

God Just Wants Me To Be Happy... Right?

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[0 : 00] Today, one of the prayers for our church was that I wouldn't be the only one preaching because we want to multiply ourselves as we continue to grow. We want to plant churches. And so we continue to pray that God would bring men and women who had teaching gifts and be able to come up and to share God's Word.

And so today you're going to hear from Chris Thornton. Chris has been with Watermark for about a year and a half. He's been volunteering. He's going to have a very funny accent, so he'll try to talk slowly so you can understand him.

He's British, and he's going to continue our guerrilla sermon. Chris came on staff about two months ago to help us with our small groups. So if you want to get into a small group or you have questions about small groups, he's the one who does the training and organizing and helps us on this journey. Watermark kids are dismissed. You're to go out back to the service elevators. Parents, we will bring your kids back up to you when the service is over so you don't have to worry about them.

Today we continue the guerrilla letter series as Chris Thornton takes a look at happiness. Here are a few letters we receive from you, our church community. Dear Pastor, I became a Christian because I was told by my friends that God wanted me to be happy and that after I invited Christ in my life, all would be okay.

[1 : 16] Hey Pastor, okay. I'm here only because of my spouse and then only by an agreement ever so often. Dear guerrilla, I find it hard sometimes to be happy in all my circumstances.

My friends tell me I am to be joyful as a Christian, but not always happy. Pastor Tobin, I study many hours a week because my parents tell me that will make my life comfortable and happy in the long run.

I wonder if that's really true. I looked at my friends' lives and that seemed to be true. So I became a Christian. But happy has not happened as I was promised.

And it seems like my life is worse than before. I grew up around people who would say they were Christians most of my life. And it seemed like, when it was all stripped away, their health or their wealth or their reputation or something made their lives not work the way they wanted it to, that they would quickly jettison their faith and act like the rest of us.

Kill or be killed. Joy in being happy. As I look at the Bible, they seem to be used in the same way. Am I correct? When I looked at my parents' lives, it seems like they promised me something that they actually do not have or live out in their lives or in our home.

[2 : 42] This week I found out that I'm being released from my job after the holidays are over. Do other religions have more to offer me? Just checking. The Christian happy face to me seems to be fake.

Or at best, happiness is a matter of your circumstances. How do you respond to this? I guess I'm just curious on what the difference is between joy and being happy.

And how do I stay focused on heaven when it does not seem like things are working out for me here and now? Help. How do I really get happy?

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed.

[3 : 44] And he healed them. Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and the regions across the Jordan followed him. Now, when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up to the mountainside and he sat down.

His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them. He said, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the people of heaven.

Children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven. For in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Good morning. My name is Chris.

I hope you can cope with a British accent this morning. Love it. Tobin can translate into Texan for you if you're struggling.

[5 : 22] We're continuing a series, a guerrilla series, and today we're going to be looking at happiness. How happy are you?

One to ten, where are you? In Hong Kong, the Hong Kong happiness index indicates that people in Hong Kong are getting less and less happy.

On average, the Hong Kong person thinks that they need about 1.5 million Hong Kong dollars, or about \$125,000 a month to be happy.

Surprisingly, women feel they need more than men. I'm not sure why. In the world happiness rankings, Hong Kong comes in at 103 between Sudan and Belarus.

Go figure. Everybody is looking for happiness. Some people are looking for happiness in the partner of their dreams. Some people are looking for happiness in just a moment's peace and quiet.

[6 : 26] Some people are looking for happiness in a pat on the back from their boss. Some recognition for their achievements. But the happiness we're talking about here is a feeling that is dependent on your circumstances.

It's a feeling dependent on your circumstances. I feel happy when the sun comes out. Coming from the UK, that means I've been miserable for most of my life. I feel happy when England are winning a football match.

That kind of happiness lasts about 10 minutes. Particularly when we're playing Germany. Now, you may feel happy when you get the keys to your new apartment.

You may feel happy when you get that job you've always been looking for. But when the honeymoon period is over, what next? Where are you next going to go to find your happiness?

Because this kind of happiness is as slippery as the soap in the bath. The moment you think you've got hold of it, it just slips out of your grasp. And you're constantly chasing it in an endless pursuit.

[7 : 33] It's not that it's wrong to feel happy, but it's not ultimate. When the Bible talks about happiness, it's talking about a different kind of happiness. It's talking about a happiness that is not dependent on your circumstances.

It's talking about a deep, rich, satisfying joy and contentment, no matter what the situation you are facing. C.S. Lewis, who wrote the Narnia Chronicles, he said this.

Indeed, if we consider the amazing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires for happiness not too strong, but too weak.

We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us. Like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because we cannot imagine what is meant by an offer of a holiday at the sea.

We are far too easily pleased. What Hong Kong needs is Christians who are not just chasing after dependent, circumstances-dependent happiness, but who are chasing after an ultimate joy that is found as we are satisfied in God.

[8 : 59] So as we come to the passage today, I want to give you a brief bit of background, and then I've got four points that I'm going to go through quickly. The context is, in this passage in Matthew, the people of Israel have suffered for centuries under the oppression of foreign rulers.

Every day they walk out, they see soldiers which remind them that they are not free. But this people is a people who have also had promises from God, promises that one day he will send a king who will bring in a kingdom which will be a kingdom of abundance, where they are oppressed, they will be free, where they were lacking, they will be satisfied, they will be blessed beyond their wildest dreams.

Everyone's looking for this king to come. And Matthew, in the first four chapters of his book, is whispering to his readers, the king is here, Jesus is here.

So in 4 verse 16 he says, On those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned. So people hear about this king.

Jesus goes around and he's healing people. People are being restored. And everyone's thinking, Wow, this may be the king. This may be the kingdom coming. So I want to get a part of it.

[10:19] I want to get some of the blessings of this kingdom. So they all go, and people are being healed. People are being delivered. And it seems great. Everyone seems to be after these blessings.

But if you look in 5 verse 1, there's a different group. It's not just the crowd who are coming for these blessings. There's another group, which are the disciples.

Because Jesus leaves the crowd, and the disciples come to him. Because the disciples are not just there to get the blessings.

They are intrinsically attracted to Jesus himself. And this is my first point. The first point is, if you want that true, lasting, deep happiness, it's found in relationship with God.

You see, the crowds, they want to get some temporary blessings. But when they've got it, then they just go away. And they're not interested in Jesus. But the disciples are the ones that Jesus said to them, You are blessed.

[11:22] Blessed. Now, what does this word blessed mean? The word in Greek is makarios. It literally means happy or fortunate. Now, it's not saying, it's not a feeling of happiness.

This is a state of happiness. A bit like if I say to you, you're so fortunate to have a boss like you've got. You're so fortunate to live in Bel Air.

You're so fortunate that you have just amazing children. It's a favoured position that you are in. And in the Old Testament, when God always says you are blessed, it always comes out of relationship with God.

So, for example, Psalm 144, 15 says, Blessed are those whose God is the Lord. The source of all that joy, all that happiness, is that relationship that you have with God.

Now, we need to be careful, because sometimes we think, okay, I come to Jesus, and then he's going to give me all the blessings that I get. He's going to give me the health. He's going to get my kids into the school I want.

[12:27] He's going to give me the job I want. But in Hong Kong, there is a kind of young lady who is called a gong-ju-bang. Now, those of you who are from Hong Kong know what a gong-ju-bang is.

Literally, it means princess syndrome or princess sickness. These are the kind of ladies who, when they're deciding who they're going to, what man they're going to date, reckon him up based on what his wallet is worth.

So they reckon, okay, can he give me the LV bag? Can he give me the diamond necklace? Maybe the next iPad mini. And if he seems to fit the bill, then they'll go with him. But if for some reason, he stops giving them what they want, then they'll go and find somebody else who can buy them a more expensive bag or something else which seems to satisfy them.

It's the same as some of the students I used to teach. When I'd ask them, what's your ambition in life? They'd say to me, to marry a billionaire. Now, I don't think they were thinking at that point, I want to develop a loving relationship with this billionaire.

And even if he loses all his money, I'm going to loyally stay devoted to him. No, they're thinking, I want his cash. I want the yacht. I want the holiday in the Maldives. I want the Ferrari.

[13:47] They want his stuff. They don't want the relationship. They want the stuff. And the problem is, once they've got the stuff, they still don't have the relationship because they're still left empty and longing for more.

But if you're all about the relationship, well, he has the stuff anyway. And if he doesn't have it, he's still content with the relationship.

And I think many of us as Christians live as Christian Gongju Bang. Many of us go to God, as long as he gives me what I want, then I'll stick with him.

But the moment it seems like things are not going quite the way I wanted, the moment I lose my job, the moment my health fails, we start to question, actually, maybe there's a better option somewhere else.

Because it's all about the stuff. It's not about the relationship. So I want to unpack this just in three further points. We're going to look at how desperation for God leads to happiness, how mourning leads to happiness, and how longing to be like Jesus leads to happiness.

[14:58] So if you look in verse 3, it says here, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Another translation says, Blessed are those who know their need for God.

Now, our society tells us if you want to be happy, you've got to be more assertive. You've got to make more effort. You've got to try your best. You've got to believe in yourself. You can do it. As long as you work hard enough. As long as you think enough positive thoughts about yourself. But that's not what the Bible says if you want to get deep happiness which is not dependent on your circumstances.

If you want to be happy, you need to become a beggar. You need to become desperate knowing that you have nothing and that God is the only hope and source that you can run to.

In Psalm 34 it says, This poor man cried to the Lord and he heard him and he saved him out of all his troubles. This poor man, he is desperate for God.

[16:12] And until you realize that the happiness that you need in life depends totally on God, you're always going to be chasing after something else. How does this work out? I think this works out sometimes in prayer.

When do you pray? What do you pray for? And how often do you pray? Because prayer expresses dependence on God. A gong jubeng prays in two situations. A gong jubeng prays when things are going wrong.

So they want God to fix the situation. And when he answers them, just like the people of Israel, then they kind of say thanks and then they leave him behind. Because I'm competent in the rest of the areas of my life.

I can deal with those. God's a bit like a tablet. You know, you've got a headache. You take the tablet. It fixes the situation. You put it back on the shelf until you get the next problem. That's the first situation.

I think gong jubeng also pray just when they want something. When they want something to make their life more comfortable. So that may be for their friends, their family. It may be good health.

[17:13] It may be to pass their exams. I don't know. Before a job interview, suddenly my prayer life gets amazing. Now, it's not that it's wrong to pray for those things.

In fact, Jesus says, when you pray, say, give us our day a daily bread. It's okay to pray for those things. But the thing is, when the gong jubeng doesn't get those things, when the job doesn't come, when the kids don't get in the school you want, they start to doubt that God is good.

They start to get angry with God. And they think, okay, forget about it. You didn't seem to work. And then they move on to throwing themselves into something else. But the poor man, who knows that, actually, he doesn't just need the stuff from God.

He needs God himself. So when he prays, yes, he will pray for things. But even if those things don't materialize, he still prays for the relationship.

I wonder how often do you pray, how often in your community groups do you pray, for God himself, and not just for stuff from God. That's the second thing.

[18:21] Third thing. If you want to be happy, it starts with mourning. Now this seems very strange, because literally, it's happy are the unhappy, which seems very strange. But the kind of mourning we're talking about here is not mourning over a dead relative, or you've lost a loved one.

This is mourning over the depth of your sin. To know true happiness, you've got to realize that while all true happiness comes out of relationship with God, you have rejected that relationship with God, and have cut yourself off from the source of all that blessing, that fountain of joy.

And that we live in a culture which kind of minimizes sin. Sin is basically saying, I want to do what I want to do, and God, I'm not going to listen to you. And I think we often think about sin like this.

I think we often think of a sin like speeding. You know, you're doing 80 kilometers an hour in a 50 limit, the police catch you, and maybe you feel sorry at that moment. You feel sorry for two reasons. You feel sorry, one, that the police caught you. And maybe you feel sorry, two, that you broke a rule. That maybe as a Christian, you know you shouldn't break the law.

[19:36] But I doubt as the police catch you, you're saying, I'm sorry, I have sinned against Leung Cheng Ying and the government. I'm no longer worthy to be called a citizen of Hong Kong.

I doubt you're staying awake at night thinking how you've offended the transport minister. Are you? You're thinking, I got caught. Oh, I shouldn't have done that.

Bit naughty. But actually, when the Bible talks about sin, it says sin is personal. Sin is a personal attack on God.

In Psalm 51, when David commits adultery with Bathsheba, he says afterwards, against you, God, alone have I sinned. Because sin is just like saying, God, get out of my life right now.

It's like slamming the door in his face. It's like kicking him out of the door and saying, at this particular moment, I don't want you anywhere near me. That's what sin is. Sin is personal. And I know in my own life, I've seen this, where at one stage, I was very selfish towards my parents.

[20 : 45] And it got to, I was so bad that my parents were so stressed out that my mom's head started to kind of involuntarily shake and she started going grey. And I was like, I didn't know why this was happening, so I asked my dad, why is this happening?

And he said to me, it's because of you. Because suddenly I realised it was personal. And it just broke me inside.

I wept. I mourned over my sin because I realised it was personal. And I think many of us, we make excuses. I make so many excuses.

Like for example, if I've had a, I've been insensitive to Fiona, my fiancé or something, maybe afterwards I might kind of apologise and say, I'm sorry, but you know, I was tired.

Or, I'm sorry, but you were mean to me. I'm sorry, but I had a hard day. Or maybe if I don't even say those things, I think, well you know, you started, yeah I did something wrong, but look what you did.

[21 : 48] That's not mourning over sin, that's justifying it. And the Bible says, when you mourn over your sin, it's the start of happiness.

But why is it the start of happiness? Because it doesn't sound like you're going to be happy, but the rest of the verse says this, blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

And here's the thing, when you understand the depth of your sin, then you'll begin to understand the depth of God's amazing grace towards you. That when you begin to understand how you have personally offended God, then you understand how incredible his death on the cross is for you.

That he's wiped out every sin, that he's thrown it into the depths of the sea, that it's gone completely. You no longer have to cover up, you no longer have to justify yourself, it's gone. He's dealt with it, you're free.

And this is such good news, I think, in Hong Kong, because so many of us, we know that there's something wrong with us, we know we've done things wrong in our past, and we just try and cover it up, we throw ourselves into, trying to prove ourselves, through work, through working hard, through being excellent in sports, through doing all kinds of things, which leave us stressed, because we're all the time trying to cover up that kind of, what we know is wrong inside.

[23 : 05] But this is good news, because it says to you, you don't have to cover up any longer, you're free, God's grace has completely wiped it out, you don't have to pretend not to be a sinner, you come to God, you mourn over your sin, and it's completely removed.

That's why it's good news, that's why this is the beginning of happiness. Third thing, fourth thing, lasting happiness also starts with longing to be like Jesus.

In verse 6, it says, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. It's longing and being desperate for righteousness, right relationship with God, right relationship with each other.

In other words, it's longing to be like Jesus. It's being desperate, desperate, desperate like people are desperate on the MTR to get a seat. It's desperate that you're so thirsty that you just want this more than anything else.

Now, the Gongju Bang is desperate for something, they're desperate for comfort. And this kind of plays out, this difference between the Christian who longs to be like Jesus and the one who longs for comfort.

[24 : 29] When things go wrong, you know, you know, you've lost all your work. You know, it's when your boss is unbearably demanding.

It's when your husband forgets your birthday or your friend talks behind your back. The Gongju Bang starts to complain. And I've been in so many offices and they're just filled with complaining people.

Because the Gongju Bang says, what have I done to deserve this? Look at them, they're just such a... I can't believe they did that to me.

But the thing is, the Christian who longs to be like Jesus responds to frustration and difficulty not with complaining but with thanksgiving.

Not because they're excited about the frustration and the suffering but because they know that God uses frustrating, difficult circumstances to make you more like himself.

[25 : 33] They are God's shaping tool to change you into the person who he's wanting you to be. Romans 8 verse 28 says, God is working all things for your good.

I think we then stop there. But actually, the next part says, to conform you, to be like himself. In other words, when your wife is nagging you, when your husband is being insensitive, God's actually going to use even those situations to make you like himself.

How? Well, you don't learn to be patient if everything's going your way. You don't learn to be gracious if everybody's nice to you. You don't learn to forgive until somebody actually hurts you. God uses painful, difficult situations to transform you like himself. And we can respond. If your longing is to be like Jesus, then you can thank God even in the difficulty because you know that he's making you more like himself.

Now, does that mean you have to go around with this kind of fixed grin, you know, that Christian grin, you know, when deep inside there's all kinds of turmoil going on but you know you've got to look happy.

[26 : 49] No, that's not what we're talking about. In the Bible, there's a word for it. It's not complaining, it's lament. The Bible talks about when you're in those moments of just real struggle and pain and you want to voice out your agony as it were, we can lament.

What's the difference between lamenting and complaining? And remember, there's a whole book in the Bible about lamenting. It's called Lamentations. A third of the Psalms are laments. So, God's into lamenting, okay?

But here's the difference between lament and complaint and I can only briefly say this. A lamenter, when things are going wrong, when they're in pain, they run to God with their struggles and they just say, God, I need you.

God, this is the way things are. A complainer runs to everybody else except God with all their problems. Maybe they start off complaining to God but then, as things don't seem to work out straight away for them, then they just go to everybody else.

A lamenter wrestles through the issues to a point of trusting God and they come back again and again and again to God until they can say, God, I trust you.

[28 : 09] I know you're working in this because for the lamenter, it's about the relationship with God. A complainer becomes bitter and angry at God and they wallow in their circumstances.

A complainer says, look at all my problems. God's not helping me one bit here. A lamenter says, God, I know you're working in my life but I'm overwhelmed. I can't cope with this situation.

Please help me. And they allow God and other people to enter into their struggles and to bring them to that place of joy in God again.

There are two old people that I used to visit. One of them is 88. She's had a pretty hard life. She had to leave school when she was 14.

Her house was bombed in the Second World War. Her fiancé was shot down and went missing for two months during the war. She had a miscarriage. She struggled for year after year with chronic pain.

[29 : 10] Her husband has died. Every time I go and see her, it's like there's one sickness after another, sickness after another. It's always something different. But when I go and visit her, she's really honest about her problems.

She's really matter-of-fact about them. She shares them. But it's not a pity party. And always at the end she says, but you know, God has been so faithful to me and I want to shout it from the rooftops about how good God is.

She exudes this incredible joy. And when I go away from that, I always go away encouraged, thinking, you know, if I ever get to be that age, I want to be like her.

And there are some kids that we, a family we used to know in the neighbourhood who basically were a very broken family. The husband was in and out of prison.

The 14-year-old boy was in and out of prison. All the children were blacklisted from the neighbourhood. But they got to know this 88-year-old. And of their own will, and this is unheard of in the youth, I mean, 10, 12-year-old boys don't just go around to strange 88-year-old ladies.

[30 : 22] But they would come off their old back willingly to meet with her and just spend time with her because they loved being with her. And actually, as they spent time with her, it meant they

weren't causing trouble in the rest of the neighbourhood.

You see, all of the rest of society would say that she was functionally useless. She couldn't do very much. But actually, her life was making a major impact on everyone who she came across.

I know somebody else that I used to visit. He's dead now. And he'd had a pretty good life. He'd been very successful in business. He had a great wife and kids.

He was very talented, very sporty. But then, as he got older, his wife died. And he began to feel the aches and pains of old age.

He couldn't do what he used to be able to do. And he became bitter and hardened. When I went to go to visit him, he would just spend hours complaining.

[31 : 25] And I'd come away from there just feeling discouraged and drained and just, I'd say to my friend, oh, we just need to pray for him. Because you see, for him, he would say, I've got nothing worth living for.

I just want to die. Because for him, life had been all about the stuff. And when the stuff was taken away, he had nothing left. But the other lady, her life had been all about the relationship.

And when everything else was stripped away, she still had the fountain of joy which kept her through the difficult times and the good times. And the thing is, this joy is not just, I think sometimes we talk about happiness and basically, we just want to be happy for me.

I want my life to be happy. But actually, if you looked in verse 14 in the bulletin, it's not there, but you can look later. Jesus goes on in this sermon on the mount and he says, you are the light of the world to the Christians there.

And it's very interesting because how are they going to be a light? This lady was a light to the people around her. How? Because she'd found her joy in God.

[32 : 48] And when you came across her, you just noticed something different about her. Wouldn't it be amazing in Hong Kong if there were a group of people in Hong Kong where everyone is looking for this happiness, where everyone, people are complaining about all the kind of things that are going on, and they find a people who are satisfied not because the situations are great, but they're satisfied because they know God is great.

How would that impact your offices if when everybody else is complaining they see that you are not the same, that there's something different about you? This is one of God's mission strategies for reaching the world, that we are satisfied in God.

That's when God gets glorified. But maybe you're thinking, that sounds great, Chris, you know, lovely in theory, but in practice life's just not like that.

That's just not practical. I would suggest to you that you are probably already a Gong Jubeing because you've forgotten what was the first thing we mentioned.

The first way to blessing is that, first of all, you're in relationship but you've got to realize your need of God. You see, when Jesus goes through these what are called beatitudes, he's saying this is the normal Christian life.

[34 : 14] This is the normal Christian life. Anything less than this is subnormal Christianity. Now when I look at my own life, I see this massive gap between that and the way I live.

Now if I just go, okay, I can't do that, that's me saying it all depends on me and obviously I can't do that. But remember, the first place to start is this, you've got to know your need of God.

Unless you go to God and run to God and say, I can't do this, I can't live like this, I need you. Unless you change me, unless you make me like this, it's never going to happen.

that is the beginning of that road to that happiness. Unless you begin to see that actually the reason there is that gap between what Jesus calls you to and the way we often live is because of our own sin and you actually mourn over it and you say, God, I know this is the way I need to be living, but I don't.

And we come and we say, God, forgive me. And even if we don't feel like mourning, we say, God, I want to mourn, please help me to mourn over my sin. Then you will know the amazing grace which says you are free, you are forgiven, it's not your effort, it's only my grace.

[35 : 39] And as he transforms your heart to want to long to be like Jesus, any situation that comes, you can give thanks to him because you know he's changing you to be more like himself.

Because when Jesus died, he died to bring you into true joy. because he died to bring you into relationship with himself.

That's why he died. And the one who chases after a superficial happiness will be left making mud pies in a slum.

But my challenge to you is this, don't be satisfied with just dependent, circumstance dependent happiness. But realize there is a holiday on the beach that you could be enjoying now.

Let's just pray. And what I want you to do is, I want you to just to think for a moment, what is God saying to you right now?

[36 : 45] I'm going to give you just a few seconds just to think, what is God saying to you in your own life now? And just cry out to him in this moment. Father, thank you.

Thank you so much that you want our joy. You want us to know satisfying, life-giving joy in this life and in the next, Lord.

Thank you that in this life we can have a taste of that kingdom of blessing things. We can enjoy the starter for the main meal later, Lord. And I pray that you would help us not to be satisfied with the kind of the lives we live, but to thirst for you, to realize that your death and resurrection is the fountain of our joy, that your grace is what cleans us and helps us to live freely.

Help us to chase after you as we've never chased after anything else. Let us not be content with just having more stuff from you. Let us really desire you, Lord, I pray.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Do I hear amen to that? Not to the crying, but to the amen to the crying, too.

[38 : 13] Hey, if this is the first time you heard this talk for the first time, and you're like, wow, that's me. We would love for you to, we have people up here who would like to pray with you if you want to deal with this in your life.

Don't allow this to keep going on without asking the Lord, what does this look like for me? The kids are going to be brought up in a second, so your parents don't need to rush down there, but afterwards, there'll be people up here to pray with you, and we'd like to just continue in that journey as we go as a family.

Last week, we had the Kennedy Town share about the outreach they had, and before we all broke down, last Sunday, everything was provided. The money for the, it was amazing.

Enough of you, enough of you signed up to help them serve the elderly in our area, so during the holidays, they're going to have two big meals of about 400 people that are going to be served, and everybody signed up for that.

All the money came in, and it was just so humbling to see the family of God come together and see a need and say, okay, we need to fix this, and let's be a part of continuing to fix this, because this isn't just a one-off thing, so praise the Lord.

[39 : 19] Also, as you head out in the back, we put these together for you guys, and they're basically just a red packet, but inside it tells the story of the gospel. And so they're for sale, and just grab a packet of them, put your money for whoever you want to share with.

I found these to be great tools. I give them to my bus drivers, I give them to the people in taxis, I give them to the people at the restaurant, so these are made available for you in the back, so please grab a couple of those.

Also, we are doing our Watermark Israel tour. You've seen it on the screens for about a month now, and so the time is coming up where we're having people sign up. We have about 10 more places left, and so we want to open that up to you as a family before we've had other people from other churches wanting to get involved in that, but we want it to be mostly a Watermark thing.

So there's a brochure that tells everything about it. It's on the back table back there. It is a money-back guarantee. Christine and I have done it every two years, so it's our fourth trip with Dr. Hannah, whom you met.

If you hate it, at the end of it, I'll give you your money back, okay? So I'm just serious, because it's just such a life-changing event to walk to these places where you heard Jesus say, blessed are the poor in spirit, and you sit right there and you see history around you.

[40 : 34] So we want to encourage you to pray about being a part of that. Also, we don't take offering here. There's little blue envelopes, and we would just ask for you, as you consider what Christ has done in your life, to give proportionally to that, and that makes all of this possible.

What a great Sunday. Are you guys happy to be here? I say, Chris, thank you so much. It's so humbling to, one of the things we prayed when we started the church is Christina and I said, we can't do it by ourselves.

We need people who have these gifts and talents, and in the two years that we've been here, you've heard from over 13 or 14 other people who've come up and brought God's word, and to me that is amazing, because it means if I die tomorrow or something happens, God takes care of his people, and he always does, and we have to trust him in that way, even as we think about planting other churches.

So thanks so much, and let me close this in prayer. Father, we thank you for this day. I think even as we just sang about humbly coming before you, and what does it mean for us to be beggars? I confess, Lord, that sometimes that's very difficult, because I think of my ability, my gifting, my talent, my education, the experiences in the past, and sometimes it's easy to let those things drive instead of letting prayer drive.

[41 : 56] And so we come before you, and I know even now there are people here who this is the first time they've even heard a talk like this, and this is the first time they've heard this idea of a relationship versus stuff. And Lord, I pray for those people that they would see you as you truly are, and they would not leave here still having a relationship with stuff, but not the giver of life.

And Lord, I pray for the rest of us as we go on our journey this week that we would really ask ourselves hard questions. Do we want the relationship, or do we just want the things? And Lord, if we find out that we've wanted the things more than we wanted you, I pray that we would just repent of that, that we confess that sin and just come before you humbly as the beggars that we are, because your word says that you are merciful and just and compassionate, and you desire to do these good things for your children as we walk with you.

And so Lord, we walk with you humbly, knowing that you're good and that you're holy. And Lord, I pray for the rest of this part of Hong Kong as we walk out today.

Help us to be different and help us to see your son in our words and our actions and in our families and how we interact with our children. Help the people around us to see those things be different and help them to ask questions of why.

[43 : 18] Give us the courage to say it's nothing about me because I fail most of the time, but it's about Christ who's changing me moment by moment through his gospel.

So Lord, I just thank you for my brothers and sisters here, and we love you and we need you, and we pray these things in your son in Jesus' holy name. Amen. God bless you. Next week we're on the third floor, so we're not up here.

We're on the third floor. There's food and drinks and coffee. Please help yourself. Are we up here next week? Oh, we're up here next week. Okay. Sorry about that.

We're up here. Okay. Okay. Okay. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. top 3- ■■■■ol Transcription see you somewhere later on tecnpey. St guzm uhh in Watch in hrs no That's somewhat update on the ways in my mind.

Sorry about the altura on the timeline on the summertime. I was like we're we're going to make, okay. Great. microphone. We're gonna make there attention all the time But I was like, okay. We're gonna make that. Okay. got it.

[44 : 17] Sorry about that. That butt pc. Ok. Sorry about that. We're up here.