

Help Wanted: A Singer

by Warren Wiersbe

The sermon emphasizes that happiness is a byproduct of serving God and that it can be achieved through freedom, fullness, and fruitfulness.

Duration: 35:51

Scripture: Psalm 126:5-6, Matthew 6:33, John 1:14, John 1:16, Galatians 5:22-23

Topics: "Spiritual Freedom", "Christian Liberty"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of finding the right Master in order to experience true freedom. He warns against believing lies, as they lead to bondage and give Satan a foothold in our lives. The speaker encourages listeners to surrender their lives to Jesus Christ, who can set them free and bring happiness. He emphasizes that happiness is found in the fullness of Christ, and that our lives should be channels for the blessings of God. The sermon references John 8:32, where Jesus says that knowing the truth will set us free, and John 1:16, which speaks of receiving the fullness of Christ's grace.

Transcript

Psalm 126, Psalm 126, the whole tone of this psalm is that of rejoicing. And you say, well pastor, I don't have much to rejoice about today. I trust you will before we finish the ministry this morning.

Psalm 126, when the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing. Then said they among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them.

The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

He that goeth forth and weepeth bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. Psalm 126, now this psalm is talking about something everybody is looking for and that's happiness. I suppose you've seen all the posters and the little peanuts books that are circulating.

Happiness is a warm puppy. Happiness is a big brother who loves you. Happiness is warm socks in your drawer on a cold day.

After a while it gets to be just a little bit silly because all of us know that happiness is a lot deeper than that and we're living in a city and a world that's just craving happiness. It's rather interesting you go down to the

library and begin to read through the great thinkers of the ages and you'll find they're all discussing this problem. How in the world can people find happiness? Aristotle devotes page after page after page to defining happiness and figuring out how to get it.

You finally get up to date to some of our modern day thinkers who just throw up their hands in despair and simply don't know where happiness can be found. Now you and I know from the Bible that the first step toward happiness is to know Christ as your Savior. That's where it starts.

To give your heart to Jesus Christ, open your life to him. Jesus was a man of sorrows but he was a very joyful person. The night before he was crucified he said to his disciples, I've spoken these things to you that my joy might be in you.

That's the kind of happiness that Jesus Christ wants to give us. In Luke chapter 15, the lost and found chapter of the Bible, the whole theme is joy. The woman loses her coin and she finds it and she rejoices and calls all of her lady friends together and says, rejoice with me, I found my coin.

The shepherd finds his lost sheep and he puts it over his shoulders rejoicing and he goes home and he calls his neighbors and says, come and rejoice with me, I found my sheep. And then there's that heartbreaking story of that lost son. Here's a father waiting and waiting and waiting and watching.

One day down the road he sees the boy coming and he runs out to meet him and with joy he throws his arms around him, with joy he kisses him. Then he comes home and he says, let's kill the fatted calf and let's have a party because my son is home. That's the kind of joy that salvation brings.

That's the beginning. The first step toward happiness is simply coming and saying, oh Jesus, I know I'm a sinner. I know that I have been drinking at the shallow, polluted cisterns of this world and I haven't found any happiness.

I haven't found any joy. I believe that you died for me on the cross. I believe you are my Savior and right now by faith I receive you.

That's the first step. But it's only the first step because from then on Jesus wants to change our lives. When you receive him, you receive life.

But then he wants this life just to grow and to blossom out and the Lord Jesus wants to make something out of us. You've discovered, haven't you, that happiness is a byproduct. You go out looking for happiness, you won't find it.

But you go out and do the will of God, you find happiness. Happiness is like health. The people who are constantly worried about their health are usually sick.

But health is a byproduct of exercise and cleanliness and clear thinking and good eating. And happiness comes to us in the will of God. Now in Psalm 126, the psalmist is talking about how you and I can be happy.

And we can be happy as Christians. Now if you're not a Christian, you better trust Jesus. That's the first step.

But as Christians, you and I can find happiness by receiving from Jesus Christ three very wonderful gifts. Now these gifts go right along with your salvation. You see, salvation isn't just one little thing that God

does.

When you have it, that's all there is to it. Not on your life. Salvation, faith in Christ, this experience of being born again is just the beginning.

You say, I didn't know that. Now you know it. It's just the beginning.

Birth into the family is not the end, it's the beginning. And when a child is born into the family, he experiences day after day fresh, new and wonderful things. And your Christian life can be this way.

I meet people all over the city of Chicago who don't know what it means to really enjoy their Christian life. They just endure it. And because they aren't enjoying it, nobody else is enjoying it.

And the unsaved husband doesn't get any joy from it. And the workers in the office or the factory don't get any joy out of it. But I tell you folks, if you and I will just receive these three very wonderful gifts that are given to us in Psalm 126, oh, how different life is going to be and God will make us happy.

Gift number one in verses one through three, freedom. Freedom. When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

Now what's he talking about? He's not talking about the 70 year captivity of the nation of Israel. That was no surprise. They knew for years it was going to end.

Jeremiah told them it would end. He's talking here about one of the most amazing events that ever happened in Jewish history. Now you've read all about the six day war and some of the other things that have happened down there.

In about 700 BC, the city of Jerusalem experienced the most amazing miracle. In one of those rooms in the British Museum over in London, there is a six-sided clay tablet. I stood and looked at it one day.

An amazing thing. A six-sided clay tablet. It's the record of the Assyrian army when it surrounded the city of Jerusalem.

Sennacherib was the king of Assyria and Hezekiah was the king of Judah. And right there in lines 20 and 21, I can't read the Assyrian markings, but the translation was there. Right there in lines 20 and 21, Sennacherib said, I shut up Hezekiah like a caged bird in his royal city of Jerusalem.

And he did. The Assyrian army moved in upon Judah, devastated the crops, wrecked the villages, surrounded Jerusalem. And every day, a loud-mouthed general came out with his bullhorn and said, are you trusting Jehovah? The other nations trusted their gods.

Their gods failed. No one can stand before the army of Sennacherib. And here was Zion, the city of David, walled in.

Food was scarce. The crops had been completely ruined. They were hungry.

Hezekiah prayed. He went down to Isaiah the prophet and said, what are we going to do? And Isaiah said, don't pay any attention to that loud mouth, because I can take care of him. And do you remember, God did take care, because the army of God moved in, and the armies of the enemy were completely devastated, and the city of Jerusalem was set free.

It all happened like that. One night, the mothers were putting their children to bed, and the kids were crying because they were hungry. And mothers were saying to their children, now go to sleep.

Maybe tomorrow, God will send some food. And they went to sleep, and they woke up the next morning and discovered the army of the enemy was done for. Overnight, just like that, God delivered the city of Jerusalem from the enemy.

That's what he's talking about. And they were like people that dreamed. Enemies threw their arms around each other, neighbors who hadn't talked to each other for months, threw their arms around each other and wept and cried, and said, isn't it wonderful what God has done for us? They were free.

Now you just pick that up from 700 BC and move it into 1973. Here's the city of Chicago. And there is more bondage today in the city of Chicago than there was in Jerusalem those many years ago.

Just open your eyes and look. Here comes someone in bondage to some habit. His heart crying out and saying, do I have to live like this? Here comes some person who outwardly seems to be very, very cultured and have character, but inwardly is in the bondage of some horrible thing.

We are living in a city that's in bondage. Bondage to habits and bondage to fears. My, the fear that's written on people's faces today.

Week in and week out, our pastoral staff is counseling with people. Some folks just walk in off the streets and they're scared and they're running away and they're in shackles. Some are in bondage to circumstances.

The mail that we get through our songs and the night ministry would break your heart. I had a letter this past week from a lady in Detroit describing a situation in her home that is just heartbreaking. In bondage to habits and fears and circumstances and sin and Satan.

Now, when you give your heart to Jesus Christ, He sets you free. When you come to Jesus Christ and trust Him as your Savior, He sets you free. And then those old shackles want to get back on again.

And this is where we receive the gift of freedom from Jesus Christ. I was telling my campus Sunday school class this morning that our job is not to find our freedom. Our job is to find our master.

You find the right master, you'll have your freedom. I meet young people over in Old Town and up in New Town and they say, we want freedom. Liberty is the watchword today.

And yet they are in the worst kind of bondage. They call it freedom. When you give your heart to Jesus Christ, when you surrender to Him, you receive this gift of freedom.

He sets us free. Over in John chapter 8, Jesus says, you shall know the truth. The truth shall set you free.

Lies always lead to bondage. Always. Anyone who believes a lie is in bondage.

A lie gives Satan a foothold in our lives. A little lie gives Satan a beachhead. And then he gets more territory and more territory.

Forgive me, friends. I have seen Christian people give way to a lie, believe something that simply isn't true. It's not scriptural.

It's wrong. And before long they surrender to that lie. Then they have to defend that lie.

And little by little, Satan gets a beachhead and they're in bondage. The first thing they think of in the morning is this bondage. And the last thing they think about at night is this bondage.

And all day long, they cannot fulfill their lives because they're in bondage. Don't do it. Don't do it.

Today, just simply by faith reach out and say, Jesus Christ, the only way to have freedom is to have a Master. And right now I'm yielding my life to You. Take all out of my life that's wrong.

Deliver me. And He'll do it. For if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

Happiness is freedom. Freedom to serve God. Not freedom to do whatever I want to do.

That's bondage. Freedom to do what He wants me to do and to be what He wants me to be. Happiness is freedom.

In verse 4, the psalmist gives us another gift. Happiness is not only freedom. Happiness is fullness.

He says in verse 4, turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south. Now, what's he talking about the streams in the south? Well, over in the Holy Land, as you go from the top to the bottom, from Dan to Beersheba, if you keep on going, if you keep on going past Beersheba, going down toward Egypt, you run into an area that the Jews call the Negev, the south. It's a dry area.

This is the area that the Jewish people are now irrigating and making the desert blossom like the rose. And this southern area, this Negev, during the dry season, all of those riverbeds lie there like so many corpses. It's as though the earth has completely died.

Ah, but then the rainy season comes, and the waters begin to flow, and these once dry riverbeds, a trickle comes in, and then it gets wider and deeper, and before long, these dry riverbeds become mighty torrents of rivers. You know what the psalmist is saying here? He's saying, Lord, I have freedom, but now I want fullness. I don't want to be a dry old riverbed.

I want that the water of life shall flow through me. Now, I trust that you'll forgive me for saying this, but some Christians are dry. You say, well, some preachers are dry.

Well, that makes us even. But some Christians are dry. And God never meant it to be this way.

God didn't set me free from the captivity of sin to have me lie there like some dry old riverbed. He wants my life to be a channel of the fullness of His blessing. He wants your life to be a channel for the fullness of His blessing.

He wants our homes to be bubbling over with the joy and the fullness of the Christian life. Turn to the Gospel of John, would you please? You know, we so often tell unsafe people, now read the Gospel of John. That's good.

I think it's time Christians began to read the Gospel of John. John chapter 1, verse 16. John 1, 16.

And of His fullness, that's Christ, have all we received and grace for grace. You see, back in verse 14, Jesus Christ came to earth. The word was made flesh.

He dwelt among us. We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Jesus Christ is full.

Now, you say that's wonderful, but verse 16 says that I should be full. Oh, my friend, on this hot summer day, did you know that Jesus Christ wants to share His fullness with you? He doesn't want me, He doesn't want you to be a dry riverbed, sandy and dirty. He wants us to be filled with all of His fullness.

Now, John 1, 16 says, of His fullness have all we received. Have you received of His fullness? Now, John goes on to picture this. In John chapter 2, Jesus gets a hold of some waterpots and He has the servants fill the waterpots with water and He turns the water into wine.

It's fullness. The fullness of waterpots. And most Christians live this way.

The church is a waterpot and I come and get a little bit of blessing and the midweek service is a waterpot and I come and get some blessing and I listen to WNBI and I get some blessing and we're glad for these things. But God never meant for me to get my fullness out of a waterpot. In John chapter 4, Jesus talks to a woman by a well and she's going to get some water out of the well and Jesus said, you know, if you'd ask me, I'd put a well right down inside of you.

So that wherever you go, you don't have to have a canteen. You don't have to run back to the waterpot. Oh, how many Christians come panting into church on Sunday morning and they drink some of this blessing of the living water and they go back home and boy, by Wednesday night, they're panting again and they come in.

God never meant it to be that way, friends. And Jesus said to this woman, look, if you'll just turn your life over to Me, I'll put a well down inside. And wherever you go, there will be a constant flow of living water.

But now it doesn't stop there. You say, oh, I thank God. I know that.

Pastor, I have turned my life over to Jesus Christ and I have that well of living water down inside. And I know I was in the hospital and I drank of that well and oh, it satisfied. And we were going through bereavement and difficulty and I drank of the well.

But my friend, God didn't put that well there just for you. Your next door neighbor is thirsty and the other people in the carpool are thirsty and the girl at the next desk is thirsty and the elevator operator is thirsty and these dear old people living aimless lives in little hotel rooms are thirsty. That's why in John chapter 7, Jesus says, if any man thirsts, let him come unto Me and drink and out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.

Not just a well that I drink at, but a well that turns into a river and I am not a dry water course. The river of life is flowing. That's what He's talking about in verse 4. Happiness is freedom and happiness is fullness.

And my friend, if you want to be happy, just start spilling over. Don't sit and look in the mirror and say, oh, nobody has worse troubles than you have. Oh, you poor thing.

You sit down and feel sorry for yourself long enough, you'll get miserable and dry and critical and sharp and abrasive and most of us are sick and tired of people who are sharp and abrasive and God, we don't want to be that way. But if we draw upon the fullness of Christ, the water of life begins to flow through and the water of life touches the next door neighbor and some life begins to appear and the water of life

touches people at work and the office atmosphere changes and touches people here and there. What is happiness? Happiness is fullness.

Are you empty? If you're empty, just remember this, all of the fullness that you'll ever need is in Jesus Christ and He satisfies. Happiness is freedom and happiness is fullness. But you get to the end of this psalm, happiness is fruitfulness.

He changes the picture completely. He starts off with captives in a city set free. Then He moves down to the desert, a dry riverbed, filled up.

And now He gets a hold of a sower, just an ordinary sower and He says in verses 5 and 6, they that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, you say, wait a minute pastor, you're talking about happiness. Where do these tears come in? He that goeth forth and weepeth bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

My friend, did you know that everybody in this church auditorium is a sower? Every child, every teenager, every college student, every mother and dad, every widow, every widower, every senior saint, every one of us is a sower. This last week as you walked through life, you were sowing. Some were sowing seeds of discord, criticism, backbiting.

Oh, but you can't do much damage with a little seed. Did you ever watch the roots wreck your sidewalk? Ever have to call in one of these expensive machines to clean out your drains? A seed is one of the most powerful things in the universe. Hidden in the heart of a little seed is enough power that if you translated it into atomic energy, you wouldn't believe it.

A seed gets into some concrete and begins to germinate and before long, crack. A root starts to go through your foundation or your sewer and crack. A seed.

Oh, you say, pastor, I was a little bit critical, but it can't do much damage. No, it'll sit there for a while, then it'll germinate and then somebody will water it and before long, some sour fruit. You sowed something this last week.

Some people sowed hatred. Some people went through life with their hands on the holster, just daring anybody. Just sowing hatred and sowing criticism and sowing selfishness.

Ah, but thank God there were many people who went through the city of Chicago sowing patience and sowing kindness and sowing love. You say, pastor, I've been sowing love to my neighbor down the street and it hasn't done one bit of good. You're planting the seed.

Every one of us is a sower. Now, the only difference between one sower and the other sower is what are you sowing? Because happiness is fruitfulness. And one of the greatest sources of happiness in my life is to see the seed that's been planted bear fruit.

I had a phone call, a long distance phone call this week from a young man who in a previous church I pastored gave me fits. I tell you, trying to untangle that young man's life was like unscrambling an egg. You'd no sooner see him get out of one thing, he was into three others.

Unbelievable. And we wept over him and prayed for him and prayed with him. And oh, the mess.

He called me up this week. I said, are you in Chicago? No, he said, I'm at my job. But he said, I want to call you.

He said, I know that in past years I gave you so much trouble. I thought I owed it to you to call you up and be a blessing to you. He said, things have straightened out.

He said, our home is happy. We're serving the Lord. I'm even out doing a little bit of preaching.

He said, Pastor, it's amazing God could use such a wretch like me. And when I hung the phone up, I thought, well, it pays to sow. Pays to sow.

Happiness is fruitfulness. Now, the sower doesn't sow just for his own sake. I feel sorry for these people who come to church and say, well, what am I going to get out of it? Well, I hope you do get something out of it to give to somebody else.

The sower goes out and he gives to other people. Now, it's called precious seed. You see, back in Hezekiah's day, they had a famine.

And now the city was delivered. And they said, let's go out and sow some seed. And here's a dear man who takes out his seed.

And he says, I can grind this seed up and make flour and feed my children. Or I can take this seed out and I can plant it and wait for a few months and have more seed. That's why it was precious.

Every seed was important. He was taking food out of his own mouth. You see, the seed that we sow as Christians is very precious.

The Word of God. This is the most expensive seed in the world. You take your burpee catalog, it beats the burpee catalog.

For those of you who aren't farmers, that's a seed catalog. Precious seed. It cost Paul his life to give me some of this seed.

It cost Jesus' calvary to give me this seed. And what's my job this next week? You say, Pastor, I want to be happy this next week. Great.

Just take the seed and go out and sow it. Wherever you have a chance, just drop some love and some truth into some heart. And one of these days, the harvest is going to come in.

Now, the harvest is not the end of the service. And the harvest is not the end of the church year. The harvest is the end of the age.

And he says here, the sower goes out and he's weeping. You say, how is it possible to be happy and to weep? Jesus did. Do you think that those who are seeking to serve the Lord in freedom and fullness and fruitfulness never weep? Paul wept when Paul said farewell to the Ephesian church.

He said, I was among you with tears. Jeremiah wept, wearing a yoke around his neck, walking the streets of Jerusalem, weeping. Jesus wept.

That's the beautiful thing about being one of God's sowers. You sow with tears, you reap with joy. Unless we water the seed with our tears, there's no harvest.

And one of these days, the harvest is going to come. This is why we must be very careful about church statistics. The harvest isn't finished yet, folks.

Paul said, judge nothing before the time. I'm willing to just keep on sowing the seed. I'm happy sowing the seed.

Sometimes God gives the harvest, sometimes He doesn't. But one of these days, we're going to come again with rejoicing because His promise is this, let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season, we shall reap if we faint not. Don't give up.

What is happiness? Well, happiness is freedom. Not doing your own thing, doing God's thing. Do you have that freedom? What is happiness? Happiness is fullness.

Receiving of His fullness, grace after grace, and then being a channel of blessing to other people. What is happiness? It's fruitfulness. Sowing God's seed and being a part of the harvest.

Are you happy today? Many of you are. Many of you, in spite of difficulties and trials, can say, Pastor, I know what you're talking about. I've experienced this freedom in Christ.

It's wonderful. I've experienced this fullness in Christ. My life is not dry and barren.

There's a channel that's blessing other people, and I've experienced the fruitfulness in Christ. Oh, what a joy. But some of you don't know it yet.

You can know it by coming and surrendering to Christ, and then day by day, getting into fellowship with Him, following Him, and the blessing comes. To put it in one simple sentence, happiness is yielding to Jesus Christ, and the rest will come. Heavenly Father, we confess our desire to have happiness in this life, and we believe that You want us to be happy.

Lord, may we never be happy with sin. Oh, Father, I pray that when we sin, make us miserable. May we never be happy with sin in the life of somebody else.

Give us that compassionate heart. Father, people here today need to experience freedom. Help them to come to Christ.

Some need to experience fullness. Help them to yield to Christ. Some need to experience fruitfulness.

Help them, Father. Help us all. To follow Christ.

Speak to our hearts now. Those who need the Savior, those who need the Lord, help them to come. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

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