

Godly Sorrow

by George Verwer

George Verwer emphasizes the importance of godly sorrow in the life of a Christian, recognizing that it is a legitimate emotion that can motivate us to respond with compassion and action.

Duration: 1:00:08

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:1

Topics: "Godly Sorrow"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker expresses gratitude to God for the ability to be genuine and authentic in preaching and in personal interactions. They acknowledge the existence of both sorrow and joy in life, citing examples of tragic events that have occurred recently. The speaker emphasizes the importance of patience and how it is a crucial aspect of leadership in the work of God. They also highlight the significance of studying and understanding Romans chapter 9, particularly verse 10, which describes a faithful minister of the Lord as being sorrowful. The sermon encourages listeners to delve deeper into this scripture and its profound message.

Transcript

2 Corinthians chapter 6. We're going to just read in English. We would like you to follow in your own language, verses 1 through verse 10. And we'll read it then, and I'll read it in English.

I hope you have the Dutch Bible with you to follow it. From 2 Corinthians 6, verses 1 to 10. This is a very authoritative, powerful passage of Scripture.

And I believe one of the greatest needs in OM at this time is to allow the Word of God to have a greater authority in our lives. So when we read something, we take that very seriously. We're not willing to pass over any Scripture and think, oh, that's not relevant.

Probably at least 20 major truths jump right out of this one passage. So let us just read verses 1 through 10. We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that you receive not the grace of God in vain.

For He says, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I helped thee. Behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation.

Giving no offense. That's one of our goals. Giving no offense in anything that the ministry be not blamed.

But in all things, commending ourselves as the ministers of God in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in torments, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned or genuine, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report, as deceivers and yet true, as unknown and yet well-known, as dying and behold we live, as chastened and not killed, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing all things. Let's pray. Lord, this is your word.

We have come, not for the philosophy of man, but for divine truth from your inspired word. Lord, we are limited in time, what we can do right now. But speak to us.

Cause us not to be hearers of the word only, but doers. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

I'm sure some of you arrived at this conference perhaps a little tired, perhaps a little empty, spiritually. I, of course, can understand if you also go away a little tired. But I can't understand if you go away empty.

God has brought us ministry from many different men and women, not only here in the main meetings, but in the seminars and smaller groups. Let us go away, those who are leaving tonight, in a great sense of thanksgiving for what God has done in these days. It is so easy to take God's benefits to us for granted.

Just the privilege of being in this beautiful place. Compare that with 4,000 Vietnam refugees who have been living on a little island off the coast of Hong Kong. It's a terrible place.

No one has lived there for years. It used to be a leper colony years ago. But with so many Vietnam refugees and the complexity of that, they put some 4,000 there in the past months, maybe longer.

There's no water, there's no electricity, there's nothing hardly there. And a cholera epidemic has now broken out among these people and they're dying. So the Hong Kong government has decided to, in the next few days, evacuate all these people into Hong Kong.

And now the government of Hong Kong has decided to evacuate them all and to bring them back to their country. Another important news report is that they expect in the coming days that many thousands of East Germans will return to West Germany via Austria. Maybe 20,000 will be coming, maybe more.

You can imagine some of the hardships, the hardships these different refugees and escapees are suffering across the world. I recently subscribed to a magazine called Refugees. It's all about refugees all over the world.

And as I was just reading that magazine this week, it was just overwhelming. I have to put it down. And I guess it's one of the reasons I often have difficulty with operation mobilization and sometimes with myself.

And I guess it's one of the reasons I often have difficulty with operation mobilization and sometimes with myself. So often people come to you and complain about this and complain about that. And of course people have to express themselves, we learn that too.

If people don't say what they're dealing with, we can't change it and we can't improve it, and we would like to. But still we can, if we express what we're experiencing, do it with a grateful heart. Even Alice O.M. only gives you a stomach ache.

Maybe some of the visitors who are here have had some hard days. A.W. Tozer explained how dangerous it is to be cynical within the municipality of De Heer. I have read almost all of them, some of them twice.

And for the sin of cynicism, Tozer recommended developing the practice of thanksgiving. And if we come to our great worship and praise sessions here, and then a half hour after leaving here we're moaning or complaining about something, it's an indication that something is wrong. And this is one of my great prayers, that as we go, either this weekend or next weekend, it will be in gratitude, thanksgiving, for what God has done this summer, this past year, and even during these days.

With that as a background, I want to basically speak on verse 10 in this passage. Gordon MacDonald was with us for our leaders conference, and the Holy Spirit used him and his wife Gail in a powerful way. And the Holy Spirit used him and his wife Gail in a powerful way.

And many of his books are also available. And it was on this passage that I was preaching in Madison, Wisconsin some years ago, when I first met Gordon MacDonald as he was sitting in the meeting. This was before the public information concerning his difficulties and problems.

It's when I speak on this particular verse that I can often express what's on my heart in a very, very deep way, that I don't seldom do. It's an interesting verse, it's not very popular in some circles today. With our great emphasis on praise, we seldom hear a message on sorrow.

One of our close friends from Denmark, who was with us one year ago in this building celebrating his 60th birthday, just died a few days ago of a heart attack. One of our close friends from Denmark, who was with us one year ago in this building celebrating his 60th birthday, just died a few days ago of a heart attack. And a few of us left the conference to attend his funeral this weekend.

We began our leaders' conference with news that Randy Smith, Clint Smith's son at 14 years of age, was killed in Egypt on his skateboard. I've not heard many messages on sorrow. But I remember being at the funeral of a close friend.

And a godly Anglican minister stood up and spoke on the subject of sorrow. The Bible says that Jesus Christ was a man of sorrow. What does this verse say? The verse is speaking about a man of God, a woman of God, this chapter.

And of course it's very, very strong. How we are to prove ourselves. Look at verse 4. Patience.

How are you doing in that area of your life? If any of you have a struggle in that area, maybe you ought to write to me, because that's probably in my top ten problems. I believe it's one of the greatest needs in the work of God. And I've noticed that most of the people that God has put in key places of leadership in our little fellowship are people that know reality in the area of patience.

One of them, I'll tell you, is Peter Maiden. And he's got to work day by day with me, and that can test anybody's patience. And you may have this plan and that plan for this year, and this OM conference.

You're going to do this, and you're going to go here. You're going to do this, and you're going to go there. And you're going to win this group for Christ, and you're going to start a new community in Boonga Boonga Land.

And God looks at you, and He says to you, I'm going to put some new recruits on your team that are going to test your patience right to your toenail. When I was a young Christian living in Mexico, in those early days, I was amazed at the emphasis in the word of God on the subject of patience. Now, I'm in trouble because I'm starting to expound the whole chapter, and I just want to expound verse 10.

I'll be here till morning. But I wanted you to at least look at what builds up to verse 10. And if you could study this on your own, I think you would discover it one of the real laser beams of Holy Scripture.

It just gets stronger and stronger and stronger as we go through the chapter. And then it gets to verse 10, as sorrowful. This is a description of a faithful man or woman of God.

This is a description of a minister of the Lord, referring back to verse 3. Look for a moment at Romans chapter 9 and verse 2. Isn't it amazing, you go to churches these days, and the people don't even have a Bible. They don't even bring a Bible to church. Sometimes we get ministers that preach and never refer to a single verse in the Bible.

No wonder some people are suggesting that we incorporate Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam into our Christian faith. If we throw the Bible to one side, then anything may end up taking its place. The Apostle Paul is speaking here in Romans chapter 9. And he says that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

In verse 2, I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. It is pertinent, Bibles and often very beautiful, to have a heart full of sorrow. There is a place for sorrow in the life of a Christian.

We need to understand that. With those that weep, and we should rejoice with those that rejoice. I know that in my own life, God has taught me something of godly sorrow over these many years.

I find so easily, if someone is weeping in the midst of a crisis, that I immediately start weeping with them. Should I be ashamed of that as a weakness? What kind of a man am I, weeping at the drop of a weep? I remember going to the funeral of a little boy of 11 years of age. I didn't even know the little boy.

But I knew his father, I knew his mother. During the funeral, I was managing, you know how we are, to hold my emotions together. But when I stepped out of the funeral parlor, and I saw the mother and father standing there, and I had to try to greet them, of course, I just broke into weeping.

I've gone through many struggles with my fellow Christians, and with Christianity in general. I'm sure that some of you may be like me. You find you don't easily fit into any one particular church or group.

And that's not necessarily a virtue. But I have such a longing to see people who are real, to see people who are willing to take the whole counsel of God. And it's so hard to find.

You find some churches that are very somber, very sad. You find churches that are very serious. And then all the people look very serious, and very somber and sad.

Well, I think there is a difference between people who look somber and people who have a heartache. And so often today we have the results of a superficial knowledge of the Word of God. So people have part of the truth.

From that church or group, we may go to another one where they're always praising the Lord, they're always bubbling all over, and whenever you talk there's a big grin. And from that church you can go to

another church where they're always praising the Lord, and they're always laughing, and they're always smiling. Sometimes you wonder if they hear the message that you're preaching.

When I first went to Mexico, I was preaching in Spanish. That may have been the problem. I was in a little church and people were just praising the Lord.

Glory to God! Praise the Lord! Whatever I'd say, praise the Lord! Of course, it was getting me, you know, excited. And I said something like, thousands are going to hell without Christ! Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! If they had really been listening, there should have been perhaps a sob, a cry, something other than praise the Lord. We saw brilliantly in the message of Tony Sargent something of the sorrow of our Savior in Gethsemane.

Have you ever made a list of things that cause you to be sorrowful? And do you sort of feel ashamed of that? Well, I mean, I need to be more positive. Here I am with a list of things that make me sorrowful. Some church groups are actually teaching that we should never say anything negative whatsoever, no matter what.

People are telling us that if we create negative vibrations, these negative vibrations will spread and other people will become negative, so we must not do it in the first place. In fact, one church said, really, it's unnecessary to mention things like the word sin. It has negative overtones.

Sin. People get very depressed. You shouldn't use that word.

There's an avalanche of books along this line. They all talk about personality improvement. They all tell us how we can be fulfilled and happy every day.

Happy, hop-hop. I tell you, if you've got a brain, all of that is going to make you sorrowful. Jesus was sorrowful.

Paul was sorrowful. All the prophets were sorrowful. And it is completely legitimate for you to have some sorrow in your heart.

As I make my list, maybe I could just share a few things. I grieve and sorrow almost every day over things that are happening in this world. And that actually helps me face the world.

It helps me to live in the world. What is going on in the Lebanon right now, and the bombing increased again today, is a point of sorrow. The situation in Colombia with the drug lords going on this week, it brings sorrow to our heart.

The situation in South Africa brings sorrow to our hearts. I've been getting more involved in visiting prisoners in recent months. And when I was visiting Wandsworth prison some weeks ago, and sat there among all these prisoners talking to my friend, I was almost overwhelmed with sorrow.

We have 50,000 in prison in Great Britain, almost the largest prison population of Europe. If I go back to my native country of America, there are 500,000 in prison. And when we see how these people are treated, we see the problems in our courts, we see the problems in our prison systems, surely this creates legitimate sorrow in our hearts.

I am not saying we should dwell on these things all day long. I don't believe that's God's will. And we'll see that he has called us to a life of joy.

Even in this passage it says sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. What seems to be a contradiction turns out to be a paradox. What seems to be a contradiction turns out to be a paradox.

Things that make me sad are things that happen in Operation Mobilization. I guess one of the problems characters like me have is that we've been in this work a long time, with me over 30 years, and the work and you and your own personality gets a little bit, you know, mixed up. And one of the things that enables me to press on is that I know how to, by faith, totally step back completely from Operation Mobilization.

And stand before God alone. Not together with my brothers and sisters, not together with my fellowship, but to stand before God alone with his word and allow him to speak to me in that position, in that way. But it is sorrowful, some of the things that happen in this dear fellowship.

Some of the disunity that gets in. Some of the gossip that takes place. Some of the judgmentalism and the mouthing off that takes place.

And I think even through the great event of Love Europe, there is a place for sorrow. The things that were wrong this summer. The things that were ugly and sinful at Offenburg.

And on some of our teams. We don't dwell on it. But it sobers us up.

And it keeps us from boasting. And I pray that my long-term OMer, that you are beware. You are very, very careful about making anything that sounds like a boast concerning the ministry that God has given us.

And when we talk about our ministry, and when we talk about Love Europe, or we talk about our great ship ministry, let us be honest in sharing not only the positive things and the wonderful things, but carefully and discerningly some of the weaknesses and some of the failures and some of the sins. And I believe people would appreciate our honesty and our reality. OM has become more famous in the past couple of years.

Through the losing of the ship. And then this last year, we were privileged to have two men in prison. We were so proud, boy.

Book of Acts, Christianity. Pray for our men in prison. All over the world, this news went.

Even the Christian papers who never hardly say boobop about OM had features about prisoners for Christ. Now these brothers are out. How many of us are still really concerned for Nepal? For Nepalese who, when they get in prison and jail, don't get out so easily.

And also the fact that some who have been found guilty immediately leave the country, because they don't want to go in prison at all. I have a sense that it's very difficult to get a balanced view of almost anything. Maybe I need more faith.

I think the cause of great sorrow, the greatest sorrow we face as Christians, is the thought of people going out into eternity without Jesus Christ. How can we believe that men are lost and going to hell, and somehow continue to pop along like some kind of Disney World wind-up film? A serious-minded person was observing some OM people in Bromley not so long ago. And he said that everything that was discussed, everything that came to the table, was superficially spiritual by nature.

It seemed as if they had just finished high school and were not yet fully grown-up. I'm not against humor, you know that. And we're going to come to the other part of the verse.

But I do believe that some of us should do our best Maybe some of us need to learn to weep again. I know you can't force yourself, and this is linked with our temperaments, but at least you can have a weeping heart. And many times in my lack of compassion, in my lack of reality, I have to simply, as an act of the will, say, God, I can't feel that situation, but by faith, I identify with those suffering people in that refugee camp right now.

I identify with them, and I will not listen to the lies of Satan that tell me otherwise. I think we are sorrowful over the things we see on government level. I think we are sorrowful when we see so much money wasted on the things of this world.

When tens of millions go without food, without clothing, without homes, and we, in our society, seem to waste so much. It's interesting that when Jesus Christ challenged the rich young ruler, he went away sorrowful because he had much. How we need a fresh vision of what it is to be hilarious givers and sacrificers for the kingdom of God and for other people.

And lastly, we're sorrowful, I am sorrowful when I see often the state of the church. I am absolutely committed to the local church. OM is committed to the local church.

We cannot harshly judge a local church because we know our own sins. We know our own failures as a movement and as people. What foolishness to stand in harsh judgment upon any local congregation.

But as our own sins as a movement break our hearts, so the sins in the body of Christ also cause sorrow and weeping. The lack of love among God's people. The lack of prayer and reality in prayer and prayer meetings among God's people.

The lack of evangelism and an evangelistic zeal and book of acts reality among God's people. How can you see this and not have it break your heart? Have we become accustomed to lukewarmness so that when we meet it, it no longer affects us? Many, many times I have wrestled with whether I should leave OM. Because in one way, I would have more freedom to preach that which roars upon my heart if I were out of OM than if I am in OM.

Because there is a part of this burden on my heart which I must confess is offensive to the average evangelical in the average church. I was preaching at Columbia Bible College maybe two years ago and I really opened my heart about what is there concerning materialism in America. And when I got done speaking and I talked to myself, I don't know if any of you talk to yourself I said, Verwer, you've done it again, you're a jerk.

And after I gave that message I felt it was too strong, it was too hard. Then I found out they had recorded it and were going to broadcast it over the radio in South Carolina. And I, maybe I made a mistake.

I contacted the radio people and I said, please, whatever you do, don't play that message over the radio. I have this fear that I'm going to get OM in big trouble. I was pouring my heart out in a huge, one of the biggest churches in America.

It was prayer meeting night. The church has 7,000 on Sunday morning. Few hundred came to the prayer meeting and all the OMers were there.

And I really let it all out. But one or two things I said were a little bit, you know, a little bit borderline, off the wall. The enemy's clever, he likes to get you just, you know, even one or two sentences and he'll try to

spoil the whole message through that one sentence.

But God uses us in our weakness. 50% of that audience stood up to repent and claim revival in their own lives. But the next day, the OM leader took me aside.

And he said, you know, some of the leaders in the church are offended. And he said, I think you ought to apologize. My favorite thing.

It's at moments like that that my engines begin to roar and I think of leaving OM in the smoke. The only problem, he was right. There were some things that were not rooted and grounded enough in love in what I had shared.

When I get to heaven, I may discover I played the fool as the next night I got up and gave a great discourse on the need for spiritual balance in all things. I gave a message the next night on the need for spiritual balance. Those messages are always so much more comfortable.

People come up to me and say, oh my, you're so balanced. Oh, really? My conviction is that there's the right kind of balance and there's the wrong kind of balance. A wrong kind of balance is a lot of wishy-washy playing down of the truth, a lot of oozy, snoozy, greasy, weesy compromise.

Well, you all understood that, I assume. That's the wrong kind of balance you just described. But biblical balance are powerful messages on both sides that bring forth powerful men and women of God.

Well, we better look at that next part of the verse. This is really wild, yet always rejoicing. How can this be? Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.

In our human way of thinking, we would think, well, I'm sorrowful half the time and I'm rejoicing the other half, right? As a human being, you immediately think, well, I'm sorrowful half the time and I'm rejoicing the other half. No, wrong. We can know legitimate sorrow, and yet we can be rejoicing in our hearts in the midst, even of that sorrow.

What are some things that cause us to rejoice? Just quickly. What are the biggest? God has an ultimate plan. Someday all sorrow will be wiped away.

The Bible speaks of a new heaven and a new earth and a lot of other mysterious, glorious things that I'm still studying. But it's our knowledge of God, the God of creation, the God of ultimate destiny. And the realization that He has an ultimate purpose and ultimate control.

That brings deep, deep rejoicing in our soul in the midst of great sorrow. That is the deep root that keeps me going day by day. Secondly, we're always rejoicing because of what Jesus Christ has done on the cross.

I know that is very basic, but I believe there's a time, as we say in this little manual, that we need to go back to those basics. And there may be someone here tonight that's being bounced about in your Christian life in chaos and confusion because you're not experiencing the reality of that cross in your daily walk with God. One of the reasons we so urge God's people to read these powerful sermons in print, Calvary Road.

Thirdly, we rejoice. Each church is experiencing degrees of revival. Some of you come from those kind of churches.

And that's such an encouragement in your life. Don't presume. Keep praying.

Keep encouraging those people. Because whenever there's a church that's ablaze for God, Satan will have a strategy to put that fire out. Because whenever there's a church that's ablaze for God, Satan will have a strategy to put that fire out.

There seem to be all kinds of different types of Christians when it comes to being involved with a local church. Some believers seem to have an ability to persevere in the refrigerator. These are what I call Arctic Christians.

They're God's Eskimos. They can go in the coldest church. The place is so dead.

The place is so dead. No one ever moves unless they have to go to the toilet. And I have a very good friend who goes to a church like that.

And they also reject him. Because he's become involved with Operation Mobilization, which is a mongrel movement with people of different denominations. For 25 years, this dear Eskimo sits among those people Sunday morning.

And they break bread, and by the time it gets to your mouth, it's frozen solid. I'm amazed by his faith. There are other people.

They cannot handle that. They will die in that environment of frostbite. And I can relate.

I can understand. They want to get where there are other hot coals, so that even if they're a little bit cool, they get next to somebody hot for God, they burst into flame. We've all seen it.

Well, I don't want to labour the point. There are many good, hot, on-fire churches across the world, and they are on the increase. And one of our greatest churches in the world, the Church of Christ, is a church in the Netherlands, and his goal is to see more of that kind of church among Hindus and among Muslims.

And that vision should grip us day and night. And as we read the reports of what God has done this summer, and we think of new churches being born at this very moment, it causes us to rejoice. So there's three major reasons right there why we're always rejoicing.

But the fourth is perhaps just as important. We are rejoicing because God has given us as a gift the spirit of joy. We are rejoicing because God has given us as a gift the spirit of joy.

I am convinced that there are days when there is no logical reason to think about why I am rejoicing. But when I look at the Word of God, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, and all the other fruit of the Holy Spirit. Oh, if I had an extra hour, you know what I would speak of? Be ye filled with the Holy Spirit.

That's the key. Not just, you know, a few years ago when you were at a special summer camp and you got spiritually zapped. That's wonderful.

Praise the Lord. But daily. Daily yielding your members to righteousness.

Daily, whatever terminology you may use, being filled with the Holy Spirit. Daily dealing with any sin that can grieve the Spirit and therefore kill that joy that's wanting to burst forth in your life. I was just a young preacher speaking in the YMCA.

And you learn a lot when you give people a chance to ask questions. I wish we had more question and answer sessions. That was a big thing in the old days.

I don't know what's happened to that. And the man asked me this question. He was very liberal in his religious thinking.

And it hit me very hard. How, he said, can you believe in hell and still be happy knowing that your friends and neighbors and loved ones are going into hell? How can you be happy? And especially if we have a commitment to be unselfish. Because if we look at happiness objectively, there is an element of selfishness that so easily combines with happiness.

And as you go to bed tonight, how concerned will you really be about how other people feel tonight? And I thank God that he knows that learning to be unselfish is a lifetime battle. We never arrive. And I have seen people who have never arrived.

And I have seen my own unselfishness in such frightening ways. And yet I see how normal that is as a human being. And how I must have a sensible, biblical way to work on that.

I sleep very well. I have high energy way until quite late often. Once I feel it really going, unless I got something special to do, like a prayer meeting.

I just go down very fast and one thing, that's all I want to do then. Sleep. And from right here, standing behind this pulpit, if I got into that mood.

And I think I can prove this. I could be from here to the bus on the other side of the field, unclothed, in bed and asleep, probably 7.6 minutes. In fact, after the night of prayer, it's just simpler and I've actually done it, just to drop in the meeting and sleep under the chair.

And yet I can be doing that. And barely conscious of the fact that my wife is in a special difficult situation. It takes her usually an hour to get to sleep.

She does not like to be jabbed by me when she's in that process of trying to sleep. But I must confess that sometimes my behavior has demonstrated that in fact, I don't care. So you can pray more for me.

And I will pray especially for you. Some of you feel you're really starting to get sanctified. You've been into Watchman Nee and Tozer and you're really beginning to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

Some of you feel you're really starting to get sanctified. You've been into Watchman Nee and Tozer and you're really beginning to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ. And I can almost guarantee you that the moment you get married, you're going to have the shock of your life.

You're going to discover aspects of your self-life you didn't even know they existed. Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. How can we rejoice in a world like this? Many of the most brilliant men in our world have died bitter, lost, negative cynics.

How can we go on rejoicing? The reality of God living in us. It is a mystery. We cannot understand all of this.

We cannot understand ourselves completely or our wives or our loved ones. And Tozer recommended that for many of us it would be good if we got a little more relaxed about ourselves. Study what you can.

Learn what you can. Obey as much as possible. Receive all you can from God.

Then leave the rest with Him. And learn to live in a world full of mystery. I believe some of you are really wrestling with the doctrine of hell.

And you're going to wrestle more when you get back to Istanbul and back to Delhi and back to the Muslim world. I believe we can be full with the Holy Spirit and yet fully human. We will constantly want to study and learn more of God and of God's Word and of God's ways.

But we will also rejoice in the midst of the mystery. Take that passage of scripture. Take that verse.

It can be a therapy to you. It can set you free from anxiety and bondage. It can help you function at weddings.

It can help you function at funerals. It can help you function when you're accepted and you're loved and you're appreciated. It can help you function when you're rejected and misunderstood and forgotten.

It can help you function when everyone accepts you and loves you, but also when you feel rejected and alone. And when we develop that kind of double biblical balance, biblical sorrow, biblical joy, we will be a non-stoppable combination for God. Let us pray.

Lord, I just thank you for that verse. I thank you that I don't have to defend my sorrow and my broken heart. I thank you I don't have to pretend to be Mr. Happy 24 hours a day.

I thank you, God, I don't have to pretend whether I'm preaching or talking to one person in the woods. I thank you that I don't have to pretend whether I'm preaching or talking to one person in the woods. You have not called us to be actors.

You have called us to be spirit-filled, yet very human beings. And we thank you that we can weep. And we thank you that we can be happy.

And one day we will understand it all. But in this world we will still look into a mirror full of riddles. Lord, you know the special sorrow of some of us here tonight.

Even as these days we say goodbye to one another. Some of us will never see one another again in this world. Like Alison Price who arrived at Gatwick with all the joy of being delivered from those rocks on Lagos.

And her parents were there with all of the joy of that reunion. Only a few months later to have her snatched as she was run over and killed on her bicycle. Father, in the depth of our soul we can express, we can feel that we are sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.

Lord, in the deepest of our hearts we know that we can weep and at the same time be happy. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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