

Why Bother with God if I'm Already Happy?

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Preacher: Max Jeganathan

[0 : 0 0] The scripture reading comes from Luke 19, starting at verse 1. Please follow along on the screen or in your Bible. He entered Jericho and was passing through.

And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. And he was not seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not because he was small in stature.

So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.

So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all grumbled. He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor.

And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold. And Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.

[1 : 1 2] For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. Amen. Great. I'd love to introduce our speaker to us this morning. This morning we are going to be listening to Max Jaganathan, who is originally from Sri Lanka, but moved to Australia at a young age.

And having grown up in Australia, he then studied law and politics, both at the National University of Australia as well as University in Oxford. He has also worked advising political leaders in Australia, and he now works for RZIM as a speaker and also regional director for the Asia-Pacific branch of RZIM.

Max is a friend of Watermark. He has spoken here before. He leads a fantastic team of speakers and apologists, and it really is a great privilege to have him speaking to us today on the subject of, Why do I need God if I'm happy already?

Let's welcome Max Jaganathan to us this morning. Good morning, Watermark community. It's such a blessing to be able to share this message with you.

I'm so sorry that I'm not able to be there in person. It's been a couple of years, I think, since I've been with you physically, but I remember that time fondly, and I'm in touch with many from your community pretty regularly.

[2 : 3 1] And so we've been praying for you. We at RZIM hope things are going well there as you in Hong Kong come out of the pandemic and as the Lord calls and leads you as the Watermark family and community to great new depths as we approach this Christmas season and into the new year ahead as well.

I want to talk to you about a topic that I think is as important and relevant as it ever has been as we continue to battle our way through a post-truth culture, a post-truth world, and trying to make sense of what that actually means, and particularly what that means for the big questions in life.

And when we think about how much hostility there is, how much uncertainty there is, how much volatility there is, how much anxiety there is out there in the world for so many different reasons, this question often comes up, why bother with God if I'm happy?

Now, it's an interesting question because, as I said, with so much negativity around, it seems that a lot of people aren't that happy. But a lot of people still remain focused and committed to this idea that if they can find a way to find happiness and achieve happiness for themselves, and they don't need anything else, we've built for ourselves individual self-focus models and paradigms of fulfillment.

And if we can make things work relatively well most of the time, according to those paradigms of fulfillment, then we think that we don't need anything else. And it all stems from this transactional mindset that we seem to have lulled ourselves into.

[4 : 04] And some of that can be understood through simply the global systems that we've created for ourselves, whether it's our economic and financial systems, whether it's our geopolitical and geographic systems of people movement.

It's very transactional. You give and you get. It's all driven by supply and demand. And so when we go to the shops and we buy something, we give and we receive. And so it's easy to think that what we are seeking to achieve is this transacted happiness, where you just do certain things that make you happy.

And the better you do them, the more happy you become. And once you have that level of happiness, that's all you really need. You don't need to look any further than that. But the problem is we continue to struggle, both inside our own hearts and in the world around us that we see.

It seems like happiness isn't quite cutting it. And so I want to talk about three things today. Three things. Three answers to the question, why bother with God if I'm happy?

And the three things are these. Because truth is indispensable. Because suffering is unavoidable. And because happiness is not enough. Because truth is indispensable, suffering is unavoidable, and ultimately happiness is not enough.

[5 : 14] And we see some of these themes come through in the biblical story of Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector, this guy who is of enormous economic and financial power and influence, but is socially excluded, is socially and culturally ostracized from his very own community.

And he's hated amongst his people. And yet he has built for himself, as we all do, a paradigm of fulfillment through wealth, through financial wealth. Now, we don't all do it through financial wealth, but obviously financial affluence is a big and very common model of prosperity and achievement and success today.

But we don't always do it in the way Zacchaeus did. But we all have our paradigms of fulfillment. Zacchaeus has happened to be financial affluence, and perhaps even political influence, given how senior he was.

We know he was a chief tax collector. But in the midst of that, we still see that he found it in himself that morning to go and see Jesus, to go and get a look at this Jesus.

Now, clearly, something else was needed. Otherwise, he wouldn't have bothered. If he was really happy, why bother going to see who this Jesus is? Even if you weren't entirely sure who he was or whether this whole thing was a hoax, why would you bother going to see Jesus?

[6 : 29] So why bother with God if you're happy? Because truth is indispensable, suffering is unavoidable, and happiness is not enough. Let's have a look at this with a little bit of regard to Zacchaeus' story, but more importantly, with a stronger focus on your and my heart individually.

And it doesn't really matter where you are, on that walk with God, on your wrestle with God, on your struggle with God, or perhaps even in your rejection of God. I hope this is relevant for you.

There's a sociologist called George Ritzer. There was a sociologist, an American sociologist. And he talked about the cultural and economic phenomenon called McDonaldization. And McDonaldization, he referred to in the context of four things.

Efficiency, predictability, calculability, and control. And of course, he was referring to the fast food chain. But what he was also talking about was this cultural and psychological reality that more and more, people simply just want what they want when they want it.

And then they get on with their lives. That's it. It's all about material needs and material wants. So McDonaldization very much fits in some ways with Zacchaeus' life. You know, just get wealthy, get what you need, get what you want quickly.

[7 : 40] That kind of drive-through culture, that Amazon, that kind of immediate click, one-click culture that we have moved into. And of course, the industrial and computing revolutions have really sped this up and helped this out.

And if anything, the pandemic has actually accelerated this because we are ordering more and more and more things from food to groceries to electronics to clothing to music to multimedia entertainment, whether it's Netflix or Amazon Prime, whatever it is, we're all just ordering it and having it delivered literally to our doorsteps or to our screens, to our handheld devices.

So McDonaldization, which Ritzer actually came up with, I think, in the 50s or 60s, has been accelerated through the last, not just 10 to 15 years, but particularly you can make the case disproportionately in the last 12 to 24 months as well.

So why then would we bother? If we can have the things that we want, if materially at least, even in the context of entertainment, in the context of short-term pleasure and desire, if we can have everything we want, why would we bother with God?

Well, the first point I want to make is that truth is indispensable. Truth is indispensable. And we see this in Zacchaeus' response to the news that Jesus is coming to town.

[8 : 53] He's wealthy. He's stinking rich, in fact. And he's full of economic and cultural power. He's in with the Roman authorities. And yet he still knows that something is not quite right.

And so he gets up and he comes. He comes and he climbs the sycamore tree just to get a glimpse of this Jesus. He's looking for something. And I want to suggest to you that he's looking what we are all looking for.

On some level, one of the things that Zacchaeus is looking for that day and that we are all looking for is truth. Absolute objective truth. Because the post-truth culture will tell you that truth doesn't really matter.

That what matters more are your feelings. Your feelings are the most important thing. And yet we know that the denial or rejection of truth fails on two very important fronts.

It fails logically because you simply can't deny the existence of absolute truth. without affirming it. And it also fails experientially as we see some from Zacchaeus and from our own hearts too.

[9 : 51] Because every human heart longs for truth. Longs for coherence. Longs for a better understanding of reality. Right? So what about the logical flaw? Let me start with that. Denying truth fails logically.

We know this because if anyone says to you truth does not exist, all you have to say to them is to say, was that statement true? Was that statement that you just said, was that true?

Now, you've asked them a propositional binary question. They have to either say yes or no. They say, there's no such thing as truth. You respond, was that true? If they say yes, then they are making an objective truth claim, an absolute truth claim, and thereby, they are denying and detracting from the substance of what they're trying to say.

So they're admitting that the substance of their claim is false because they're admitting that they're trying to make a truth statement. If they say no, it's not true, then once again, they're admitting that the substance of their statement is false.

So whichever way you answer that question, we see that truth exists. We see that that statement, truth does not exist, implodes on itself. It implodes before it even gets off the runway.

[10 : 54] It doesn't even take off. And we're not using Christian principles or any kind of religious principles or metaphysical assumptions here. These are just very simple, widely accepted principles of logic. Aristotle called it the law of non-contradiction.

You can't try and deny the existence of absolute truth because you have to make an absolute truth claim in order to do that. So we know logically and philosophically, before we even open the Bible, that absolute truth exists.

Absolute truth does exist. And we can know it because any denial of those two things implodes on itself logically. And when we look at the Christian message, we see something incredible. We see that the means to truth is exactly what we would expect the means to truth to be if we were following the principles of logic.

And Plato is helpful here, the ancient Greek philosopher. He said, all you have to do to find truth is follow the evidence to where it leads. Just follow the evidence to where it leads. Follow the evidence to where it leads.

And when we look in the Bible, what we see again and again and again is an invitation to question, is a presentation of evidence, propositional evidence, historical evidence, philosophical evidence.

[12 : 00] Ultimately, the person of Jesus Christ who turns up and doesn't say simply, this is the truth, this is the truth, this is the truth. He does make a number of truth claims and backs them up in many ways, but ultimately he points to himself and he says, I am the truth.

So we know that to find truth, we have to follow the evidence to where it leads. And we know that in this Christian message, we are presented with propositional evidence. And both inside and outside the Bible now, if we look, there is evidence, mountains and mountains of evidence.

If we are willing to engage with it and to follow it to where it leads. And Zacchaeus, interestingly that morning, he did exactly that. He was looking for something beyond his life. He was looking for truth.

He knew that there was something about the way he was living that wasn't quite in keeping with the nature of reality itself. And so he followed the evidence and finally he followed it to Jesus and then followed Jesus.

So any denial of truth proves itself to be contradictory and falsifies itself in the process of trying to deny truth. We know that truth is indispensable. But secondly, and perhaps even more powerfully, even if you put that logical and philosophical stuff aside, the truth is just a very natural yearning of every human heart.

[13 : 12] We're all looking for truth. Many of you will be familiar with the old Jim Carrey movie, The Truman Show, where Truman Burbank is living what seems to be an idyllic kind of life. You know, in a town that's clean, there's no crime, he has a job, he has friends.

But of course, the premise of the entire movie is that it's all a lie. Everyone in his life and in that town is an actor, except him. He was taken as a little baby, adopted by a multi-billion dollar media corporation, and his entire life was turned into a reality TV show, streamed live over cable, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

And Truman doesn't know this. And the whole movie is about him discovering by chance, through a series of strange occurrences in his life, that his life is in fact a lie.

And then trying to escape. And the whole movie, we as the audience, doesn't matter what you believe or who you are, you are cheering for Truman. We are rooting for him to break out of this lie.

Because no one wants to live a lie. No one wants to live a life based on betrayal, or based on deception, or based on incoherence. The truth is indispensable, yes, because it's logically and philosophically indispensable, but perhaps more powerfully, because it's experientially and existentially indispensable.

[14 : 27] None of us want to live a lie. None of us want to be lied to. None of us who are in relationships want to be cheated on. None of us who are in friendships want to be betrayed. None of us want to be deceived. We all know that there's something intrinsically wrong with that.

And you don't need to be a Christian to sense that and to be honest about that feeling. So why bother with God if we're happy? Number one, because truth is indispensable. And if you follow the evidence to where it leads, as Zacchaeus found, as I have found, as many, many of you have found, it will lead you to the person of Jesus Christ.

But you've got to follow it like Plato said. You've got to follow it to where it leads. We can't simply follow the evidence while it's comfortable, while it's convenient, while we agree with where it's leading us. No.

We have to follow it all the way to where it leads and it will lead you to the person of Jesus Christ. Truth is indispensable. Secondly then, suffering is unavoidable. There's a famous novel called Gilead by a great writer called Marilynne Robinson.

She won a Pulitzer Prize for this novel. And in that novel, she makes two very powerful statements. She says, and it's a fictional book, of course, but she says, there are two realities that plague all of creation.

[15 : 34] My insufficiency to the world and the world's insufficiency to me. There's something very insightful about that. She's basically just saying, it doesn't matter how hard I work, how well I do, how happy I think I am.

There's always something about me deep down that doesn't feel quite right. And there's always something at the same time about the world out there that doesn't seem quite right. It doesn't matter what we do, I know the reality is that I'm imperfect and the world is imperfect.

And because of those two realities, there is always going to be suffering in the world. Suffering is probably the most ubiquitous human condition there is. We all deal with it. It doesn't matter who you are or what you believe or what you don't believe.

Everyone suffers and everyone at any given moment, even right now, I'm sure you're all dealing with elements of suffering in your life or at the very least, you're dealing with the suffering of people very close to you who are going through even more visceral suffering at the moment.

We all suffer. And so, in response to the question, why bother with God if we're happy, we still have to have a response to suffering. And any worldview that desires to be taken seriously has to have some kind of a response to the problem and the reality of human suffering.

[16 : 45] And to their credit, most worldviews out there have some kind of a response. And I'm not going to go into them specifically. I'm not going to name them. But the broad categories of response are very clear. There is one category of worldview that says, look, there is a God out there and he recognizes that there is suffering, but it's just his will.

You just have to shut up and deal with it. He has no moral connection or moral obligation to you or your suffering. He doesn't need to explain himself. You don't even have the right to ask him about your suffering. Just shut up and deal with it.

It's his will. There's another category of worldview that says that suffering is all the direct fault of the sufferer. So it's because of something you have done.

All suffering is caused by the individuals who are experiencing that suffering. They did something either in this life or perhaps in a previous life and that's why they're suffering. There's another category of worldview that says, and this is a curious one, that all suffering is an illusion.

It's only because of your state of mind that you are suffering. And to this worldview, the response to suffering is to meditate ourselves out of that desire so that we can then be free of all desire and therefore free of all suffering.

[17 : 56] So the reason you struggle when you lose a family member is because you love them, you desired them, you were attached to them. So if you meditate yourself out of that desire when you lose a family member or lose a job or lose a friendship, then you won't suffer because you don't care.

And ultimately, this worldview culminates in the complete extinguishing of the self. You meditate yourself completely out of all desire, out of all consciousness. Then there's a fourth category of worldviews which are the atheistic worldviews.

And if they are being honest with you, honest with us, their response to suffering is that suffering is meaningless. Because if the atheist is being honest, then everything is meaningless because, as Richard Dawkins would say, we are simply time plus matter plus chance.

And to paraphrase him directly, in that kind of a world, some people are going to get rich, some people are going to suffer, some people are going to get raped, some people are going to get killed, some people are going to get lucky, and there just isn't any reason or meaning to any of it.

Now, when you look at these four categories of worldview, I don't know about you, but I find them both intellectually and more importantly, experientially, not all that compelling. Because in the midst of suffering, there is something we are all looking for, no matter what we believe.

[19 : 08] We are looking for comfort and strength in the suffering, and we're also looking for a narrative of redemption and restoration beyond the suffering. So comfort and strength in the suffering, and the hope of something better beyond the suffering.

And once again, when we look to the Christian message, we see an incredible response to suffering, not just an acknowledgement of it, not just a God who knows it's happening, but a God who doesn't say it doesn't mean anything, he doesn't say just shut up and take it, he doesn't say, he doesn't throw down a bunch of philosophies or theories to meditate around it, he literally steps down into the suffering as a person and suffers for us.

And not only that, takes all of the suffering of humankind and brokenness and anxiety and imperfections and struggles and guilt and shame, takes it all onto himself and dies on a cross for us.

This is a God who came into the world to step into our suffering. That was the primary reason for which he came into the world. A God who suffered for us and now a God who is willing to suffer with us.

If we are willing to take his hand, Jesus says, take my hand and we will conquer through the suffering. We will conquer through the suffering. Now we see in the life of Zacchaeus, there must have been suffering.

[20 : 29] He was socially, as I've said, socially ostracized. He was psychologically struggling. He was experiencing social exclusion. He might have been suffering some mental ill health as a result of this.

We know that people are seeking acceptance. People are seeking acceptance and freedom from guilt and shame and Zacchaeus had guilt and shame in mountains. Tax collectors at that time were probably the most guilted, shamed and hated members of the Jewish community during the Roman rule.

And so Zacchaeus' suffering, even amidst all of his material affluence, would have been significant. And he was reaching out for rescue in the suffering. Not for theories on how to get around it, not for ways of how to meditate himself to detach from it.

He wanted rescue from it. And he ran to find Jesus as a means of rescue. And the cross of Jesus Christ, which followed not far after the story of Zacchaeus, where Jesus goes to a cross, dies for our suffering, our sins, our brokenness, our struggles, then defeats all of that by rising from the dead, affirming and proving who he is.

Again, getting back to the evidence, proving who he is. Now reaches out, not just to Zacchaeus, but to all of us as a means of rescue from our suffering through him and with him.

[21 : 44] And he offers us the two things we're all looking for, comfort, strength within the suffering and an eternal hope, an eternal future where there'll be no more suffering at all. So truth is indispensable, suffering is unavoidable, thirdly and finally, happiness is not enough.

And this is an important one because you could make the case that this is the only answer that matters. I think the indispensability of truth and the ubiquitousness of suffering are deeply relevant. But the fact that happiness is not enough is something that resonates with all of us if we are honest with ourselves.

And once again, we see this playing out in the life of Zacchaeus, in what actually got him out of bed that morning to go and investigate this Jesus. Because on any measure, the paradigms of fulfillment that we build now of wealth and convenience and the capacity to attain a high quality of life, Zacchaeus had all of those things in many, many ways.

Yes, he had suffering, but he also could have made the case that if wealth was all he was looking for, then he was happy. But again and again, we see people who have followed and have fulfilled the paradigms of happiness that we have built, whether it's through celebrity, through professional success, through sex, through drugs, through alcohol, through Facebook friends, through Instagram followers, through financial security, through status and reputation, through personal and social popularity, whatever it might be, people get to the top and then they realize that it's not enough.

Again, not to double down on Jim Carrey after mentioning The Truman Show, but in an interview, I think way back in the 90s, there was a year where Jim Carrey was the highest grossing actor in Hollywood and he was asked in an interview, at the end of the interview, they said, do you have a message for your young fans, for maybe that actor who's just starting out, do you have any words of wisdom for them from your experience of climbing to the top?

[23 : 41] Because clearly, you're at the top of your profession. And Jim Carrey paused and he looked into the camera and he said, I wish that all aspiring actors could see what I see now, that when you get to the top, there is nothing here.

That when you get to the top, there is nothing here. Happiness is quite simply not enough. And when we look at the Christian message, once again, we see why and we see how we can find redemption from this problem.

And it's because of this. If you look at secular dictionaries, at the definition of happiness, it talks about a sensory experience, a feeling. Happiness is a feeling that is necessarily temporary because it's based on temporary circumstances.

It's based on the five senses that we've got and our external environment and how our senses respond to that. And that could be, you know, at a party or in response to alcohol or in response to physical touch or in response to a great academic or financial achievement or a wedding or the birth of a child.

It's all about these events, these necessarily temporary events that we feel something. Then if you look at the definition of joy, the secular definition of joy, and what you see at best is that joy is considered by the world out there simply to be a whole lot of happiness.

[24 : 55] So the definition of happiness points to joy and the definition of joy points to happiness. And so most people think that joy is just a whole lot of happiness. Just a whole lot of happiness. A quantitatively different amount of happiness.

But in the Christian message, joy and happiness are not just quantitatively different. They are qualitatively different. Because happiness is based on temporary circumstances, temporary experiences, a temporary state of affairs.

Whereas joy is based on eternal circumstances. It's based on an up-close and personal relationship with God himself through the person of Jesus. And that is unchanging.

That is where followers of Jesus draw their joy. It's an outpouring. And at that point, joy is something that you are, not something that you feel. It is permanent, not temporary.

It is eternal, not temporal. And it is something that transcends and is immune to the ups and downs of the world, even the suffering in the world. So Christians and others might feel happiness, but when you're a follower of Jesus, when you're a follower of Jesus, you are joy.

[26 : 05] And in the midst of that joy, your happiness levels will continue to go up and down. Because as Marilyn Robinson said, the world is broken and we are broken. But there is an underlying sense of being and who we are where we are consistently and constantly rejoicing in the reality of the wonder that we are in right relationship with our Creator.

We know where we are going. We have access to this supernatural love, to this supernatural rescue from our suffering through the person who is truth itself, Jesus Christ.

C.S. Lewis put it really well as he so often does. He says, and I'm paraphrasing him, he says, we are too often and so often just preoccupied with making mud pies in the backyard that we don't consider for a moment the possibility of a holiday at the seaside.

And it doesn't mean that we're not happy in the moment. It doesn't mean that the mud pies aren't fun. It doesn't mean that we can't get really good at making mud pies. But the reality is that if we are closed off, if we throw God out of the picture, all we are left with are the paradigms of happiness and the systems of fulfillment that we build for ourselves.

And they might work really well, but what if there is something better? What if there is more? And when we think about that possibility, that God might have something better for us than anything we can put together in our own strength, then the answer to the question becomes very, very simple.

[27 : 27] Why bother with God if I'm happy? Well, quite possibly because we have no idea of the kind of happiness and joy that God has for us. Well and truly above and beyond even our wildest dreams, hopes, and imagination.

Truth is indispensable, suffering is unavoidable, and happiness is not enough. And when we are walking with the person of Jesus Christ, we are backed up in our beliefs and our faith by the propositional evidence, which is made real by the personal evidence of a person who claims to be and is the truth, Jesus himself, which is then manifested through relational evidence.

So the indispensability of truth is strengthened and made real in our lives three times over. Through that walk with Jesus, we are then restored through our suffering.

And the Bible says we conquer through the suffering. You don't ignore it, you don't avoid it, you don't pretend it's not real. Jesus says, take my hand, we are going through it. It's okay, I've been there before, I've got this.

And finally, we get access to the supernatural joy that is qualitatively different to happiness, not quantitatively different. And then we are empowered and strengthened to go out into the world and pour out the love of God onto the lives of other people and point them to the indispensability of truth and point them to the cross of Jesus Christ, which is the greatest response to suffering in human history and point them to the qualitatively different transcendent joy that the message of Jesus Christ offers us.

[28 : 56] Zacchaeus found this that day. He found it because he knew the truth was indispensable, suffering was unavoidable and happiness was not enough. And he found the truth in a person that day.

He met the truth. He found restoration through his suffering and conquest through it and a redemptive hope and a future without it through relationship with Jesus. And then finally he found that happiness was simply not enough.

He understood at the beginning of the day but even more so at the end of the day that for his ultimate fulfillment and flourishing he needed something beyond the temporary happiness that he could seek and find himself.

My hope for you today is that wherever you are in your walk with God, in your struggle with God, or perhaps in your rejection of God, that you might continue in or perhaps commence anew to search for that truth that's indispensable to your heart, to give your suffering to this Jesus who came and conquered suffering for you and to seek out that joy that comes through all of the yearnings that we look for and can ultimately only be fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Forgiveness, peace, assurance, acceptance, significance and ultimately joy. May God bless you. Thank you for giving me a hearing this morning.

[30 : 11] Take care of yourselves and I look forward to seeing you in person as soon as the Lord wills it. Cheers. Great. Max, thank you so much for bringing that word to us this morning.

Thank you for reminding us that Jesus Christ is not only real, but he's the one in whom true life and joy and purpose and deep satisfaction is found.

Friends, let's respond to this this morning. I wonder if some of us here are followers of Jesus and yet if we're honest with ourselves, we worship Christ on a Sunday, but most of our lives are spent trying to find meaning and purpose and true happiness outside of Christ in the things of our lives.

Maybe we've used God as a means to try to find happiness rather than recognizing that true joy, true meaning and purpose is found in him. Maybe some of us this morning would not consider ourselves followers of Jesus at all.

Maybe we've searched far and wide to look for the meaning and the purpose and the deep joy and satisfaction that Max has spoken about this morning. Maybe you've looked for it in work or your career.

[31 : 27] Maybe you've looked for it in your children. Or maybe you've looked for it in your parents' approval. Maybe in money, in wealth, or a romantic relationship or a partner.

Whether you're a follower of Jesus this morning or whether you consider yourself not spiritual, whether you're a believer or you consider yourself not a believer, this morning God, the God who created the world, the God who created you and I is looking us in the eye and he's not only calling us to align ourselves to the truth of who he is, he's offering us an invitation.

He's inviting us to come and find hope and joy, meaning and purpose, true happiness, lasting life, not in the things of this world that can so easily fade and fall away, but in who he is, in his everlasting promise in the person of Jesus.

I want to give each one of us a chance to respond. And one of the ways that we respond is firstly by acknowledging the things in our lives that we've looked to for meaning and purpose, for joy and satisfaction.

The Bible's got a word for this. It's actually the word repentance. And when we hear that word, it can sound very heavy and negative, but actually, the Bible's invitation for repentance is always an invitation to come and find life, to find true life.

[32 : 56] It's an invitation to let go of the things that promise so much but don't deliver and to find true life and joy in the one who really does. I want to ask us to take a few moments.

Let's take 30 seconds and just on your own, think about where is it that you're looking for true and lasting joy? What is the one thing that you could not live without?

Let's take a few minutes and think about that right now. If you don't marriage me, let's take 20 seconds because you're listening to this. Let's take 20 minutes and see you first in the 2nd term to identify you for true and merkw■ to be able to maintain your feet and you want to make yea for love and ■ be as good as possible.

For love and pastor remember, and if you're looking as well asking to be as the opening again, there, let's try 249 to see the ■■ andayer, I hope and Kane Will you join me in a moment of prayer?

Let's pray together. Oh, sovereign God, the one who created everything in existence, and yet the one who invites us to come and call you Father.

[34 : 19] Jesus Christ, the one who walked the dusty roads of this world, who saw the pain in the eyes and felt the tears of those that are hurting, those who looked in the eye of those that had looked for meaning and purpose in so many places and felt empty.

Oh, Holy Spirit, the one who is alive and real and at work in our lives now, we come before you now, and we ask you, God, to come and invade our lives.

We ask you, God, to open the eyes of our hearts to see what it is that we've been looking to for meaning and purpose, where we've sought for joy and happiness.

And God, come and help us to see that all those things are truly, ultimately, found in you. They're not found in a concept. They're not found in a religion. They're not found in a philosophy or in a teaching.

They're found in a person, the person of Jesus Christ, the living God. God, we ask you to, more than that, won't you pour faith into our hearts?

[35 : 27] Won't you help us to trust you? Won't you help us, God, to see that the invitation you offer to us and to say yes? God, we want to say we're sorry for looking in everywhere apart from you, looking to our jobs and our families, to romance and to our wallets, for the things that only you can give us, true meaning, true purpose, true satisfaction, true life and happiness, faith, and everlasting joy.

Jesus, we come before you now and say, have your way in our life. Come and have your way, we pray. We pray this in your gracious, your compassionate, your sympathetic, and yet your sovereign name.

Amen.