

# Youth

by Matt Chandler

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*Matt Chandler's sermon emphasizes the importance of rejoicing in youth while recognizing the reality of mortality and the need to remember our Creator.*

**Duration:** 1:00:56

**Scripture:** Numbers 15:39-40, Ecclesiastes 11:9, Luke 22:19, Galatians 1:6-9

**Topics:** "Youth"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher talks about the importance of taking steps and not being afraid to fail. He emphasizes that God's power flows through us and that we should embrace the opportunity to be a part of what God is doing. The preacher acknowledges that there are challenges and difficulties in life, but ultimately everything is meaningless without God. He encourages the audience to rejoice in their youth and passion, but also reminds them that they will be judged for their actions.

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## Transcript

Well, good evening. If you have your Bibles, let's just get going. I'll have to... I think everyone who's taken the stage so far has said something like this, so I'll just do it.

It's an honor to be here. I honestly, when I got the call from Don about doing this, I thought it was Driscoll Jacking with me, and so I was like, Mark, quit playing. And it really was Don asking me to preach out of a great book, and so I'm looking forward to diving into this text with you.

To be honest, I've preached through the book of Ecclesiastes before in 2004, began to walk the village church through it. I feel this text every time I get into it, and I feel it deeply because of a couple of reasons. Number one, I pastor a very large, very young church in the providence of God, and to be honest about how young we are, in the almost nine years I've been pastor of the village church, I've done one funeral for someone over the age of 30.

I have done dozens and dozens and dozens of funerals of 20-year-olds and under 10-year-olds. And so when you're in that type of environment, you begin to really grasp and understand that life is a lot quicker than you would think that it is. I am under really no illusion that any of us gets to see 30, much less 60, 70, and 80, that this time we have, this little sliver really is a gift from God.

And so I set out after my first couple of years. I remember the first one. We've had multiple babies at the having to walk into those rooms where, as Habakkuk so eloquently puts it, as the Chaldeans are approaching, that rottenness entered my bones, that my legs became heavy, walking into those environments where there is sorrow upon sorrow upon sorrow, and really at the time not seeing a theological framework that would support the weight of that type of sorrow.

I wanted to begin to be faithful to the Lord and to the people. He had asked me to prepare them for the reality of life and life in a fallen world. And in one of the great mercies of Christ on my life, as I was preparing them, He was preparing me.

And so I get up on Thanksgiving morning. I pour myself a cup of coffee. I head to the chair that I sit in to read the Word almost every morning.

And I, on the way to that chair, am stopped by my wife who is preparing some dishes to my mother-in-law's for Thanksgiving. And she asks me to simply feed our, at the time, six-month-old. And so I got the bottle and fed little Nora and then put her in her Johnny Jump Up.

I don't know if you know what that is. It's basically a death trap for children. And so you hang it by springs on a doorframe, and then your kid grows in boldness and courage.

And so I put her in the Johnny Jump Up, and then literally, I have no memory until I woke up in the hospital. And woke up in the hospital. Apparently, I'd had a grand mal seizure in front of my children.

And to this day, the funny thing is that to this day, my daughter will not acknowledge that it was a seizure but ask me if I remember when I was snoring like that because I was making a weird noise. And so even the providence of God in shielding her from what was a terrifying ordeal for our family. Found out I had a mass in my right frontal lobe, and that right mass needed to be removed.

There was a lot of drama in the Thursday where I had the seizure and the Tuesday, just a few days later, that I found out on Friday that I would be having a craniotomy. And so a well-meaning member of our church came and sat down and looked at the scan and said, man, it looks encapsulated. It looks like you're going to be fine.

They're going to just watch this thing. They're probably going to put you on some seizure meds and you'll be fine. So I went into the meeting with the neurosurgeon going, oh, man, this is nothing.

We're just going to have to watch this, you know? And so I was not prepared to hear, we're going to have to cut out a large chunk of your brain and this might end bad for you. And so heard that, and for the first time, I'm on the receiving end of that news. Now, I had walked other people through that news hundreds of times, honestly, but it's the first time I had received the news myself.

And to be honest, I felt like I got punched in the soul. I don't know how else to explain it. I was not expecting it, I had gone in going, you know, this is what God does.

I'm going to go in, it's going to be all right, and I'm fully expecting that. So find out I'm going to have to have the craniotomy, go in and have the craniotomy, and then I'm thinking, okay, they got it, we're going to be fine. But then you start to pick up stuff.

If you're a pastor who shepherds your people well and walks them well through these type of circumstances, you begin to kind of learn the rules at the hospital. And so I get out of surgery, and I'm starting to ask about the biopsy, and nobody's answering my question. So, I mean, I've played this game enough to know that's not good.

Like, if they're going, you know, why don't you just get stronger and we'll talk? That's bad. I mean, you've been set up. I mean, they're not, because I'd have been, I told my wife, I'd have been furious if two weeks later they're like, no, it was nothing.

Why are you keeping me in suspense for two weeks? Just tell me it's nothing when I wake up. And so they sat me down and just said, you have stage three oligodendroglioma. You've got about two to three years is what the average is.

And so, again, that kind of sent me and the family reeling. And it wasn't long, though, until we landed on what's tried and true. We landed on the firm foundation that God doesn't drive an ambulance, that this didn't surprise him or shock him or knock him loose.

He wasn't like getting the Trinity together to try to figure out how to get me out of this jam. You know, spirit, where were you on this one? No, I sealed you in him. That was on you.

And she's like, I don't know, spirit. You know, that's not what happened, that he was there, that he knew, and that he was doing something. And I want to be honest.

I'm not wearing a cape. That took a few days. I didn't hear that from the doctor.

I'm on a firm foundation. That is not how it worked. If that's how it went down in your life, you have been shown greater grace than I have been shown because the first couple of days were tough to walk in.

And so when I read this text, like I feel it. And don't go super holy on me. Don't go.

You should feel all the texts. Well, yes and amen. But I feel this one.

Like this creates heat in me. It creates angst in me. It creates fire in me because here's what I know that you don't know.

Some of you will not be back next time we do this. Now you think you will because everybody knows that you can get that call that changes everything, but nobody thinks they're getting the call. So everybody can quickly acknowledge, yeah, there's no one that is immune to getting the phone call that'll change your world forever.

Yes, your children can die in accidents. Yes, your spouse can become terminally ill. Yes, this can happen.

Yes, this can occur. But nobody thinks it's coming for them. In fact, pastoral experience almost trains us that it comes for others.

And so when I read this text, the thickness of it, the weight of it, the pain of it, the heaviness of it honestly is a beautiful thing. When I first read through Ecclesiastes and felt the spirit kind of leading me to preach through it, I just felt like this brother needed a hug. I was just like, man, somebody hug him.

It's not this dark. So let's go. Ecclesiastes chapter 11, starting in verse 9. Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth.

Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes, but know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. So he starts out and everyone would say, yes, hallelujah, amen. Even the most pagan of men would love the first part of that.

Hey, rejoice in your youth. Follow your heart. Follow the desires of your eyes.

I mean, who doesn't want that? Do you know anyone, saved or unsaved, that would have a problem with that? No. They'd be like, okay, that's in the Bible? Let's go, all right? But then he throws it out, right? Just about the time he's got you, he's like, hey, but don't forget, you're going to get judged for all that. So go, go, rejoice, follow your eyes, follow the desires of your heart, but you've got to die and stand in front of God.

So just don't forget that in your partying. Okay, Luke 10, remove vexation from your heart, put away pain from your body, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity, meaningless. See, it started so beautifully and now it's, he's gone dark on us.

Let's go 12.1, remember also your creator in the days of your youth before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, I have no pleasure of them, before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain in the day when the keepers of the house tremble and the strong men are bent and the grinder cease because they are few and those who look through the windows are dim and the doors on the street are shut. When the sound of the grindings is low and one rises up at the sound of a bird and all the daughters of song are brought low, they are afraid also of what is high and terrors are in the way. The almond tree blossoms and for some of you goes away with the wind, okay? The grasshopper drags itself along and desire fails because man is going to his eternal home and the mourners go about the streets before the silver cord is snapped or the golden bowl is broken or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain or the wheel broken at the cistern and the dust returns to the earth as it was and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

Vanity of vanities says the preacher, everything, all things are meaningless, they are vanity. And so if we could, there's a lot of problems in this text, okay? There are a lot of problems. Mainly if we just sum it up, he's going, hey, rejoice, enjoy your youth, enjoy your passion, but here's the deal, you're going to get judged for all that.

Oh, and by the way, life's going to go by quickly and there's going to come a day that you hate that you woke up and you're going to die. But then guess what? Remember that judgment I talked about? It'll be time. So you get to die young and be judged or you get to hate life and then eventually die and get judged.

Good luck. It's all vanity. You know, see what I'm saying? I just want to hug him, just want to go, come here, man, come here.

And so you've got a problem in this text and I think it can be solved by looking at the imperatives in this text and the imperatives are going to lead us to Christ. Okay, imperative one is rejoice. Now, human beings have a rejoicing problem, but it's not that they don't rejoice, it's that they rejoice on the surface.

So everyone we know rejoices. You do not know a man or woman who is not an expert at rejoicing, it's just that they are broken in how they rejoice and what they rejoice in. In fact, when Paul in Romans 1

begins to unpack what's wrong with humanity and how the wrath of God is being revealed against mankind, you'll see that the problem isn't that he rejoices, but rather the problem is what he rejoices in.

And so if we're in Romans 1, we rejoice in what? Creation. Not the creator. We rejoice in the creation.

So we look at creation and we rejoice in that and in essence we say, isn't creation lovely? Look at how spectacular creation is. Look at how amazing creation is. And see, our rejoicing is shallow because it doesn't then roll up into who created what we're rejoicing in.

See, it's shallow. We don't get deep enough in our rejoicing. And then what does he say next? We all believe the lie over the truth of God.

So what's the lie over the truth of God? Well, it's this kind of fallen nature in us that believes that we're smarter than God. Now, I've never met anyone who will say that, but I've met hundreds that live like that. And so I'm smarter than God.

It's why if you look at God's reaction to believing the lie over the truth of God, he paints this illustration of homosexuality. He paints this image of a man going, forget the woman, I'll take myself. Of the woman saying, forget the man, I'll take myself.

And you have once again men rejoicing in the wrong thing. I am smart enough to pull this off. I can do this.

I mean, sure, you failed the eighth grade, but you can handle this. And then what's the last one? The last one in 28, Romans 1, we failed to acknowledge him. Now, you can see this constant.

So it's basketball season right now. A guy that's seven foot should never be allowed to dance after he dunks. It's just shameful.

Like anytime Shaq Diesel jams the ball and does that thing he does, I'm just like, hit a free throw, brother. If you hit a free throw, then celebrate. All right, but if you're seven three and you dunk the ball, that's like me putting on my shoes.

I just shouldn't be able to dance or celebrate that. All right, so here's what happened. If we just take our boy Shaq Diesel, he didn't rap on the uterus wall and go, I'd like to be seven three and really athletic.

He was born. Well, he worked hard. Okay, but I can work hard and I can't do that.

See, he was uniquely wired and uniquely gifted by God to bring glory to God. And when he touches it, he makes himself a blasphemer. When he uses what God gave him to glorify God with, to glorify himself, he blasphemes.

So we don't have a rejoicing issue in that we don't rejoice. We rejoice. I'm from Dallas, home of the largest cult in America.

All right, I mean largest church, most expensive church you've ever seen. You can pay like a grand and take a tour of it. I mean, it is... I have men just filled up in our church that swear to me they can't read or study well but can tell me the third string running back on the Cowboys team and how much he rushed for his junior year of high school.

But can't study, can't read, you know, can't understand theology, but oh, yeah, yeah, he played for Westbrook High School. Sophomore year, rushed for like 3,000 yards. I mean, that's rejoicing in.

That is a celebration of. We do not have a problem in rejoicing. In fact, you don't know anyone who doesn't excel at rejoicing.

The problem is not in the rejoicing, it's how we rejoice and the fact that we don't get underneath what we're rejoicing in to really give credit to where credit is due, which honestly leads us then to the second imperative. And that's where we'll do the bulk of our work and our time together. So the second imperative, it kind of beats like a drum in this text.

A better way of reading this text would be, remember also your creators in the days of your youth. Remember your creator before the evil days come. Remember also your creator, all right, before you have no pleasure in them.

Remember your creator before the bowl is broken, before it beats like a drum. Remember, remember, remember, remember your creator. Now, the question I think we have to answer here is, is there a way of remembering that redeems how we rejoice and fixes the brokenness in how we rejoice? I think that's question we have to answer.

Is there a way to remember that then redeems the brokenness in our rejoicing? And so we see all through the Old Testament, this kind of gospel rhythm began to be established. He says, remember your creator. And what we see primarily in the Old Testament is this call to remember several things about the nature and character of God.

And so in remember your creator, there is remember that I am God. Through the prophets, through the law, God wants to constantly say, I am God. I am the creator.

I started this. I'll finish this. This was my idea.

I did this. And it shows up beautifully in the wisdom literature. Love, Job 38, 1 through 13, just a terrifyingly beautiful passage.

I've asked a lot of questions of the Lord. I'm grateful that he hadn't answered me like this. Then the Lord answered to Job out of the whirlwind and said, who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Yeah, I mean, if that's a phone call, I'm hanging up.

Okay, like who is this that talks to me like they know? Dress for action like a man. Just makes me, I'm nervous reading it. I will question you and you make it known to me.

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me if you have understanding. Who determined its measurement? Surely you know. Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb? When I made the clouds its garment and the thick darkness its swaddling band and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors and said, thus far shall you come and no farther.

And here shall your proud waves be stayed. Have you commanded the morning since your days began and caused the dawn to know its place, that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth and the wicked be

shaken out of it? And then there's like this pause, like Job's got an answer. No.

And honestly, that text I love because Job tries to get, he's like, you're right, you're right, you're right, God doesn't relent. There's a whole nother chapter. Oh, no, no, no, no.

Dress for action. So Job tries to backpedal and God's not having it. Now, you're also going to see it in these moments of worship, like Psalm 147.4, he determines the numbers of stars.

He gives to all of them their what? Their names. He named them. This is remember that I am God.

I'm not you. I'm God. Remember, I do what you can't.

I started this. I began this. I'm driving this.

I am beyond you. Remember that? And if you look at Habakkuk, very similar to Job, such a great book where Habakkuk's trying to go, hey, why don't, why do you put up with injustice? And God answered, I'm not putting up with injustice. I'm sending the Chaldeans.

And you remember Habakkuk's response? No, you won't. You won't because they're more wicked than we are. And you surely won't use more wicked people to judge wicked people.

And you remember what God tells him? Well, first Habakkuk tried to walk with a little swagger. He's like, well, I'll place myself on the outer wall and see what God has to say about this. Remember what God had to say? Oh, I'm coming.

And if you think I'll delay, just wait for it. Just wait. I'm coming.

Remember that I am God. Okay, but he goes on. That's not the only remembrance.

He also is going to use a lot in the Old Testament. Not only remember who I am, but remember what I've done. God's going to constantly call people back to remember, look, I have accomplished much around you, for you, in you.

Let me give you just two. I think we could play this game all night, but it has been a long day. Right at the establishment of the Passover feast, this is Exodus 12, 14.

This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations, as a statute forever. You shall keep it as a feast. Now, what's he calling to? Remember, you're going to get together and you're going to remember.

You're going to remember that you were slaves and I freed you. You didn't free you. I freed you.

You didn't get yourself out of Egypt. I got you out of Egypt. I sent the plagues.

I showed my power, my authority over the creative order. I killed Pharaoh's men. I got you across the Red Sea.

I got you out of Egypt. You're going to remember that I spared your sons. You're going to remember that I am God, and I have delivered you and called you and promised you and walked you into what I had promised to your fathers.

You see it again after the crossing of the Jordan in Joshua 4, 5-7. And Joshua said to them, pass on before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of the Jordan and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, what do these stones mean to you? Then you shall tell them of the waters that the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, when it passed over the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan were cut off.

So these stones shall be to the people of Israel memorial forever. What's he doing? Remember what I've done. Don't forget that I deliver you.

Don't forget that I don't abandon you. Don't forget that I am faithful to myself and I have acted on your behalf. And then you've got this great other reminder he'll do throughout the Old Testament that we don't like to talk about much where he goes, and I'm not doing this because you're awesome.

Because that's where we like to land. And like in this room, nobody's going to say it, but a lot of us believe it. Like we believe that it's going to work well because we're faithful.

We believe it's going to work well because we do it this way. We believe that we, and the message that God's had for his people since day one is I'm going to do this because I'm awesome. I'm going to do this because I'm spectacular.

In fact, let me show you how spectacular I am. I'm using you, dummy. Come on, watch this.

Watch my power flow through you. And you can believe the lies of the enemy if you want, but the fact that I'm doing this isn't as spectacular as the fact that I'm letting you play. That's what's really spectacular here is I'm letting you play in what I'm doing that's ultimately about me.

Don't forget I'm faithful. I don't abandon my people. And then the really third round of remembrance that you'll see a ton in the Old Testament is that God wants his people to remember his commands and not just remember his commands, but remember that his commands are about leading his people into life.

The commands of God in scripture are about lining his people up with how he designed the universe to work. And so one of the things I want to make clear at the Village Church as often as I can for people who don't have a lot of background in church or people who have kind of bought into the lie that God's in the heavens with a thunderbolt just waiting to light someone up for smiling is that really if God is making a command, he's not trying to rob you of joy, he's trying to lead you into it. So a question that I know they get tired of me asking is how's that working for you? So you're smarter than God when it comes to sex.

How's that working for you? Because I don't even think you have to be sharp. You can be a dull blade and just look at our culture and go, man, we're a mess when it comes to sex. We have not figured it out.

We're having tons of it and it's not working. And so now we're trying to figure out better techniques at doing it because if having it doesn't work and doesn't satisfy, then maybe doing it better will. And so when you go to the store, look at any magazine you want and on the cover, doesn't matter what it is, be auto trader.

And there'll be a little line about how to make her engine rev or how to whatever. It's just ridiculous. And so I want to constantly come back to the question, okay, is it working? So this is how we view sex.

This is how we view freedom. Is it working? Because all I've got at the village is testimonies of how it led to devastation, heartbreak, pain, disease, sorrow, loss. God's not trying to take.

He's trying to give. Remember my laws. It's Deuteronomy 6 through 9. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

You shall teach them diligently to your children. All right? If you have children, that's a great word. So you can tell we've got a sovereign God, right? Because he knows you're going to need diligence to teach these things to your children.

I have three small ones, an eight-year-old, a five-year-old, and a soon-to-be two-year-old, and we do family devotional almost every night. And I just have to trust that the Holy Spirit's doing something. Because if we can get out of that without a lesson on wrath, then it's been a good, it's been a good night.

Okay? You shall teach them diligently to your children. You shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

You shall write them on the doorpost of your house and on your gates. Remember my law. Remember my law.

Remember my law. Why? Because if you remember my law and you practice my law, you'll see how great and beautiful and amazing I am and how much I'm for you and how much I love you and how much I'm trying to lead you into how I design things to work for the glory of my name and your ultimate joy. Then you have, I love that God, when He speaks to His people, is rarely seeker-sensitive.

Numbers 15, 39 through 40. Don't take that as a jam at philosophy of ministry, although I can take those jabs at times, but that's not what I'm talking about. It's not November or, November.

Numbers 15, 39 through 40. And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the Lord, to do them and not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes, which you are inclined to whore after. I just love that.

Hey, whores, listen to me. I've already got it on your front. I've got it on your hands.

I've got it on your doorpost. I've got it on your gate. Now put tassels on your clothes.

Oh me, the Lord says. So you shall remember and do all my commands and be holy to your God. And so what you see being established in the Old Testament is this gospel rhythm, this idea of remembering rightly redeems our rejoicing.

And then here's what's going to happen. Jesus, God in the flesh is going to show up on the scene. And as Dr. Moeller just killed it to start this thing off of in John chapter five, and then again in Luke chapter 24, he's going to point back and go, see, that was me.

That was me, right? He even points to the Passover, like at the Passover meal. What's he doing? This is the new covenant. It's the blood of the new covenant.

He takes the bread. And we see it in Luke 22, 19. And he took bread.

And when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them saying, this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. See, we got into that gospel rhythm in the Old Testament, and it doesn't get broken in the New Testament.

You're still in it, in that rhythm. Remember, because remembering rightly will redeem rejoicing. Because your rejoicing is broken.

And so you've got to remember rightly. And if you'll remember rightly, then you'll rejoice rightly. And you'll get underneath the surface and you will rejoice in, you will worship in what should be worshiped and should be rejoiced in, rather than staying on the surface and robbing yourself of joy and God of glory.

And our boy Paul, I mean, he takes this and runs like an Olympic sprinter. First Corinthians 11, 26, for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. And so he's going to point back to the institution of the Lord's supper as a remembrance of the cross of Christ.

And he's going to say, yeah, don't forget what Jesus told you not to forget. And then one of my favorite aspects of Paul's ministry, and one that I think we need to hear and hear over and over and over again, is that Paul loved to preach the gospel not only in a frontier setting. Now he gets a lot of cred for that, and rightfully so.

But he also is constantly preaching the gospel to who? Christians. Like over and over and over again, he's proclaiming to people who know what they already know, because we're prone to forget, we're prone to wonder, we're prone to drift. And so Paul wants to preach the gospel to people who know it, because even gospel people are prone to forget the gospel.

Or at some level, just assume it, which can create a lot of pain and heartbreak in your people. So I know some of you are like, you haven't been to seminary, Matt. Okay, well, let's go.

Let's let the text be my seminary degree. Romans 1, 13 through 15, I want you to know, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you, but thus far have been prevented, in order that I may reap some harvest among you, as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. Now, interesting text, because he said, I want you to know, brothers, that I want to reap some harvest among you, my brothers.

And so he's not making a reference then to justification, to salvation, but rather playing a role in their continued maturation into their knowledge of Jesus Christ. I want to come and look at what he says there. For I am under obligation both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.

So some of you should take comfort in this. You know, some of you that have more foolish than wise at your church, you've been called to that. It's funny to me that there are several things that I've picked up on as I've gotten to know a lot of pastors.

Nobody wants the ministry of Moses. Nobody wants... Like, we love Moses, we just don't want his ministry. Like, wandering around in the desert for 40 years with grumbling, complaining people, and then getting to die right before it gets better.

Like, nobody... I mean, you remember that? Like, come up on the mountain, here's the promised land. There it is! Oh, no, you don't get to go. I'm killing you up here.

Joshua's taking them in. All right? And then here, for our group, everybody wants... everybody loves Pauline theology, but nobody wants Pauline pain. Huh? You want that deep kind of girth? That's paid for, man.

And it ain't paid for in study. It's paid for in pain. But I'm getting off point.

That was free. First Corinthians 15, 1 through 4, I mean, this is just... that's watershed right here. Now, I would remind you brothers.

So who are we talking to? Brothers. All right? Not... I'd remind you pagans. I would remind you brothers of the gospel I preached to you.

Now, listen to this. Which you received. And that's past tense.

Which you received. In which you stand. That's present tense, right? By which you are being saved.

Present future. So now hear me, because I want to press on this hard. So then, the gospel of Jesus Christ, all right, that we have been given, imputed to us, the perfect life, the righteousness of Jesus Christ, He has taken on our wrath and the resurrection as evidence that that check cleared is not something that we walk through and then get into something else, but rather it is what saves us, what sustains us, and what brings us safely home.

We do not move on from the gospel. You preach it that way, you disciple men that way, you will remove from them the very lifeline of spirit-empowered relationship with Jesus Christ. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures.

Now, what scriptures would those be? Yeah. He died in accordance with the scriptures that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures. He keeps pointing back to the Old Testament.

Galatians 1, 6 through 9. Oh man, I love Galatians. I'm actually going to start preaching through it in January of 2012 if the Lord will keep giving me breath. But Galatians 1, 6 through 9, I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel, not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preach to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. And then you've got that spectacular, like Mount Everest section of text in 220 through 3-5 where Paul, showing that he is a proclaimer, showing that he is a preacher, says, I'd like to learn just one thing from you.

And then he asks like six questions. So you know he's a preacher. Let me ask just one thing.

And then he begins to rattle off, how did you, did you come into the kingdom because you did something or did you come into the kingdom because the Spirit of God made you alive in Christ? After being saved that way, are you now being perfected by the law? Because that great, great 220, man, for I've been crucified with Christ, I'm gone. But the life I live now in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me, gave himself up. Ephesians 1 and 2, that's nothing but this cosmic level view of the gospel, isn't it? Ephesians 1 and 2, I mean that's not on the ground, man.

That's like in outer space looking down on the God. I mean that is a spectacular, spectacular text. Philippians 1, 12 through 17, I just want to constantly say there's never, I don't, I've never met a man that's as free as Paul is.

Like you can't touch him. You can't touch, like if you tell, I'm going to kill you. All right, it's time to go home.

All right, we're going to let you live. All right, to live as Christ. Okay, we are going to beat you.

Well, you know, that's sharing in the sufferings of Christ. I welcome that. We'll put you in prison.

Well, I'll convert all your guards and most of the prisoners. I mean, just an untouchable man. Why do you get untouchable like that? You keep going back to the gospel over and over and over again.

And that's what he says in Philippians 1, 12 through 17, isn't it? It's like, look, I'm here in prison and you know what that's done? That's emboldened others for the gospel. So I'm here and I'm able to share the gospel here. He's saying, look, everything drives the gospel forward.

And in fact, what you'll find in most of Paul's writings, he always wants to clearly set up the gospel before he gets into any now because of the gospel do this. So you've got these great turn texts in the Pauline epistles, love Colossians 3, where if you then, so you've got this great kind of Christological beginning in chapter one, you've got this real breakdown of who he is, of what he's done, of what God's accomplishing, and then three swings it. And so, okay, if you've been baptized into this, if you believe, if you're a believer, then let's look at marriage, then let's look at children, then let's look at church, then let's look at life.

But if you don't get the gospel, we can't have these conversations. Because if I preach these conversations before I preach the gospel, you get hung up and try to accomplish what only Christ in you can accomplish. All right, now, when we remember what we've been commanded to remember, then our rejoicing is redeemed because we'll move past the surface and get underneath it.

And so let's look back on some of the things we're supposed to rejoice in, in Ecclesiastes 11. Pick it up in verse nine again. Rejoice, oh young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth.

Walk in the ways of your heart, and the sight of your eyes. And so now, if I can rejoice, having remembered what Christ has done, having remembered what He has purchased for me, being really, really aware, like spiritually aware of what Christ has done for me in His perfect life, on the cross, and in His resurrection. And you've got to be careful.

I'm just going to say this for free. You've got to be careful. Yes, cross-centered, but if it's not His perfect life also, and if it's not His resurrection also, so yes, give me the cross, and amen.

But there has to be double imputation, or the cross loses its power. Doesn't it? Okay, so two of you are with me. All right, I'm fine with that.

I like God be my judge. Okay, so if we start looking at this, now all of a sudden, for my youth, for my physical strength, I'm not rejoicing in my youth and my physical strength. I'm rejoicing that God, in His mercy, has granted it to me, and because of the grace of Christ, has freed me up in my youth to serve Him faithfully.

See, I got underneath it. I'm not going, I'm strong, I can do this, I can accomplish, I've got a shirt on, I've got a good body, I'm ready to go. That's not, I don't rejoice in being young, I rejoice in being redeemed.

And now, youthful strength, youthful zeal, youthful passion is redeemed so that I might rejoice in the fact that I'm here. Because here, you know, we, illusion's a control, or control is an illusion. You don't have any control.

So, I mean, I get, listen, I read. So, you can eat all the spinach you want, man. You can get your Pilates on.

You can get in the gym and pump weight and run. You can be as careful as you want with that, but it's not going to save you. Now, should we be wise in how we steward our physical body? Absolutely, we should.

Absolutely, we should. But at the end of the day, at the end of the day, my rejoicing isn't that I'm young and strong, because that can be taken from me in a second. That can be ripped from any one of you in a second.

But what can't be ripped from me is that in this moment, at this time, God has given me strength and energy to make much of Him. So, I don't rejoice that I'm young. I rejoice that in my youth, He's opened my eyes to how beautiful and spectacular He is, so that in the energy of my youth, I get to make much of Him.

Now, He also says in this text that we should rejoice in the desires of our heart and our eyes. So, I can kind of look at the desires of my heart, and I want to show you how you get underneath some of this stuff. And so, I have a beautiful wife that I love very much, and the last year and a half has just kind of really made that even more spectacular to me, because when you've got nothing to offer at that point--so, I try to help around the house, try to be a good daddy, try to love my wife, try to lead my home with all the grace the Lord will give me--but when they cut out a big portion of your brain, there's just a little section of time that you're down, and you don't get to do those things.

And you add into it the amount of steroids you're on, and then you've got to--I don't go rage. You would think I would go rage with my personality, but I just cry a lot. And so, then all of a sudden, where I'd been strong and able to run things in the home, I would just cry at everything.

Like my little daughter coming back, Daddy! I couldn't hold myself together. I was so ready to be off the steroids, not because I was raging, but because I literally couldn't--like, we'd go to a movie, and there would be like a commercial for like St. Jude's Hospital, and I'd just start sobbing. And so, couldn't wait.

So, in that season, where I had nothing to give, no way to really lead, no way to offer to have my girl, that kind of Ahabah kind of love, they're going, man, I'm not going anywhere. I'm yours, and you're mine, and we're in a covenant together. So, there's something underneath that.

Isn't that right, Ephesians 5? Like, isn't that day of epiphany when you went from thinking girls were gross to thinking you had to have one? Like, that's not some sort of weird, biological, hormonal thing. I mean, God's driving that. God's painting a picture.

And so, underneath, the heart I have for my wife is this beautiful picture of what God has done for me in Christ. And then, when there are issues, and what I mean by that is when my wife acts up, if you will. She's in here.

I'm going to pay for that, just to let you know. I'm not saying that behind her back. She's in here.

And then, when we rub, because the only people that think marriage isn't difficult are people who aren't married or just got married. And so, there are definitely seasons where you rub. There are definitely seasons where you, I mean, you're going to come together.

There's going to be impasses, right? I mean, am I allowed to have a bad marriage? I love my wife very much, but there are these moments where you need help. And in those moments, we get this great lesson, don't we? Like, if we're seeing, if we're remembering who Jesus is, we're remembering this great analogy, the wedding supper of the Lamb, and being the bride of Christ. And you start to see, underneath your marriage.

I'm not just rejoicing in Lauren, but I get to get underneath that, and I get to rejoice in the fact that God has entered a covenant with me, and He's not leaving me ever. And that's not built on my performance or how well I please Him, but rather in who His Son is. And then, listen, I love being a daddy.

If there's something greater than that, outside of being a child of God, man, I love it, man. I love what they say. I love the innocence of their heart.

And I love how often, if you'll pay attention, God is teaching you about Himself in them. Whether that's from how they trust to... And I'll tell you, and I want to be careful here because I want to try to entertain you, but this image, the Lord just blew me up when our oldest started to walk. And because I believe that a young child walking really isn't so much a decision of the will as much as it is some sort of physiological weird thing that happens.

And so if you've got kids, they start to crawl, and they start to rock back and forth, and then they start to scoot along the side of something, and then what do they do? They'll let it go, right? And they kind of awkwardly hobble there. And then because God has created children with giant heads and small bodies, the head falls forward, right? Now science, now science is involved, so now you've got momentum. And so the kid at this point has two choices, take a step or die.

And so the kid steps, and now we're moving, now we're in physics, all right? Step, step, step, and then what happens? Falls. But what do you do? I mean, we freak out like the kid just got a football scholarship. Like, he's walking! I mean, we're calling, we're tweeting, we're setting the kid back up, taking a -- we absolutely freak out over the fact that our kid took two steps and fell on the ground.

And I've never -- we have a young church, a lot of young children in our community of faith and have never seen a father watch their kid take three steps, fall, and go, idiot. Are you serious? Baby, this is your side of the family, because we walk in my family. We walk.

You don't! You ever see that? I mean, how crazy would that be? No, you celebrate the steps, don't you? And so I'm, I'm watching my oldest do this, and I'm just, I'm blown away that she's walking. I mean, it's like, she's 15 months. I mean, I was like, man, she's going to drive before she walks.

But at the end, here's the picture I kind of got watching Audrey fumble her way into walking. Step, step, fall, and there's this great rejoicing in the steps. And we scooped down, pick her back up, and we're like, okay, set her back up, you know, and then go, go on, go on, get the camera, get the camera.

All right, you used -- when she was little, you had to get the camera. Now you just pull out your phone or whatever, but get the camera. We're going to film this thing, and then we just kind of watch her and wait for her to do it again, and then we'd celebrate again.

But it never bothered us that she would fall. Never bothered us that she would fall. We knew she was starting to walk.

She was going to get better and better and better and better at it until she was running. And so since we knew it was going to end with strong walking and running and climbing trees, the falls didn't bother us. And I'm kind of watching my kid learn that, and I'm just kind of blown away at Grace saying, that's what I'm like.

I celebrate your steps. I celebrate your steps. And because we, so many of us, believe the gospel, we don't remember the gospel well enough, and it's a door we walk through onto other things.

You don't get grace enough to know that when you blow it, God still celebrates His Son in you. And in fact, I think the litmus test of whether or not you understand the gospel is what you do when you fail. You run from Him and go clean yourself up a little bit before you come back into the throne room, or do you approach the throne of grace with confidence? If you don't approach the throne of grace with confidence, you don't understand the gospel.

You still think it depends on, like, you can get yourself clean enough to get in the club. And so I want you to just settle on that. It's not you at your worst that God has a problem with alone.

That's you at your best. It's when you nail it that you're filthy before the Lord. Like when you get up and you have your quiet time, you get into Edwards and you read that and, you know, you're trying to learn to play the acoustic guitar so you can lead worship before you preach.

And you, like, on that bed, you share the gospel with your neighbor. You know, you went to the gym and you even kind of transitioned. Some guy was bench pressing.

You used the bench press as an entry to a gospel narrative. I mean, brilliant. Lights out.

It's on that day that you are offensive to God without Jesus Christ. The idea that somehow the Reformed community hadn't bought into the idea of earning, like the Arminian side of this thing, is foolishness. I meet young men all the time.

I meet older men all the time still trying to earn what's been freely given. Still trying to earn what's been freely given. And then in our jobs, in our calling, in our--see, we get to get underneath it when we understand what Jesus Christ has done.

We remember, all right, what Jesus has done, what he has purchased, and that takes us underneath, all right, that surface level of rejoicing, and it gets us out of the kiddie pool and into the deep end of the pool where joy can be ever-expanding and the glory of God can really shine and we can be sustained in that rejoicing. Now, let's talk, because I think we need to have a conversation here. This is not just a mindset.

This is not just, oh, let me change how I think about things so that I can remember correctly and have remembering correctly correct my rejoicing issue. All right, that's not how it works, so let's talk about it. All right, how do we get into remembering in a way that leads to rejoicing correctly? I'll be straight.

You need to be born again. I'm going to just throw this out there, okay, let you say a lot on it. You're a much better pastor when you're saved than you are when you're not.

Just going to think on that, dwell on that. You are a much better pastor when you understand our message, not just in your head, but when you've been transformed by the Holy Spirit of God. Not, listen to me, not conformed to a pattern of religion, because I, can I be honest about my fears? I'll tell you my fear.

My fear for some of you is that you grew up in church and you learned early on that by saying certain things and acting certain ways, you got power and credibility and applause, and you've learned to play the game so well that you've gone, you know what, by being reformed and by making much of Jesus, much is made of me, and in the end, you have not been converted. You've just been conformed to a pattern of religion. You haven't been transformed by the Holy Spirit of God.

Now, you've got to get into your heart and war with that, but I feel no guilt in wanting you to question whether or not you know Him, love Him, serve Him. Trust me, you'll be a much better man of God when you actually are a man of God. Now, regenerate hearts.

We get into remembering rightly to correct our rejoicing issue by regenerate hearts. A second thing, and I've already pushed on this, I just want to keep pushing on it, all right, a constant meditation on and thinking on the gospel of Jesus Christ. I have to, after all of these years of trying to faithfully serve the Lord by the power of the Spirit sealed inside of me by the grace of God, I still have to preach the gospel to myself.

Just a few months ago, I was down preaching near my hometown and had a little bit of a break, and so I thought it'd be a good idea to kind of go see some of the houses that I got saved right before my 18th birthday, so I went down there to kind of take some pictures of some of the old houses I lived in and show them to my kids when I got home, and so I went down there, and I drove into town, and I saw this field that I got in a fight with with this kid named Sean in front of a whole bunch of people, and I mean, I'm not a fair fight kind of guy. I mean, are you looking at me? I don't have that kind of physique. I mean, I've got to take a cheap shot and keep wailing until somebody breaks it up, and so some bad, dark things had happened in that field to the point where wherever Sean is to this day, if God hadn't saved him, if you mentioned my name to him, he would flush.

And then I drove by one of the houses that we lived in and took a picture, and it just immediately began to be filled with some of these memories of some of the things that occurred in that house. You know what I felt? Shame. And then I drove by a Jimmy Hereford's house and remembered his 16th birthday party and was immediately just filled with shame, and so I get back in my car, and I'm driving back up to preach, and the entire drive there, I'm being accused, and not by the Holy Spirit because when the Holy Spirit accuses, it's sweet, isn't it? When the Holy Spirit convicts, there's a sweetness to it, not so when it's the lies of the enemy.

And so, I mean, I'm driving, and I'm fighting with myself because I'm in my heart having these thoughts. Oh, you're going to, you know, talk to them about what a man of God you are and what a man of God they're supposed to be? That's what you're going to say? You're going to point guys towards the gospel? What do you think Sean thinks about your gospel? What do you think Holly thinks about your gospel? What do you think most of your friends in high school think about that gospel? What do you think? And I mean, I'm literally going, man, how am I supposed to do? I'm going to preach on believing the gospel, and I'm having to wrestle with myself to believe it myself. And it was somewhere in the middle of that that the

promise of the covenant and the blood of Jesus Christ and the knowledge of Scripture really defeated what was the work of the enemy because I got to say, no, that man Chandler's dead.

He was. He was a piece, man. He should never say anything about Jesus Christ.

Good thing Christ killed him on the cross. Good thing that the new Matt Chandler is holy and righteous, and not because he is, but because it was granted to him. And now all of a sudden I get to walk in gospel power.

Now I get to walk in gospel power. Do not, please, do not assume the gospel. Don't assume it.

It has to be explicit, and it has to constantly be explicit. If you assume it, so Dr. Mohler in his intro talked to this whole thing, referenced Christian Smith, moralistic, therapeutic deism. You assume the gospel, that's all they'll hear.

Do this. Don't do that. Go here.

Don't go there. They will not understand that their righteousness is blood-bought. Don't assume it.

We baptize tons of 20-year-olds who will say to us in our baptism class, I grew up in church, never heard the gospel. Now we always want to press on that because sometimes you just don't have ears to hear, and so we always go, did you take any notes when you were in youth group? Yeah, yeah I did. Go back and look at your notes and tell me that you didn't hear the gospel.

And a lot of them come back and go, no, I just heard the gospel. I just didn't, I mean, I guess I didn't have ears to hear. But there's an amazing amount of young men and young women who were told, don't drink beer, don't have sex, don't listen to secular music.

Now, should we call young people to holiness? Absolutely. Is holiness possible outside of the working of the Holy Spirit to regenerate us in Christ? No. And listen, even if they didn't have sex, didn't touch beer, and didn't listen to anything but Sandy Patty, does that in the end redeem them? No.

They're just nerdy lost kids. Make the gospel explicit. Preach it week in and week out.

Well, people will get tired of hearing it. Okay, well, I've been doing it for nine years. They don't get tired of hearing it.

They get tired of hearing it, okay? Now, the third thing that gets us into remembering in such a way that fixes our rejoicing problem. Regenerate hearts, a constant meditation on the gospel. And then I'll throw this out there thinking that maybe it'll get me in trouble.

That you would walk by the Spirit and not by flesh. Once again, out of Galatians. You would walk according to the Spirit.

I want to stay deeply tuned in to my affections. Like, when I no longer marvel, when I'm no longer overwhelmed, when I'm no longer stirred up and inflamed by the fact that God in His mercy saved me. Like, I didn't save me.

He saved me. I had a plan for me. It wasn't His plan for me.

Like, He came and got me. I wouldn't look at it. I moved from California to Texas and happened to locker next to a guy in football, happened to, who was came up to me and said, hey, I need to talk to you about Jesus.

When do you want to do that? Not, hey, would you like to hear about Jesus? Like, I didn't, in His Word, it wasn't an option. I mean, He was going to tell me. He's just, He did let me pick the place.

Where do you want to have the conversation? I mean, it's happening, but where do you want, you want to do it at practice? You want to do it afterwards? You want to do it? So, I want to stay dialed into the fact that He came and He saved me. I want remembering to lead to rejoicing, and when that's not taking place, I want to be nervous, and I want to get around other brothers who can help me work through why I'm not marveling at what should be more spectacular than anything else in the universe. Okay, it's getting late, so let me land the plane.

We're all over the map here. Some of us are young, and we feel young. Some of us are what I'll call at your cruising altitude.

You know, if you've flown, you kind of take off, and then you hit the cruising altitude for a while, and maybe you're there for a while. Maybe it's a short trip, but you're at a cruising altitude. Now, some of you are on the descent, and then some of you, the tray tables are stowed, all right? The chair back is up, all right? You don't wonder if you'll be here next year, next time we do this.

Like, I said that, and you're like, no, probably. Seriously, probably. That is me.

I probably won't be here. And so, we're all over the map, but here's the reality, and I need you to hear me, and I don't know if you will. We are right now several hours closer to standing in front of our great Father or Judge than we were when we walked in.

And I'm wondering how you're doing at rejoicing. I mean, I think that's the question on my heart for you. I'm wondering how you're doing at rejoicing.

Are you doing it well? Are you remembering in such a way that you're rejoicing? You're getting underneath how most men rejoice, and you're rejoicing in what God has done for you in Christ. Are you rejoicing in what Colossians calls those shadows? Are you looking at your marriage and going, man, isn't the Father spectacular? Are you looking at your children? You're looking at your money. You're looking at your life.

You're looking at those little nuances of everyday life, and are they stirring up in you a passion for God's mercy? Or is your rejoicing hollow? Is it shallow? Are you in the kiddie pool? Are you swimming in the ocean? So my hope for you is that you know the deep waters. My hope for you is that the Holy Spirit would invade in simple acts every day to draw your attention and focus to who He is and what He's done, because that's the firm foundation that's unshakable. That's how you become a man that's unmoved, a woman that's unmoved.

That's how you glory in crazy circumstances. When you hear cancer, when you experience loss, you mourn, yes, but you're very quickly to say, yes, Lord, accomplish what You want to accomplish. There's a confidence that comes when remembering redeems rejoicing.

That's simply not there when you rejoice in your youth because you're young. You rejoice in your money because you have money. Rejoice in your wife because you've got one, and she likes you for now.

Rejoice in your children because they're healthy. Rejoice in your children because they're doing what you say. Rejoice in the nice car that you have.

Rejoice in the nice house. All of that can be taken from you. You're not free, but when remembering leads to rejoicing, the thing that's underneath all that, you'll be a man or woman unshaken, and that's my hope for you.

Let's pray. Father, I thank You for our time together, and Spirit, I pray that You would let these seeds fall on good ground, that You would protect them from being snatched up, that You would protect them from being choked out, that You would protect them from, in the end, springing up quickly, only to be burnt up because of lack of root. I pray that You would make us gospel men and gospel women.

I pray that we'd meditate upon, think upon, dwell upon what You have done, who You are, what You have accomplished, and that would send us into a deeper rejoicing of all of life, a way to see things with new lenses where You are celebrated at every turn. Turn us into worshipers, genuine rejoicers in what You have done and what You have accomplished. We love You, but I think it's our confession to the soul in here that we want to love You more than we do.

We want to know You better than we do, and we thank You that You cover us with Your grace while we learn to walk and stumble about, and it's for Your beautiful name I pray. Amen.

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