

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message

March 22, 2026. "The Wisdom in Children's Stories. *"The Snowy Day"*— finding joy in everyday life.

I Intro.

We're halfway through March. The days are getting longer, and now hopefully we can look forward to warmer days. We hope you're having a good year so far. You'll want to keep up with everything that's happening at NCC. Stay connected through our social media to keep up with everything that's going on. Welcome to our companion devotional to Sunday's message. It's just a part of all we have to offer to you. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey. We don't want you to miss out on anything. We consider you part of our community. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are fully committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know.

II Recap.

Think about some of your favorite books from when you were young. It's amazing how something so simple, feels innocent, can be so profound, impacting. Many of the best, and most powerful lessons we learn are from children's books. And many children's books are like the parables of Jesus. A compelling story that weaves in powerful truths and wisdom.

The first week we did "*Pinocchio*" and the power of the process of transformation. We are all works in progress, will always be works in progress. So we live in a community of grace and challenge to be about that work. The second week it was the beautiful book; "*Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale*" Learning about the power of practicing humility and generosity. Last week it was the classic; "*Charlotte's Web*". Looking at relationships of sacrifice and loyalty.

Today, we finish with the simply beautiful book; "*The Snowy Day*".

III Sunday.

Thesaurus day. **Think of words that mean the same thing as "delight"?**

Now stretch yourself, be creative. **What are some simple things that give you this emotion?**

I want you to name little, everyday, ordinary things. For me young kids laughing cures every ailment I have. Also finding good leftovers in the fridge. There is magnificent beauty, and joy, in the simple things. That's how we're ending this series. Finding joy, delight, all the words you came up with, in the simplest things. This is a long familiar passage that would be more fitting after Easter. But this passage will give us some insight to how we can miss the little things. And also miss God's desire for us to delight in everything he's given to us. Hopefully, as we close out this series, a couple of very practical things you can take with you, as you walk out today, to help you live a life seeking joy.

Luke 24:13-32. *That same day two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and*

began walking with them. But God kept them from recognizing him.

He asked them, “What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?”

They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, “You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn’t heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days.”

“What things?” Jesus asked.

“The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth,” they said. “He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago.

“Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said.”

Then Jesus said to them, “You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn’t it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?” Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, but they begged him, “Stay the night with us, since it is getting late.” So he went home with them. As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!

They said to each other, “Didn’t our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?” And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them, 34 who said, “The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter.”

Talk about: “Foolish” first. Feels like we need to address Jesus using the word “foolish” first. What we’re going to do here is why we need to hold our interpretation of scripture humbly. There’s always more we need to learn. Let’s start with this teaching by Jesus in The Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:22. *But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ (contempt/fool) is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.*

Two completely different uses and meanings of the word “fool” here.

Raca- good for nothing, empty-headed, low intelligence, often expressed in frustration.

Mōrós- judgment, morally inferior, to condemn. To curse another to forever be separated from God. Jesus used these two different words we clumsily translate as the same word (fool), to talk about the difference between allowing your frustration to cause harm. And to literally condemn someone to hell. This is why we have to BE VERY CAREFUL in how we interpret and apply scripture. Make sure you know the context, and words used before you use scripture.

“Foolish” in this Luke account is completely different. This “foolish” is- (**anoētoi**) ‘not understanding’, choosing not to think. It’s knowledge without understanding. It’s all right there in front of you, everyone

else can see it. You know all the stuff. You just haven't put it together yet. It's what you say to the TV when you've figured out who the killer is, and they haven't. The kids in the horror movie who run into the abandoned house and split up. Buddy the Elf would call them: "*Cotton-headed ninny muggins*". It's not as severe, or as cutting. It's just a person not being aware, thinking in the moment. Jesus obviously sees, knows something that they don't. And they probably should have already connected the dots. Properly.

So, how does this apply and work for us? Think of some of the praise songs we sing. "*I Trust in God*" "*Run to the Father*" "*Blessed Assurance*". And every time we find ourselves in a really difficult or trying situation, we still struggle to find the faith that calms every worry and settles every fear. This response is the same as. Don't let your fear, insecurity, overrun your faith in God and your ability to steal your confidence and sense of security. Be confident in God's promises.

So, what can we learn from this account about finding 'delight' in our world?

1. Stop and notice the beauty all around you. The first truth from the scripture and "*The Snowy Day*". Peter doesn't need fancy things or elaborate entertainment. Don't we just love this innocence in kids? The snow becomes his joy. He notices everything about it. He is curious and experiments, continuing to find joy by just noticing all the little things about it. Think about your experience with snow. How it quiets the world. Squeaky crunches under your feet. Gets on your eyelashes.

In the story of these disciples on the road to Emmaus, they were so consumed by their grief, so distracted by their feelings and what's going on in their head, they missed putting all the things scripture promised together. **What does this teach us?**

Pay attention to the little things...especially in difficult times. There is evidence of God, wonder and awe, all around you. **Romans 1:20.** When you get discouraged, drowning in hopelessness and maybe even in despair. Feels like the whole world is conspiring against you. Stop, take a deep breath, and notice the little gifts God put in the world that reveal him. And like these two, have deep conversations with others about those things.

2. Being fully present means living life open to the movement of God. In the "*The Snowy Day*" Peter sees no need to rush through the experience. He just allows himself to be swept up in that experience of snow. An important aspect of being 'fully present' is being able to be open and work new understandings, experiences, thoughts into what you already believe. It's not throwing everything you once knew away. It's not letting what you know block you from God is now revealing to you. It's having a humble enough faith, always open to God doing, revealing new things.

The two men on the road to Emmaus knew something was happening. Things had changed. But they were lost in it. They didn't know what exactly, couldn't understand, put the pieces in the right places. But they knew that they just couldn't keep going on in the same direction. In that moment, the two of them knew, (or had some awakening), that this was something special. Because they allowed themselves to be fully in that moment. Sometimes in Man Cave or After Party, something is brought up, something happens, and all of us are so sensitive to that moment that I abandon the planned lesson, and we take a side path. In those moments something special is happening. And it's possibly the only time this space would open up. So, we needed to be fully present in that moment. We didn't just blow past it so we could get our 'stuff' done. God has created a world, and is continually creating it. He is ALWAYS active in our daily lives. We just have to be open, and available enough, fully present in that moment, to experience what God is wanting to show us.

3. Allow yourself the grace of 'seeing' it after the fact. In *"The Snowy Day"* Peter allowed himself to notice all the little things that the snow showed him, and to be ready the next day it snowed. Yeah, you may have missed it in the moment. Don't beat yourself up. Find comfort in noticing you didn't notice it at first. Jesus didn't call the two men foolish because they didn't know it was him. He called them foolish, they didn't understand, because they hadn't connected the dots. It was all laid out for them. God had been doing and promising this work for centuries. And after Jesus explained everything to them (wouldn't you have loved to hear him teach that class?) and left, then it all came together. It's that perfect response you came up to that person— but 6 hours later in the shower that night. You may be upset you missed it, but you give yourself grace because— you still saw it.

The question is; **How and why do we miss the ordinary wonder of God's creation?**

I think this is why. **Have you ever gone on a walk with a child between 2 and 7? What's it like?**

It's the most agonizing, painful, stretching of our patience thing we ever do. **Why?** Because we're adults, we have a schedule. We have things to do, places to go, people to see. And small children don't have a worry, concern, or care in the world. And no need to hurry. They're examining every ant, weed, nut, acorn, along the way. **And what do they find?** Everything we tend to rush past. Because we have so much to do, we miss delight.

It was at this point in the service we did a meditation to help people slow down and find delight, joy.

So, take a moment to slow down, hopefully stop, and open yourself up to be fully with God in this moment. To delight, find joy in God.

What's going on in your life? What is draining you of your energy? Where do you feel lifeless, passionless, directionless? What do you need from God? In this moment, just you and God feel and know the ways God has showered you with so many things to delight in. Ask God to show you the things you need to see to find delight and joy.

IV Challenge.

Wrap up for this series with an unusual bottom line. Ecclesiastes is a weird book. And it needs a little framing. It's basically a person's search for what would bring meaning to their life. They've tried everything, personal pleasures, acquiring everything, and more. And always ended up unsatisfied, and feeling unfulfilled. Coming up short. No joy or delight. So, this is where they ended up.

Ecclesiastes 3:9-13 What do people really get for all their hard work? I have seen the burden God has placed on us all. Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end. So I concluded there is nothing better than to be happy and enjoy ourselves as long as we can. And people should eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of their labor, for these are gifts from God.

I'm not sure this passage is a universal, across the board, truth. But it's a truth we just need to hold in front of everything we see. Bottom line truth in this is; there is not that 'one thing' in life that will bring happiness, contentment, meaning or even understanding. It's enjoying the things God has placed in our lives.. God has made everything around us...for our delight. But there are moments when God, his creation, and all of who God is breaks through all the noise and distractions. And if we slow down, stop, take a deep breath, and pay attention...we can find God. And find hope, joy, delight in God's world. Spend this week finding one thing each day that points back to God.

There are times all we need to do is enjoy all around us. Go and enjoy God's world.