a Chuck Norris. I get to be a Bob Ross and say, "let's see how Jesus wants to make this a happy mistake and actually weave it into the story of the gospel of grace." He grows you in patience.

You see, friends, as long as your child is still breathing, there's still opportunity. I know the story's bad. I know it's awful. Quit going Chuck Norris. It doesn't help anything. It actually makes it worse. Trust them to Jesus and wait for consequences to come and their heart to soften. You'll notice a difference. They'll call you up and say, "hey, I don't want to argue anymore. Can we talk?" And then you get to share the truth, the grace and the love and the joy and the mercy and the peace and the goodness of Jesus Christ with them.

So he grew Paul in perseverance through difficulty and

delight. He grew him and now it's flowing through him in patience. Beautiful patience. He was rejected and it was just redirection. Now watch what comes next. Humility. 48 is probably the toughest verse. If I had -- my death clock gives me until 72, so I don't have much time left and I've already, clearly needed to go to bifocals. If I had until 72, I still couldn't explain all of verse 48 to you. That's true for probably every verse in the Bible, but I'm going to tell you this. My job as a pastor isn't to remove all tension from theology or life.

My job is to point you to the One who will love and serve and save your souls. I'm going to walk you through verse 48 and show you how it grows us in humility. And I'll toss it out there and we can dialogue and discuss and delight in the Word of God, but you realize we're finite people, right? We're finite. And God's infinite. And so we're going to spend eternity seeking to understand Him.

Let me show you how the Spirit of God grew Paul in humility. Verse 48 says this. [Reading: verse 48.] Let me tell you why they began rejoicing and glorifying God. The gospel will always grow you in humility because when you understand it, the good news is Jesus was crucified. Jesus was beaten. Jesus was scoffed. Jesus was mocked. Jesus was put to death so that you might receive mercy and peace and love. He took all of our sin so that we might receive all of his righteousness.

It's really good news. I don't deserve any of it and you don't deserve any of it. How the gospel grows us in humility is, when you honestly come to the scriptures, I realized I deserve judgment, but because of Jesus Christ, I got justification. I deserved guilty condemnation, but because of

Jesus dying in my place for my sin, being buried conquered death, rising again and freely forgiving and giving eternal life, I no longer get guilty condemnation. I get grace and new life. I deserve hell and Jesus gave me heaven.

You see, when you have a proper understanding of your state, a proper understanding of self, the gospel is always good news. And that grows you in humility. I deserve none of this and Jesus has given it all to me. Now, watch this. So that's the beginning. I deserve judgment and I got justification.

How else does it grow us in humility. Look at the end of verse 48. It's just amazing. [Reading: verse 48b.] Dave, how does this grow us in humility? Well, number one, notice these people didn't believe because Paul preached an awesome sermon. Paul's already done preaching. And apparently nobody got saved. A bunch of people got angry. So it's not like Paul can be like, "people got saved because of my awesome sermon." God saves people in spite of us. Do you know that?

You may not know that yet. Let me be very up front. I haven't seen any elders in this service so I'll just dump it all out there. There are mornings I wake up and think, God, you're so lucky to have me. I don't know what you did before you had me. Right? Isn't that horrible? That's like the height of pride and arrogance. And I'll quickly be like, oh, man. That was just because I was sleepy, God. Like, just forget that part.

But then I realized I was doing it in marriage too. Brooke's so lucky to have me. I don't know what she did before me. Isn't that horrible? I'm sure no one else does *THAT*.

[Laughter]

I deserve better. I mean, I should have breakfast on the table and coffee ready. And I should have -- man, Hillside's so lucky to have me. You see. This is what pride does. It blinds us to reality. It distorts things. What the scriptures do is they say, actually Dave, man, I save people in spite of you. You do your best and I'm grateful for that. But I save people in spite of you. And not only that, man, it's not how good the preacher is that's the power. The power comes from God. From His Word.

And so He just keeps winning. God just keeps winning. He's had to work with miserable preachers for thousands of years, amen? Easy.

[Laughter]

I mean that. Like, it's true. You've got fallen men and women speaking infinite, eternal truth. How does anybody get saved? God's sovereign. He's doing it. You know, no human soul can bear the weight of another soul's salvation. This is so encouraging because I realized that even when I stumble and falter and fall, God's at work. Let me tell you why I'm so encouraged by this. As many as God had called came to eternal life. It pumps me up because it reminds me that God just keeps winning.

How many of you have ever watched a Spurs game? San Antonio Spurs at any time, any point. Like, even on TV.

[Laughter]

Is that a Massachusetts thing? You just won't watch it? I don't mean to call you girls out. I'm sure we've all heard of Tim Duncan.

[Laughter]

All right. Let me walk you through the first game I ever saw. Because I had heard about Tim and Manu and Tony and this whole team. They're awesome. They're great. I went and saw a game in '03. It was against New Jersey. Jason Kidd. I watched him play in college. And I thought, this is cool. I get to watch Timmy Duncan. I went. I watched. And I remember telling my buddy, hey, Timmy's kind of boring to watch. When does he start playing?

It's like, well, he is. First quarter I was like, I don't even think he scored. Second quarter, I was like, I don't like watching Tim play. And I know that's blasphemous in San Antonio, but it was true. Tim was huge. A center. He would post up, catch the ball, dribble it and shoot. And he would run down just like this. [Imitating Tim running like a robot.]

Congregation member: Yes.

Dave: And then he would come back down. Then he would post up. He would catch the ball. He would dribble it and then he would shoot. And he would run back down.

[Laughter]

And I literally felt bad for him. I was like, man, I don't know who the coach is, but they should probably pull him. It's just not his night. It's just not. Halftime was horrible. A kid hit a 3 at halftime and it just demoralized the crowd. Tommy was

suffering. It looked just awful. Fourth quarter, Tim got a little fired up. Posted up, caught the ball, bumped the guy and then shot it.

[Laughter]

I was like, well, that's something. It's not Barkley, but it's something. I can't tell you how shocked I was. It looked like Tim was losing and losing and losing. So bad I was like, pull him!

[Laughter]

I mean, something's not going well. I was so shocked in the fourth quarter to hear, "Tim Duncan is one block shot away from a quadruple double. Truly the athletic feat of a lifetime. Crowd, what you are watching is the greatest game ever played." And I sat there like, "whaaat?"

[Laughter]

And then to reach the end of the game and he had like 23 points and 14 rebounds and 12 assists and he was one block shot away from a quadruple double when the whole time it looked like he was losing.

See what this passage reminds me is that God is winning. All He does is win, win, win all the time, yo. And it keeps going. And the world looks at it because they're proud and says, God is losing. But when the story finishes, he just holds up his hand and all he has is championship rings. Because all he's done is win and win and win and the kingdom of this world *WILL* become the kingdom of our Lord and Christ and the world will say, how did Jesus do it?

[Softly.] How did he do it? Through individuals who are being grown in perseverance, grown in patience, grown in humility realizing that he saves one at a time. The game may not look that good and it may be kind of clunky, amen? Most days for me are. But we finish and God says, amazing. Amazing. Almost a quadruple double. Best game ever. Well done good and faithful servant.

On verse 48, we tend to take the doctrine of the sovereignty of God and make it into an argument or a debate. Have you ever heard of Calvinism versus Arminianism? So what we tend to do in the church is Calvinists will grab their 72 verses. We'll build our Bible bunker and get our Bible buddies and we'll lob Bible bombs.

"As many as he foreknew, he predestined to be conformed to the image of his son." [Mimicking throwing a bomb.] Deal with it.

Armenians are like, well I don't like that. So I've got my 72 verses. How about every present active comparative demands that people repent. Take that!

And we lob Bible bombs and Bible grenades at each other. Here's what I want to ask you. [Chuckling.] And it's true. Typically when people want to argue with me about Calvinism or Arminianism, they'll come in with two or three verses. "What do you do with Ephesians? What do you do with Romans? What do you do with human responsibility and God's sovereignty?" I start the conversation like this.

I'll discuss all passages with you. I love the Word of God. But first, can I ask a series of three, maybe four questions?

So I'll ask you that. So they say, yes. Okay. First, have you ever lost your keys? Have you?

Yeah.

Okay good. We're on the same page. Have you ever lost your wallet or purse? Yeah, okay. Good. Have you ever lost your car in the Target parking lot and didn't know where it was at, and had to push your button to get it to beep? Be honest. Be honest.

[Laughter]

Have you ever forgotten one of your childrens' names when you're trying to say them all? Okay. So now that we agree that I can't keep track of my keys, my wallet, my purse, my car or even my kids' names, yes. Let's talk about the deepest, most infinite truth known to man at the depth of the wisdom of the knowledge of God. Things that I can't even begin to comprehend. Yes. Let's argue about those things, right?

Because every day that passes, I forget more and more and more and I can see less and less and less. I'm so grateful that God has given us everything we need to know pertaining to life and godliness. But he hasn't told us everything we *want* to know. And there are certain mysteries that are in the scriptures that exist to grow us in humility.

Any doctrine that grows me in haughtiness is being misused, amen? Like, if I have a doctrine and I want to argue with you about the sovereignty of God, I don't deny the sovereignty in the salvation of man. Memorize through Ephesians. Work through Romans. I don't deny it. But if that doctrine causes

me to be proud and haughty, I'm misusing that doctrine. And I think what God has done is give us the deep things of God so that we might grow in humility and say, oh, the depths of the wisdom, the riches of the knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments. It's beautiful.

And it brings me peace. God's at work. He's beyond me. So, number one, he grows us in perseverance through difficulty and delight. Number two, he grows us in patience through rejection and redirection. Three, he's going to grow us in humility by not giving us what we deserve, but taking us deep into the knowledge. These things are beyond us and we walk in humility when we come to them. Fourth, he's going to grow us in joy -- and I'm out of time so I'm just going to sum it up.

Watch where this all ends, because this is John 15:11. Jesus said, these things I have spoken to you so that in me you'll have joy and I want your joy to be complete. Watch this. Verse 49.

[Reading: verse 49-51] "Shook the dust off their feet" would be the modern day version of "I wash my hands of this. I've done all I can do."

Watch verse 52. It's astounding. So they're rejected, they're being blasphemed, they're being lied about, they're being kicked out of the region. What's your response to rejection? I'd be mad. It's immature, but I would probably egg some of their houses. Anybody else?

[Laughter]

Honestly. Anybody ever taken a baseball bat to a mailbox? I

don't know if you guys do that in Texas. I wouldn't do it. Ends up, it's a federal offense. It's a big deal. A friend told me that.

[Laughter]

Dave: [Laughing.] No, that's not true. But listen. That's not the point.

[Laughter]

The point was to put you there. If you've ever undergone all of this; rejection, blasphemy, being beaten down and then lied about, being kicked out of the region like, "you're no longer welcome here. No soup for you. We don't want you here." Watch verse 52.

[Reading: verse 52.] They were filled with joy having been kicked out, rejected, told they didn't want the message. Yeah. They were continually filled with joy. Do you know that we don't even have a good definition for joy in America? I don't know if you know that. We don't. We talk about happiness because it's written into who we are. We're going to pursue happiness.

The scriptures speak of charos [sp?] or joy. Let me put joy definitionally for you. Joy is like a lifejacket that gives super buoyancy to the soul. I've got to walk through this because it matters. Joy is like a lifejacket for your soul that gives you super buoyancy. And this is important because we live in a society that has a tidal wave of tension and stress and worry that comes at you every single day. And that will drown your soul.

See, the opposite of joy is not sadness. The opposite of joy is actually hopelessness. If you're here and you struggle with depression -- I walked through suicidal depression for years. The opposite of joy is not sadness. The opposite of joy is hopelessness. It can't change. It won't get any better. Everything's bad and it will always be bad.

What joy is, when you come to understand the gospel, it's like this lifejacket that gives super buoyancy to your soul. So that no matter what comes, no matter what tidal wave in our society comes, you always pop back up to the surface.

My son and I went on a boating trip. It was my youngest son. And we were on this innertube and we hit this wake and man, we went flying. I remember just seeing my 6-year-old son just flying through the air like this. [Demonstrating.] And we were high. I skipped across the water and it busted *me* up. My concern was, is my son going to be okay? I was so grateful that he had that lifejacket on because he came up. And it was the first time in his life he had the wind knocked out of him. And his face. Have you ever seen a kid come up and they've had the wind knocked out of them?

They come up and they're like [demonstrating.] I mean, they're dying in their mind. He had no idea. And his face? He was looking for me. I breathed a sigh of relief because he had that lifejacket on that popped him up to the surface.

This world sends tidal waves of tension and stress and panic and anxiety every day. If you watch the news, every day. What the scriptures give to us is joy in Christ Jesus. And Jesus Christ, that joy that he gives shows that he's defeated death, he's growing you through delight and difficulty and perseverance, that he's never going to leave you, that he

never gives up on you, that he has a good plan to take you to a good place. That is the lifejacket that gives buoyancy to my soul. Because every day is really difficult in this world, isn't it?

So as Paul and Barnabas were facing rejection after rejection after rejection, the gospel of Jesus Christ gave their souls buoyancy. You see, all of us look for that buoyancy somewhere. All of us find that joy somewhere, don't we? Now if it's dependent on something out there, I can guarantee you, it's going to fail you.

Let me walk you through this. I think all of you know I'm a recovering addict and alcoholic. Any substance, any mood, mind-altering substance, I'm off to the races. I had learned from an early age that those substances would give me some feeling of joy. Now many of you have that. For some of us, it's alcohol. For some of us, sugar. For some of us it's politics.

[Laughter]

Something just happened in the room. I actually have a spreadsheet and I can walk you through the similarities between heroine addiction and politics. Okay. Let me walk you through it. When I was an addict, I would get this angst, this feeling of anxiety. This feeling of fear would overtake me. And it would build in me until I went and used. And then I could breathe.

It's very interesting, because watching the political system, every two years there's this [mimicking anxiety] fear, this angst, this worry until November 3. [Heavy sigh.] And then we breathe if our candidate wins. If not, ho, ho, [groaning.]

it's like four years. It's very, very similar.

Now am I speaking against politics? No, I love politics. If you've known me very long and sat with me, I'll talk about politics with you. I actually really enjoy politics. I enjoy politics in America. I've got my favorite team. I don't wear the jersey, but I've got my favorite team. I've got my favorite players. I don't have their ball cards, but I've got great joy in politics. I even vote! November 3. You watch me. I will have an "I Voted" sticker. You know they give those to you?

True story. I'll ask for two of them. I'll save one up in my office for about six months and then randomly I'll wear it around town.

[Laughter]

People freak out. "Did I miss it?"

[Laughter]

Yes, you missed it. I'm so sorry. You're not a very good American.

[Laughter]

Congregation member: Oh, my.

Dave: You should feel shame. It was the biggest election ever.

[Laughter]

That's just me because I'm sick. I'll get two of the "I Voted"

stickers. I will literally -- you watch. I'll save it up in my office. I enjoy it. You know why I enjoy politics? I thoroughly enjoy it. It's number 23 on my list of favorite things to do. You know why I enjoy it? Because I don't need anything from it. Because my joy isn't found in politics. November 3 will come. I will vote. November 4 will come and my life will not change. I will wake up and I will love the Lord, my God, with all my heart. I will love my wife. I will love my children. I will love my neighbors. I will love my community. I will seek to serve and preach and nothing will change because politics are not ultimate. They can't give you joy. And if you're dependent on that for joy, it will always steal your joy. Enjoy it. But you can only enjoy something if you're not dependent upon it for your joy.

Have fun! What a rush! We live in the greatest nation ever! We get to vote. Enjoy it. Disagree. Discuss. Dialogue as long as your joy is found in Jesus Christ. Because if your joy is found in Jesus Christ, nothing can take it. People can reject you, people can hate you, people can turn their back on you. Okay. I still love Jesus Christ and he is the source of my joy.

We go into some interesting topics today. The sovereignty of God and the salvation of man, politics and voting. See, this is how Jesus Christ grows us. We're going to be a people who are very diverse and very different. We're going to love each other deeply and profoundly. And we are going to see Jesus Christ doing something very simple and very central. He said he was going to build his church. Guess what he's doing? He's building his church. And as we see him build his church, we're going to see that His kingdom will come. His will will be done. And one day, the kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and Christ and he will

reign forever and ever.

Until then, know this. The Spirit of God in you wants to grow you in perseverance, he wants to grow you in patience, he wants to grow you in humility and he wants his joy to overflow from you to a lost and dying world that has no idea where to find joy. Don't let anything steal that joy, friends. It's too precious. It's too good.

Don't go home thinking, I need to persevere, I need to try harder, I need to be more patient. Go home and enjoy Jesus. Go home and delight in Jesus. Go home and rejoice in Jesus. Go home and absolutely delight yourself in the goodness of the gospel. As you do, you'll find he'll meet you in that joy and he'll begin to do the transforming work inside you. Let's pray.

Father, God, thank you so much for this time just looking at your Word. I admit that it is so big, so deep, so wide that the more I study it, the less I think I understand it. So thank you that you made the gospel so central and so simple, that you loved us so much that you sent your Son to live the life we couldn't, to die in our place for our sin, to be buried, to rise again and to give us eternal life.

Father, I pray that you would encourage us through this message, that we might delight ourselves in you and enjoy you, and in that, you would use that joy to transform and change us to look more like Jesus Christ. It's in His name I pray, amen.