



# Message **Transcript**

**Today is the Day**

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Thank you so much for choosing to worship with us this weekend. And I want to make a little announcement before I got started. I don't want you to clap till I'm done. But we had kingdom advancement opportunity from the beginning of September until the end of the year to raise money to further radio, church planting and all those different things. And we had a million dollar match that we were offered. Earlier in the year, we had raised \$100,000 for kingdom advancement for an extra campus. We went north of just \$1.2 million.

So, hold on, which means that this year for kingdom advancement raised \$2.3 million to be used of the Lord to further his kingdom, and that is worthy of praise. So, now let's celebrate that.

So, as your pastor, I just want to thank you for your faithfulness to Christ, and be praying for us as elders as we seek the Lord for how to best steward those resources for future church plants, campuses and what the Lord would have us to do as we continue to advance by proclaiming his word to the nations. Would you pray with me this morning as we get ready to hear his word?

Lord Jesus, we just thank you for who you are. We thank you that you're alive. We thank you that you're with us. Lord, we thank you that every time your word is opened and faithfully proclaimed, that you speak to us. And so, Lord, that's our prayer this morning. Be helpful to me and speak to us. Lord, show us who we are in you. Show us the things you want us to put into practice. And Lord, help us become the men and women and boys and girls you've designed us to be.

And it's all for your glory, that we're asking these things. And now we come before you in the mighty and the matchless name of Jesus asking you to do what only you can do. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

After my freshman year in college, I had a couple guys that were on our football team pulled me aside and they asked me this question. They said, "Did this year go pretty fast for you?" And I said, "I think it was the fastest year of my life." And they said, "The rest of your college career will go faster than this one year went." And they were right. Time just flew by.

I remember when I was getting married to my wife that before the wedding ceremony, it was a couple of weeks out, my uncle pulled me aside and he told me this, he said, "Hey, over the next couple of weeks, I know you're really urgent about getting married and it feels like it's forever away. But take your time during the weekend to slow down.

And when you do vows with your wife, look at her and honor her and listen to what she's saying and be sincere about what you're saying to her because that moments going to be here, and it's going to be gone so fast." And I remember thinking, two weeks feels like an eternity till it gets here. And that moment just passed like that.

And then when we had children, everybody advised us when we had children, they would say stuff like this, like I say now, "Hey, the days are long, but the years are short. So, make sure that you make an investment because they're going to be gone before you know it." And they've been right.

I mean, time has a way of continually moving beyond whether we like it to or not. And we don't want to miss the moment for the things that are most important. And especially when it becomes spiritual things, we want to make sure that we're dwelling on the things that are most important in the moment that God would have for us. And I want to talk to us today about three choices that we can make daily as the Lord gives us life so that we can be ready for all that God has for us.

If you have your Bible open, I want you to open to Psalm chapter 118, Psalm chapter 118. We're really looking at one verse today. And then, we're going to unpack it using some other scriptures. But here's the verse you've heard it before. It says this. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Now all scripture is in context. And the context of this scripture is really talking about God's faithfulness to his people, his love that endures forever. As a matter of fact, when Jesus entered Jerusalem on a colt, this was one of the psalms that people were chanting that Jesus. Bless it is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna. That's comes from this Psalm, Psalm 118.

But in this section of scripture, if you go back just a couple verses, Psalm 118 starting in verse 22. Here's what it says. The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. In the New Testament, Jesus refers to himself as the stone the builders rejected that had become the chief cornerstone. That Psalm 118 had a prophetic nature to what it was proclaiming. That when Jesus entered Jerusalem on that colt, that he would be the king coming to his people that would be rejected by

his own people.

And then it says in verse 23, this is the Lord's doing. It is marvelous in our eyes. Why was it marvelous? It was marvelous with the fact that Jesus was rejected. Because in his rejection, he went to the cross. He died on a cross for all of our sins. He was buried in a grave. He rose three days later. He's alive as he's ever been. And that was the Lord's plan for all along, for all of us who would place Jesus Christ as Lord of our life to be in relationship with him.

And then he says this. So, this is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. What day? This day. The day of salvation is today. I mean, the fact is, you're only given a one-day contract with life. Nobody gets a two-day contract with life. Nobody's guaranteed anything about tomorrow. If you woke up and you're breathing today, this is the only day that you're ever guaranteed. This is the day.

Well, as Christians, we understand that every day because of our relationship with God through the person of Jesus Christ is a day that God has designed, he's authored, he's put together for us to rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day. And I think this is really important message to look at during this time of year. Because for many people, this is the time of year where we spend time reflecting about our past and looking forward to our future. And we set what are called what? New year's resolutions. Just by show of hands, how many at least have one new year's resolution, at least one? Okay, several of you.

I mean, this is a time of year we start thinking not only about today. We start

thinking about this year or next year or where we're going to be. And so, I think it's really important that we understand where God dwells. And while God stands outside of all time and space, God created time and space. While he stands outside of all time and space, where does God dwell? God dwells in the present. This day is a gift.

Every day that you've been given is a gift. And the reason it's a gift, it's the day that the Lord has made. The Lord made this day. The Lord created the world and everything in it. The Lord created you and all that you are. And every day that the Lord gives you life, he has purpose on that day in the moment to dwell with you.

When Jesus Christ came to earth, we celebrate this at Christmas time often. One of the names given to Jesus Christ was that Emmanuel, which means God with us, God is with us. He demonstrated that by coming. And Jesus promised his disciples that even after he ascended into heaven, he would send the comforter, the Holy Spirit to be with us forever. Where does he dwell? In us. Where? Presently to be with us forever. Where does God dwell? Today, today. Today is a gift from the Lord to you. Today is God's gift to you.

And so, often we have different approaches for how we see that and so we can miss out. This here is a rearview mirror for a bicycle. Okay? A rearview mirror for bicycle. The purpose of this tool is to put this on the handlebars, so that as you are riding a bike, you can look here to see what is behind you. It serves a purpose. Because perhaps somebody is trying to pass. Perhaps there's things you need to be aware of that are coming on your side. On our car, we have side mirrors and we have a rearview mirror. They're important to us.

There's nothing wrong with reflecting. But the purpose of the mirror is to help alert us to what's behind us for how we're going to drive presently, correct. I mean, the purpose of the mirror is not to gaze in the mirror. If you drive your car while looking only in the rearview mirror, it could have serious consequences. While there's nothing wrong with the mirror, it's not designed to live in and to continually gaze at.

When it comes to our spiritual lives, there's nothing wrong with reflection. Often the Lord has us reflect on our past and be reminded of how he's given us mercy or how he's changed us or grown us, or remind us of his incredible love for us in our sinful nature. But it's never to live there. It's all for how it affects us presently. And for many people, they live their lives with one of these. It's the rearview mirror, and it works two different ways. Positively and negatively.

For some people, they like the mirror because they can look at it and remember all the positive stuff. I mean, they kind of look in there, "Man, back in the day, I was so fit, and I had so many good friends, and man, I had the best job. And I was living in this kind of house." I mean, it was just so good, the good old days. And they dream about going back there where they're not currently living is in the present.

Others of us look in the mirror and instead of looking at all the good, we look at all the bad. Look at what happened to me. Where was God when that happened? How come that's going on in my life? I am what I am today because of all those people. And not only that, look at the bad choices I made because I caused that. I was the one that made that bad choice. And we gaze on the rearview mirror and we focus on it.

And this is what the Lord is saying, "No, this is the day that the Lord has made." Let us be present with the Lord today. For some of you, it's not wrong to reflect. I encourage reflection, maybe you journal reflect. But it's only good and only helpful to the extent that it helps you in the present. Don't live in the past. Here's the truth. God's forgiven your past. God's using your past no matter what you've been through. God says, "I'll use all for your future. You're not disqualified. It's just all been part of your curriculum. I love who you are today."

Some of us don't struggle with the rearview mirror. We have a different tool that we like to use. We use a tool that looks like this. You know what these are? These are binoculars. We struggle this way. Instead of living in the present, we put these guys on and we're always looking out at the future. We can't be present with anybody because of what's going to happen. We're always looking out.

And these are a good tool, too. I mean, if you're in the last row of the 500 section at a Broncos game, it's okay to wear these for a while. They can be helpful. Because what binoculars do is they take what's far away, and they bring it up close, so that you can see it. There's nothing wrong with that.

But I would encourage you, if you use a tool like this at the Broncos game, take them off before you leave. Don't drive home with them. They're not going to be very helpful to you. So, they're a helpful tool. And God always has this. Paul says, "I forget what is behind and straining toward what is ahead." It can be a helpful tool to eagerly anticipate the Lord's return, and to think about what's coming in the future, and to look ahead for what God might be leading us to. There's nothing wrong with that, so long as



it helps us to presently live the way God would want us to live.

People that tend to have these on all the time will say things like this, "Our best days are ahead." Guilty as charged. It's going to be better. They can be optimistic. Or they can be people that are really nervous about the future. Have you seen our world lately? Have you seen where it's going? It's not the same world I grew up in. It's so much different. It's going to be troubling for my kids. I'm nervous. I don't want the next day to come. These can work either way.

Where does God want us to do of? This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. I mean, you think about when you're stressed out and you're worried, it's probably not because of what's happening right now in this moment. It's probably because you're thinking about something in your past or thinking something five minutes down the road or beyond. But right here right now, I'm okay. I can handle this minute in this place. And so, God tells us that this is the day that he's made. He's designed, he's ordered, he's authored today. And he wants us to rejoice in this day.

So, I want to talk about three choices that you can make daily. This is not three choices you can make this year. These are three choices that you can make daily to enjoy the gift that the Lord has given to you. Because today is a gift from the Lord, first and foremost, for you to do this. To seek him and to trust him. Today is a gift from the Lord for you to seek him and trust him. That's the number one reason why you're here. If you flip over to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter 6, starting in verse 25,

here's what Jesus says, "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life."

In other words, what are you sweating about? What are you sweating about in your life? Who you're going to marry? Where are you going to go to school? What kind of grades you're going to get? What kind of job you're going to have? What kind of income is going to be developed? Where you're going to live? Where you're going to go? How your kids are going to turn out? Just says, "Hey, I'm telling you for this reason, don't be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink nor to your body as to what you will put on, is life not more than food and the body more than clothing."

Here's what he says, "I've got it all taken care of." He goes on in this section to say, "Hey, look at the birds of the air and look at the lilies of the field." I mean, not one sparrow falls to the ground without your father knowing about. He cares about the birds of the field. He cares about the lilies of the field, not even Solomon and all of his splendor was clothed like one of those. In other words, here's what he's saying, God has all things in order. So, what are you worrying about?

Then he says this in Matthew chapter 6 in verse 33, very familiar passage, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you." What's the command? Seek when? First. When? Today. Daily, seek him first. Seek first his kingdom. What's his kingdom? His kingdom is his rule, his authority, his reign, his purpose. And we pray the Lord's prayer. We pray, let your kingdom come. Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Lord, we want your rule and your

reign, and we're seeking you, and we're seeking your face and we want what you want.

And if you've authored this day and you've created me, and you placed me in this day, then you have purpose for me in this day. So, I am seeking you first to start the day to see how you might use me today. Now, let me just be clear on something. I'm just telling you, if you start your day with Jesus, as your day's events unfold, you will see them differently than if you don't start your day with Jesus.

Now, I'm not talking about being religious here. There's ways that you can seek Jesus. You can seek Jesus by studying his word. Great way to seek Jesus. You can seek Jesus by praying to him. Great way to seek Jesus. You can seek Jesus by singing songs to him. Great way to seek Jesus. But don't make your discipline of what you do the thing. make the heart of Jesus the reason why you're doing your thing.

In other words, don't just say, "I'm going to set a time aside to pray." That's a good thing to do. But don't make the time that you set aside to pray your thing. Make the heart behind why you're setting time aside to pray the thing. In other words, I'm setting time aside because I want to get to know Jesus better. I'm not just setting time aside for the sake of setting time aside.

I mean, you'll get this if you date or if you're married. It's not like I would tell my wife, "Hey, nobody gets a full two hours of my time. I'll give you an hour every morning from 6:00 to 7:00 and an hour every night from 8:00 to 9:00. And you get more than anybody, so deal with it." That probably wouldn't come across as loving, because it's

not. It would be me on my schedule doing a task so that I hope she likes me.

Now, my heart would be seek Jesus with your whole heart. And Jesus modeled this. You can write this verse down. It's Mark chapter 1 in verse 35. Mark chapter 1 in verse 35. It says, "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up and went to solitary places where there he prayed." I mean, Jesus modeled in his life. It wasn't just that one day that when he got up, he modeled seeking the face of his father. He always wanted to be around his dad. He modeled that his entire ministry. He was always doing what he saw his father doing. He was spending time with his dad.

Even after he feeds the 5,000 people and sends all the crowds away, and sends the disciples on the boat, what's he do? He goes up on a mountainside and spends the whole night doing what? Seeking his dad. What does he want to do in the Garden of Gethsemane when he's being tried, when he knows he's going to go to trial and be falsely accused and killed? He's seeking his dad. What's he doing when he's being beaten and placed on the cross, and everybody's hurling insults at him and killing him? He's seeking his dad. He modeled for us that at all times what he was doing is he wanted a relationship with his father.

Seek first his kingdom. Seek first Jesus. The number one reason God has you on the earth today and you're still breathing is that you would seek him, that you would spend time with him, that you would go after him. And Jesus isn't the only character in the Bible we read about that spent time doing that.

If you write down this verse in Joshua chapter 3 in verse 5. I mean, after 40

years of waiting to get into the promised land, and God tells Joshua to go, and Joshua 3 in verse 5, Joshua said of the people, "Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, the Lord will do wonders among you. Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, the Lord will do wonders among you."

In other words, consecrate yourselves when? When? Today. Get ready now, so that the Lord can do tomorrow what he's planning to do. I talked to a lot of singles that want to get married. And I'll ask him this question. Because a lot of times, singles feel like God's overlooked them or where's God been? How come he hasn't brought my husband? How come he hasn't brought my wife? How come? How come? How come?

And I'll ask this question. If God brought your spouse to you right now, would you be ready to get married tonight? And inevitably, they say, "No, not tonight. I mean, I'm not ready for it." Then you're not ready. In other words, prepare yourself today, so that if today were the day, then you'd be ready. I mean, prepare now for what God's going to do tomorrow.

The only choice you can make, the only thing you can control is the present. You cannot change your past. You cannot dictate your future. But you can make choices in the present. And the choice that you want to make in the present is seeking the face of the Lord. It's falling more in love with Jesus on a regular basis.

When John writes the Book of Revelation in chapters 2 and 3, he writes to seven different churches. One of the first churches he writes to is the church of Ephesus. And he commends them for so many things that they've done well. But then he says, "But

there's one thing I have against you. You have lost your first love." In other words, you've done the right things and you're keeping your religious rituals and you're abstaining from evil. But here's what I have against you, we're losing the love that we once had. Return to me.

Here's what Jesus is saying, "Seek me." Jesus sought the father. Joshua sought the father. Do you know Moses sought the father as well? In Psalm chapter 90 in verse 14, Moses pens the Psalm and here's what he says, "Oh, satisfy us in the morning with your loving kindness that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days." When's Moses seeking them? In the morning. When's Joshua seeking them? In the morning. When Jesus seeking them? In the morning.

In other words, what you start your day with and what you start filling your mind with and who you start going after is going to shape the course of your day. And here's the opportunity you have. Every day you have a choice to seek first his kingdom, to seek first Jesus' rule, to seek first his love, to spend time with him growing in him. That's his called. Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be added. In other words, God says, "I'll take care of everything."

And in that section of scripture of Matthew chapter 6 in the Sermon on the Mount, he's talking about the fact that he's sovereign God, that he is the provider, that he's the one who takes care of everything. And notice when it comes down and says, after seeking first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, here's what he says in 6:34. "So, do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough troubles of its own."

How many you know if you wake up tomorrow, there's going to be some troubles in our world? I mean, do you realize that? They're not going away until Jesus comes back. That every day will have troubles. If you spend time focusing on all the troubles that can come, you miss out living today what God wants you to do. Seek him and do what? Trust him, trust him.

Some of you need to trust the fact that everything that's happened to you or every bad choice that you make can be completely forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ, and that you can be made new in his image presently, that you can enjoy God to the full presently. And some of you need to come to grips with the fact that as much as you think you can control your future, you can't control a darn thing. You can't. But if you can live in the present, the present is God's gift or his present, shall I say to you to live and dwell with him. Trust him presently.

Now faith is a unique thing because oftentimes, when we talk about faith, people think we're talking future. I'm believing for this, I'm believing for that. But faith is a present tense activity for something God may or may not do in the future. It's trusting him now for what he will do. Where's faith happen? Today. I can't faith something tomorrow. I can only faith in something today. I'm trusting God now for what he will do. My salvation, I'm trusting God today that someday he's going to glorify me in heaven. But I'm trusting it now, not later.

And faith is one of those unique things. Sometimes as we grow with God, he asked us to trust him by just praying, preparing and waiting. In other words, I've heard

you, just be diligent, be faithful. I'll show up when I show up and quit trying to control everything. And other times, faith looks more like this. I told you to go, get moving. I'll show up when you get there. So, start taking those steps. You've been passive for too long.

Now, you might ask, well, which one is he telling me? I don't know. Well, how do I learn? Here's how. You fail. That's how you learn. Now, think about it like this. How many know how to ride a bike in here? How many can ride a bike? How did you learn? I mean, you all fell. Everybody falls. None of you watched a PowerPoint presentation on balance from one of your parents or your older siblings. Here's what balance looks like, here's how it works.

Now, go forward. But if you ever fall off this bike, we are taking it away, and you will never bike again. We wouldn't do that to a kid. We expect that they're going to fall. We know that they're going to fall and it's in the falling that they're learning. Don't want to do that again. Don't want to lean that. Okay, this is how. Okay. And then they go.

Christians are so afraid to fail. I got great news for you. The cross was designed for failures. And as Christians, you're already forgiven. So, here's the truth. Trust him presently. What if I get it wrong? You're forgiven and you try again. And that's how I grow in my faith. I'm far more faithful now than I was years ago. I've grown in my faith and being a pastor. Have I cornered the market on what it means to be faithful? Absolutely not. And I never will and nor will anybody else. But I have to trust God presently for what he's going to do.



And sometimes for some of you that are so fast to move, God's going to train you to sit still and be patient and trust him. And for others that are more like, I just want to have another prayer meeting about it, then we'll figure it out, get moving. Go do something while you're sitting. And God knows just what you need presently for what he's going to ask you to do that may look different than anybody else. But here's a choice you can make every day. You can make the choice to seek him and to trust him daily.

And the reason you can do that is this is the day that the Lord has made. He's designed today for you. So, you can trust him with today. When you seek him, when you read his word, when you spend time praying and worshiping, God has a way of moving in your life in order to show you that he's sovereign over all your circumstances. This is the day that the Lord has made. God wants us to trust him and to seek him and to spend time with him. That's your first choice. The choice is to seek him and trust him.

The second choice you have every day is this, you have the choice to make the most of every opportunity that comes your way. God gives you the choice to make the most of every opportunity that comes your way. If you have your Bible, you can flip over to Ephesians chapter 5. As Paul was writing to the church in Ephesus in Ephesians 5 verses 15 and 16, he says this, "Therefore become how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time because the days are evil."

Our walk is simply how we live with Jesus. Therefore, be careful how you live

with Jesus, not as unwise men but as wise. Wise means this, I have wisdom or skill in how to walk with God. So, don't live unwise, but spend time seeking and trusting in the Lord so that you can walk out your faith in wisdom. Why? He says making the most of your time. What is time? Time is the opportunity you have. You are given a one-day contract with life. This is the time that you have. You don't have any more days than what you think you do.

I mean, think about this. God doesn't tell us when we're going to die. But Psalm 139 says that all of our days were ordained for us before one of them came to be, which means from heaven's perspective, there's nobody that dies that arrives in heaven where God says, "What are you doing here? I wasn't expecting you quite yet." I mean, every person, well, things on this side of heaven are tragic. Well, there's never a time where somebody dies that we say, "Oh, man, it was the right time."

In heaven, it's ordained. And all of your days are ordained before one of them came to be. Here's what it means. It means you only have a set amount of time to serve the Lord. And nobody knows how much time that is. So, make the most of every single day as if today were your last day.

Now, I had a little fun. I'm not a big mathematician. So, if the numbers are wrong, forgive me, but I had some fun this week. I'm 48 years old. And I was trying to calculate the number of days I've been alive, which is something like 17,550. And then, I started thinking the average male lives to be about 75. If that's true, that's 27,375 days. So, if I'm average, and I like to think of myself as above average, but if I were average, I got 9,825 days to live. That's it. That's it. Now, that sounds like a lot.

But here's the truth, there's no guarantee I even get one more. Now, if I'm above average like my grandma, who turns 104 this March by God's grace, I got about 20,000 left, and I'm really good. But then that's going to have some other problems on the back end, too.

So, at the end of our day, the only thing we can concern ourselves with is today. And today is so important, because the choices you make today shape your future. It's all the little things you do today that make a big difference down the road. Let me give you an example. I like to brush my teeth daily.

So, let's just say that I spent two minutes in the morning and two minutes at night every day, brushing my teeth. So, I tell you, I spent 28 minutes a week brushing my teeth. Now if one of you were to say to me, "Pastor Jeff, that's nothing. I brush my teeth for an hour. Every Saturday from noon to one, I give them a good once over." Whose teeth do you want? Do you see what I'm saying?

You can't do more on a certain day expecting it to be different. It's not how much you do. It's that your daily about what you do. Some of you have fitness goals for the new year. I won't ask you to raise your hand if you do. But if you do and you start at January 1, and today's January 6th, and you've been eating better all year and you've been working out all year, you go look in the mirror today, and you don't look any different than you did at the turn of the year do. But here's the truth. If you keep doing what you've been doing over a period of weeks or months, you will notice a marked difference.

And you may not be able to identify the exact time you got in shape, but it will be the daily activity that you did over time where you now are in shape. Do you see what I'm saying? So, you have to make the most of every opportunity.

And as you use the binoculars to look out there and you sense this is where God's taking me, you have to stair step that backwards and say, "Okay, then how do I do this in the present?" In other words, let me just tell you this. I love that you're at church this weekend. If this is the only time all week that you spend with Jesus, it's just not enough to get you where God wants you to be. This is can be a catalyst. This can be an opportunity to worship together.

God wants us together corporately. He tells us to do that. But he wants us to do it so that we have ongoing relationship with him outside of here. If the only time he prays when you come to church, if the only time you read your Bible is when you come to church, if the only time you worship is when you come to church, you're missing out on what God wants. And so, how do you spend time daily doing those things?

It's like anything else in life. I mean, if you were to ask a woman, "Hey, when did you fall in love with your husband?" Even if she can name a moment. I asked my wife this the other day. She named a moment for me. You know what the moment was? I was at my parents' house. She came over, I played the piano and sang. And she goes after, "I left your house that night," she was like, "I called my mom and like oh my gosh, he sings, too, I'm in."

But the reality is it wasn't because about the matter the first day and sang and

played to her. I probably run her off. It was the reality of all the small deposits on a daily basis all the time. Calling her, being with her, so that one day she would wake up and be like, "Hey, not bad, I kind of love him." But I can promise you she didn't feel that way when she met me. Do you see what I'm saying?

If you want to grow in Christ, we tend to think there's a conference out there, a speaker out there, an event out there that if I can just get to that, it's going to change everything. Here's the truth, God dwells presently. And if daily, you'll spend time seeking the Lord over time, what you'll find is that you're in a different place with him enjoying him more, loving him more, rejoicing in a more because of the daily activity that you do. Make the most of every opportunity.

And we are and live in such a culture, it is so distracted, I'm guilty of this. Early in our marriage, my wife would tell me, you cannot bring your phone on a date. If you bring your phone on a date, you owe me another date. That's not a date. Because my wife was tired of me. I'll be at dinner and I just put my ... Okay, okay. And I would start calling people back or just texting. She's like, "That's not a date. It's distracting."

As we've aged in our marriage, now, I don't let her bring her phone on our date either. But it's fun for us. Because now we don't have phones. But we'll be at a restaurant. It's amazing to look out at a restaurant do that sometime and see how many people.

There can be couples or groups of five. And all five people are sitting at the table. They're doing this. That's all they're doing. And the only interaction is, "It's pretty

cool on Instagram." I mean, that's it. There's no engagement. There's missing the moment. And we can be so distracted. Even our relationship with Christ.

You know how hard it is when you sit down to say, "Okay, I'm going to pray tomorrow at 7:00. I'm going to spend time with Jesus." How your mind, it just takes time to unwind your mind to just start writing some thoughts just so you can keep focus. And you might hear your phone buzz like, okay. Ten minutes later, you've been on the phone, you haven't even prayed at all. You know what I'm talking about? It's hard to be present. But the reality is, it's in the present that God builds the rewards.

Most of the people I've talked to that are older than me that have regrets about the way that they raise their children is this. It went so fast and I just didn't spend the time I should have with them. And even yesterday, as I was getting ready to come into church, my wife called me. we have been staying at her parents while they finished cleaning some of our carpets for a couple days.

And so, I have no groceries. We're just going to eat here at the food court. Why don't you come join us? I don't like going to malls. I don't like going to food courts. I'm like, "No, I'm out." And then I start to think, "Well, you're preaching on this. So, you might want to go."

And so, I got up and went and just spend an hour or so with my kids just eating at the food court with no phone, just because I wanted them to know that you're more important than my preaching. I mean, it's little decisions like that over time that make a big difference. Because in the same way that I can tell you my wife fell in love with me

because of the little deposits.

I've talked to so many couples that have been married for a while that will come into my office and be like, "We fell out of love." Well, when did that happen? It wasn't a moment. It was a period of daily time that people were not preferencing and honoring one another where you got to a point you're like, it's just over. I mean, look at what he's done.

It's done. It's in the daily that God does it. So, here's what he tells us. You have the choice every day not only to seek the Lord and trust him, but you have the opportunity to make the most of every opportunity that you have. And here's the truth. Oftentimes, we want other people's opportunity. If I was in that circle of people, if I lived in that neighborhood, if I had that kind of house, if I had that kind of influence, then I would. If I have had that kind of money, then I would know.

God's entrusting you with what he's given you. And here's what the Bible makes very, very clear. He, or she for that matter, who is faithful with a very little thing will also be faithful with much. And he who is unrighteous with a very little thing will also be unrighteous with much. In other words, if you can't take the day and preference the Lord and seek him while at the same time you're asking him for things in the future, he can't grant it to you because you wouldn't enjoy it anymore, even if he gave it to you. It's, can you enjoy God presently? Can you enjoy God now? It's a gift. It's a gift. You can enjoy him here.

Now, when we started the church, I had some pastor tell me, "It's going to be for

you, Pastor Jeff, like preaching to a parade." And I'm like, "What do you mean?" He goes, "Just the people that come through and go out, it's going to be like a parade."

And when we started the church and we were really small, we around a hundred people, I knew what they meant. Because it would be like this little section here is what we were preaching to. And if somebody was gone, I knew they were gone because they sat in the same seats every week. And so, those three couples were gone. But we had a couple of new couples that visited and those three couples would come back, but that's not really what's happened over eight years.

What's happened over eight years is that people have come. They've been here for a season. God's moved them on. And then new people come in and they're here for a season. God moves them on. And we're preaching to a parade, which means this, think about this in our church. This is the only time on this side of heaven today that this specific group of people in these specific seats will ever be able to hear the word of God proclaimed and worship him. This is it. This is your only chance to do it with this group of people.

Now, you might say, "I'm coming back to BRAVE Church next week," you may not get a chance. This may be your last time. But I can tell you this, there's no way even if you do come back next week, that won't be this group of people in the seats. I mean, everything that happens to you is the opportunity that you have. And so, often we miss the opportunities we have because we're thinking about the future or we're dwelling on our past. So, we're praying for that family member that we want to come to Christ. So, I would say, pray for them.



But when you're having a meal at a restaurant and the server starts pouring their heart out to you about what's going on, maybe that's an opportunity to share Christ with them on the way, too. That don't miss the moment of what God has in your life. He's destined this day for you to be present with him, seeking him, making the most of every opportunity he's given you.

And here's the truth. Every single one of us has a different level of opportunity and different sphere of influence than anybody else in this room has. I can't have your sphere of influence and you can't have mine. We only have ours and God's looking to say, "Will you be faithful with the sphere of influence I've given to you? Will you make the most of every opportunity?"

And whether we're talking about marriage or singleness or kids or money or our health or our church, whatever it is, we have an opportunity to do great for the Lord now. Colossians 3:17 says, "Whatever you do, in word or in deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Don't be so worried about the past and don't be thinking about the future. Dwell presently with Jesus. There's a short little story in the Bible where Jesus comes to visit two sisters, Mary and Martha, at the end of Luke chapter 10.

And Martha is going out to greet him and comes into the house. And Martha is making all the preparations, and Martha is doing everything, and Martha sweeping the floor, and Martha is making it comfortable for Jesus. And Mary, the whole time, is just sitting at the feet of Jesus. She's just listening to Jesus.

And Martha's furious because she's the one making all the food. She's the one doing all the preparation. She's the one that probably dusted the chair that Jesus is on. She's the one making it comfortable for Jesus. And she says, "Jesus, tell Mary to help." She's not doing a cotton picking thing. That's my translation. And Jesus says, "She's chosen the most important thing. And what she's chosen will not be taken away from her."

In other words, here's what happened. The God man of the universe, God in flesh was in Martha's house. And she was too busy trying to make preparations for him instead of spending time with him. I mean, God was right in her house. He was right there and she's not even spending time with. "I got to cook food. I'll be with you guys in a little bit. I got to make dinner for you." No. Mary's like, "God's in my house. I don't care what happens. I'm not leaving God." See the difference? It's present. It's present. It's seeking him. It's trusting him. It's making the most of every opportunity we have.

And here's what I can promise you, here's what I can promise you, you can't predict the future. And you can't control any of them. I mean, just when you think you know what's going to happen, you don't know what's going to happen. Last summer, I was out doing a men's conference in Fresno, California. And my wife knows the pastor's wife really well. So, we went out there together and we were flying home. We just gotten on a plane.

And my wife says to me, just one of those seasons, she's like, "I'm just tired. I just need a break. I just need a vacation. I just need to get out of town. I just need to go to the beach. I just need this." And I leaned over and said, "Hey, no big deal. We're

going on vacation in 10 days, just hang in there. It's going to be great. Just press on."

Four days later, my son got his foot run over by a car. We spent the next three months making sure my son didn't put any weight on his foot. Ten days, no. Three months later, yes. You can't predict. I'm not telling you, "Hey, if you wake up tomorrow and you're in good health, you can do this." I'm saying if you wake up tomorrow in a hospital bed and you can't move, you can do this. You can choose to seek the Lord and you can choose to trust him, and you can choose to make the most of every opportunity with whatever God brings your way.

You can't predict your circumstances. You can't plan them. But you can trust this, that in the middle of those, Jesus will always be there for you, which leads you to choice number three. Which if you get the first two down, this is the final choice, which is this. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us what? Rejoice and be glad in it. It means that we get to have the choice of rejoicing and being glad continually. You get the choice of rejoicing and being glad. This is the day he made. Rejoice and be glad.

Now we think sometimes, well, if the day goes well, then I'll rejoice. If I get the raise, I'll rejoice. If the person I want to marry me marries me, I will rejoice. If my wife gets pregnant, we can have that child we've been longing for, I'll rejoice. If everything works out for me, I'll rejoice. No, it says whatever happens today, you get the opportunity to rejoice. And rejoice means exceedingly abundant joy and thankfulness for where I'm at. It doesn't mean that I have to be thankful for every circumstance that happens to me.

It means I'm rejoicing that in whatever happened that God is present in it and he's working it together for my good. It doesn't mean that if I'm in a car accident and I get severely hurt that I'm praising God that I'm severely hurt, it means I'm praising God that while I wouldn't have chosen this, that God's present with me and using this not only for my good, but for the good of other people.

Have you ever noticed when Christians go through difficult times and they have exceedingly great joy on the inside, it stirs your faith? Where you think to yourself, how could they even handle that? But you're watching them handle it with such grace, because what have they done? They made a choice to seek and trust the Lord. They made a choice to make the most of every opportunity. They made a choice to rejoice in who the Lord made them to be. And because of them, your faith overwhelms, too. And we all get the choice every day.

I mean, most people hear a message like this. And this is pretty good stuff. When I wake up tomorrow, I'll think about this. No. It's not about tomorrow when you wake up. It's about today. This is the day you get to rejoicing. This is a day you get to be happy about. And I know some people push back and say, "Well, joy is cool. But happiness is not cool." Because joy is that internal feeling, the internal emotion that happens because of our relationship with Christ.

But happiness is just a fleeting thing. Do you know what the word blessed means in the New Testament? Happy. Blessed are the peacemakers, happy. You can be happy and be a Christian. I give you permission because God wants you to be. You rejoice and you're glad in it. You're not begrudging it. You're excited about it, whatever

it is today. I'm thankful for this because God designed this for me. And even if it's not what you wanted, it was God's designed for you. And so, allow him to let that permeate your life.

Here's what Paul says. And you flip over to Philippians, Philippians 4 verse 4. Here's what Paul says. Now, before I read this, understand, I'm not reading a guy that's exorbitantly wealthy that's driving a fancy car, that's living in a fat house, that's got everything he's ever wanted. I'm talking about a guy who's in prison. I'm talking about a guy who's hungry. I'm talking about a guy who's tired. I'm talking about a guy whose relationships have been severed. I'm talking about a guy that may get his head chopped off at any moment.

And here's what he says, "Rejoice in the Lord always, again, I will say, rejoice." Say what? Paul's saying, "I have the opportunity in this prison to seek and trust the Lord. I have the opportunity in this prison to make the most of it. So, whether I live or die, it makes no difference to me. For me to live as Christ to die is gain. If I'm to live on, it'd be fruitful service for you. I don't care. I'm rejoicing that Jesus Christ is the Lord of my life. And in that, I have exceedingly abundant joy."

Which means this, it ain't based on your circumstances, y'all. It's not based on what you're going to go through. It's based upon a choice that you can make daily for the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord when? Always, always. Paul says, I'll say it again. Because in case you didn't hear me, rejoice. Then he says, "Let your gentle spirit be known to all for the Lord is near." I mean, when you're rejoicing in the Lord, even in

tough times, there's something that comes over you where people see in your life, man, it's because the Lord's working in your life, I see that.

And he says this, "Be anxious for nothing, nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Let your requests be made known to God." And notice what happens. And the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Don't be anxious about anything but pray about everything. And be thankful in your circumstances that God's sovereign over all of it. And when you're thankful and you're prayerful, God's peace will rush over you in a way that the mind can't even fathom. How can I be peaceful in this when this is nothing that I choose? It's because God is with you doing a work.

So, we think there's this place out there we get that everything spiritually just works. And it's just great all the time. I've been walking with the Lord 30 years, I haven't found that place yet. The place is a daily place where I choose every day to seek and trust the Lord, where I choose every day to make the most of my opportunities, where I choose every day to rejoice and be glad. And when I fail, I know this, I'm forgiven, and I get a chance to start all over that day. I don't have to wait till tomorrow because I may not get it tomorrow.

And this is what all saints that have had impact for the kingdom have lived like throughout all the ages. Think about it like this. I grew up in the Midwest. I grew up in the Midwest. In the Midwest, people farm. When you farm, you start early in the

spring. You start tilling soil, you start pulling weeds, you start doing everything, then you start cultivating the ground, then you get ready to put seeds in, then you got to water them, then you got to pull weeds again, then you got to make sure everything's going well. And then there comes harvest time where you pull it all out.

I've yet to meet the farmer that rolls around August 15th and says, "Man, we got a lot of work to do this month. Let's get really busy about that." It wouldn't work. I mean, you wouldn't get the crop planted, nothing would happen. In other words, you can't just take a message like this and wait. Today is the day.

For some of you who've been coming to church for a long time, for some of you who've been hearing about Jesus for the first time, the Bible says in Hebrews, today if you hear the Lord's voice, do not harden your heart. Because for some of you, what you're saying is this Jesus thing, that's something I'm going to think about that's coming up this year. I think I'm going to get serious about Jesus this year.

How about today? How about today you recognize that God's love for you is so great that he sent his son to live the perfect life, die in your place and be punished for you, that rose from the dead and who offers you incredible life with him if you would just confess him to be your Lord and savior right now, how about that? Why harden your heart?

How about for some of you that know that God's been pushing on you to make certain decisions or act a certain way in the present, and while things won't change right away if you'll make the decisions, the Lord is showing you presently that over

time, God will be accomplishing in and through you the things that he wants to see done.

What are they? Because I'm going to tell you, it's so easy to wake up just distracted, kind of ooze through life. Maybe think about the past, maybe think about the future and just kind of go. God says, "No, these are the things that I want all my saints to do. I want them to seek me and I want them to trust me. I want them to make the most of every opportunity that I give them because I'm the one that designed the day. And I want them to rejoice and be glad in the fact that I'm the designer of all this."

And the fact is, if you do that, God's going to use you for super abundant things. I mean, it's that simple. I mean, it's that clear. But it's extremely challenging to do. Because every part of us will want to put on the rearview mirror or the binoculars. And so, I just want to tell you, that this is the day the Lord has made. This is the day the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it. Amen. This is the day. This is the day. As you think about this coming year, remember, this is the day. When you wake up tomorrow if the Lord gives you breath, this is the day. Make your best today, today for the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Would you stand as we pray? Lord Jesus, we just give you praise that you've given us this day with this group of people to make the most of this opportunity and seeking you and trusting you. And Lord, we rejoice and are glad in who we are in you. We give you all the glory. We give you all the honor. We give you all the praise in Jesus' name, amen.