

Vision Moment - Equip to Serve Class (9am: 1/21, 28) [Members Meeting 5pm: 1/28 & Membership Class 9am: 2/4, 1, 18], Gospel Conversations Class (6:30pm: 1/23 - 4/17), Christianity 101 Class (9am: 2/25 - 3/25)

Rope's End / Pursuit of Happiness - 2

Happiness is ...

"Happiness is having a large, loving, caring, close-knit family ... in another city." *George Burns*

"Happiness is flying monkeys carrying your big brother off to the witch's castle." *Anonymous 7 year old Summit girl*

"Happiness is cake for dinner." *Anonymous 10 year old Summit boy*

"Happiness is rarely found in a really intelligent person." *Ernest Hemingway*

"Whoever said money can't buy happiness simply didn't know where to go shopping." *Bo Derek*

"Happiness is a good gun, a good horse, and a good wife." *Daniel Boone*

"Happiness is a box of warm donuts." *6 year old Cade*

Happify Daily @ happify.com - Website dedicated to helping you be happy through science. - Happify is the single destination for effective, evidence-based solutions for better emotional health and wellbeing in the 21st century. They have a lot of good thoughts based on evidence of what *DOES NOT* bring happiness, but very few ideas on what does. Why? Because as Jackie Hill Perry said (who is one of my favorite new social media follows and artists) "Happiness is hard." *JH Perry*

Truth - happiness is hard and everyone has an opinion or philosophy on how to be happy. And, what is crazy **SOME** of what they say sounds good and true and even may be. But it is hard to know what is true. For example ...

Happiness is not dependent on external conditions; rather, it is governed by our mental attitude. *Dale Carnegie*
Sounds good??? And, according to Jesus ½ of this statement is true & ½ is not. Which ½ is true? Which ½ do you live as true?

Matthew 5:3 (ESV) "Blessed are / Blessed = happy (internal happiness - comes from outside us and is independent of circumstances, feelings, or things being pleasant)

Truth - Jesus/God says happiness is an internal deal - not based on external conditions. Vss 3-11 says that we can be happy in the midst of often not pleasing circumstances - poor in spirit, grief, conflict, persecution, and more.

False - Happiness is not based on our mental attitude. Can't just power thru stuff to be happy. **What is it based on?**

Where does happiness begin and begin to grow according to Jesus? *This is our one question for today.* Jesus said It begins & begins to grows here, **Matt 5:3 / "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."**

Where does happiness begin and grow according to Jesus?

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,

1- **Happiness begins:** as we embrace our souls condition without Jesus.

- **poor in spirit** - fully and completely bankrupt in our soul

- **Chapter 11** - is the reorganization of an entity where debts are "repairable"

- **Chapter 7** - is the dissolving of an entity because of irreparable debt - this is us - says Jesus

Happy are those who embrace they are fully and completely bankrupt in their soul.

What does it mean to be fully and completely bankrupt in our soul?

Let's talk about - "What it doesn't mean" first. *It doesn't mean ...*

- "I'm broke - but I can fix this!" **Got it story!**

- "I'm in need of some help." - *Bankrupt in our soul does not mean - we are in need of financial counseling or a loan to stay with the metaphor. Jesus is to help us fix what we or others have messed up but then I'm good. coach, helper*

- "I'm mostly dead, but not all the way dead." - **Miracle Max from Princess Bride about Wesley**

To be fully and completely bankrupt in our soul means ...

Our soul is completely broke and unable to live out God's right and holy ways. *(We sin and can't stop)*

Our soul is dead to God and under his judgment because of our sinFULLness. *(Sin is why we are broke.)*

How does happiness begin by embracing being "poor in spirit"?

If we truly see our hopeless condition - we see **we cannot fix this** or **escape this** - but **we must be rescued.**

Good news - God's word tells us - that God reveals to us our hopeless condition and that he is our only rescue!

Matthew 16:15-17 (ESV) 15 He (Jesus) said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."

Last week, we saw God has called us to an intimate relationship with Jesus. These are called disciples. And, Jesus only calls and chooses disciples that embrace they are poor in spirit. (*all are poor in spirit*)

Has God shown you the condition of your soul – completely and fully bankrupt?

Has God shown you Jesus is your rescue – your way to be right before God and to be with Him (happy)?

If so – have you trusted your bankrupt soul to Jesus? Have you? Or, have you been trusting you to make yourself right before God, to find happiness in this world? **Trust him now ... (pray!) 16**

The 2nd part of our question is "How does happiness ... **begin to grow** according to Jesus?" Jesus says – this growth begins from basically the same place it started – embracing our soul's condition.

2- **Happiness begins to grow:** as we live in the tension of our soul's new condition.

Matthew 5:3 (ESV) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus says: when we embrace and are rescued from our soul's bankrupt condition – **we get the kingdom of heaven.** What does that mean? – Because of Christ – *our soul's bankrupt condition is forever changed.* (v 3-9 specifics of this)

II Corinthians 2:8-9 (ESV) For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that *you by his poverty might become rich.*

Our soul is no longer bankrupt. We have the riches of the Kingdom – which is ...

Ephesians 1:3 (ESV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *has blessed (gifted) us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places* Why? What are our riches? Who is our riches? *Do you believe this?*

Hear God pleading with us to embrace our new condition ...

II Corinthians 5:17 (ESV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

What does this mean? The old has passed away – the new has come.

1- We are a New Creation: we are RICH in our soul because God has a) breathed His life into us & regenerated us from death to life – and b) given us every spiritual blessing (inheritance) that is ours in Christ, with Christ.

2- We are no longer bankrupt in our soul. *But we still have an old nature in us that is broken & only knows sin.*

I Timothy 1:15 (ESV) Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

Eph 4:22-24 (ESV) 22 put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 ... put on the new self, created after the likeness of God

Galatians 5:16-17 (ESV) 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

People who helped shape our faith almost 500 years ago during a time called the Reformation of the church used a phrase to describe the condition of our soul in Christ. The phrase was – simultaneously just and sinner. We are all together rich in our soul because of Christ (because our sin was put on him – He gives us all His life and riches) and yet in us remains an old and broken nature – prone to sin. **22**

So, ... **How do we live in the tension of our brokenness and our richness?**

1st – Learn the truth of your new condition – and ask God to help you believe it – so you can live in it.

(Disciples = learners. Grow in CGs, classes I told you about, DNA groups (reading the word thru the lens of the gospel)

2nd – Regularly repent when God reveals that you are not living (*believing*) in your new condition.

Even though we are new creations, our old nature moves us to believe and live on one side of our condition.

1) We are drawn to live only as a worm – only broken.

2) We are drawn to live only as a new creation – ignorant to our old nature that lives with in.

This problem has long been a problem for Christ followers.

1) **Perverved Puritan Movement:** "Happiness is not our pursuit – understanding our brokenness is."

Young, not wealthy couple, gets married. A friend sends them on a honeymoon they could not afford. The hotel is nice and the room is ok – but small. They sleep on a pull out couch. On the 2nd day - the new wife notices a 2nd door she hasn't seen. 1st goes to

*a connecting room like most hotels. This does not. She opens to find a luxury suite full of gifts. **This is you and I** when we live only as broken – we miss out on the riches of life in Christ that we have because of **CHRST**.*

• **When we live as a worm – what are we saying about us and God?**

- **When we are constantly living in a way where we miss out on the richness of God: we are always living like a poor bankrupt man – who has been given a loan by God.**

This moves us to lives where we are always repaying God like we are repaying His loan to us. This often leads to a lot of work done in order to please God and others and leaves us worried and unhappy.

- **We are saying God is a LOAN OFFICER – who has lent us enough to be right with Him. He has not lavished us with all His riches and He expects us to pay it back.**

This is a distorted and a destructive view of God. IT IS SIN – that I often live in – and probably some of you have.

But, oh God is a lavish and extravagant giver of himself and all his gifts to us – through Jesus Christ!

Repenting: 1) **turning from this view of God (loan officer who says you owe me) and my belief I am just a worm (must know truth) – and 2) turning to Jesus who is lavish and extravagant!**

II Corinthians 2:8-9 (ESV) For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. He left heaven and all his riches & status and become poor – lost status, name, and took on judgment for our sin. Poor! **Why** – so he could give us a loan? So he could become our coach – our helper! NO! He became poor - to give us himself (rich). Run to this Jesus!

This problem for Christ followers – has not just come from a perverted Puritan movement, it has also come from a

2) **Perverted Prosperity movement – “Happiness is our only pursuit and it comes through being healthy and financially prosperous – our circumstances.”** *We are like the guy who runs the homeless shelter who looks down on all the homeless who come in for help. He judges, doesn't think most deserve their kindness. What's crazy – this guy use to be homeless himself and he didn't get out of that condition because of hard work – he only got out because of another's gracious all consuming gifts to pull him out.*

• **When we live only as a new creation – ignorant to our old nature that lives with in - what are we saying about us and God?**

When we live only in the new creation – we can forget the brokenness & sinfulness that lives with in us.

This quickly leads us to become prideful, like we ended our soul's bankruptcy through our hard work.

* **This often leads us to judge others who don't work as hard us.**

* **This often leads us to believe our life is only supposed to be pleasing and prosperous.**

When our life becomes really hard (unpleasing and the opposite of prosperous) and we get disappointed, angry, or done with God – this is due to a lie about our condition and God we have believed. The lie we have believed about us – we are not still broken – living in a broken world. The lie we believe about God ...

We are saying God is a taskmaster who only rewards those who work hard. (God helps those who help themselves.) And we should not have to endure hardship and pain like this because we have worked hard. God owes us comfort – a pleasing and prosperous life. We dislike the soft gracious God, who gives to those who don't deserve it. > This is a distorted and a destructive view of God.

But oh, our God is gracious – not a taskmaster, loving and kind to all of us who are broken – he is not soft. He poured out all his justice on Jesus so you could get all of His mercy.

You have done nothing and could do nothing – remember this. You were spiritually homeless, bankrupt in your soul. You did not work hard for God's mercy and grace and you don't work hard for it to get it now. HE gives!

II Corinthians 2:8-9 (ESV) For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

Christmas 1997 in Arkansas where my parents used to live. We had a 4 kids and 5 adults and it was beautiful til everyone got sick. Stomach flu wrecked the house. Will (20 who was 8 months old) and I were the last survivors. Then Will got it. I discovered he got it with screaming and a smell. The screaming led me to him. The smell led me to realize – he has now got it. 1) Crunchy peanut butter all over, 2) the dilemma, 3) trying to stay clear of the mess, 4) Diving into the mess and to clean my son 5) no thanks just screaming at time 6) then happy sick face and cuddles.

We were covered in sin – completely and fully bankrupt in our soul. Jesus (God) dove into the mess to clean us and give us a new, rich life in Him. We fight it – but when happiness comes – amidst the brokenness – we realize how

wonderful and amazing Jesus is. He is gracious and loving - lavish and extravagant. Run to him now – *your rescuer, your healer, your giver of happiness – in the midst of brokenness.*

II Corinthians 2:8-9 (ESV) For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

Next week – we will see that God gives us repentance – grief over our sin and our brokenness to live in the tension of Saint and sinner and grow us in happiness.

Blessing: II Corinthians 2:8-9 (ESV) For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.