

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

WHEN MONEY IS TIGHT | REBEL'S GUIDE TO JOY

KYLE RILEY | APRIL 2, 2023

What's up family? How are we doing today? Oh, man. I love it. I love it. So glad to be here with you all. I want to welcome everybody here at our Northwest campus and everybody at all of our campuses, actually. It's so great to be here with you.

Hey, before we jump in today, we have some celebrating to do. This past week we had the chance to see over 600 people journey together for the past 10 weeks through *Rooted* and we were able to have a graduation for our winter session of *Rooted*.

We had so much fun. So many stories that came out of this. So much life change. And there were people who didn't know Jesus and they came to know Jesus for the very first time through *Rooted*. And people who have been walking with Jesus for years and their relationship with Jesus was restored and revived and renewed. And now they are relating to Him in a totally new way.

We had 56 people, 56 choose to go all in and get baptized. Can we just celebrate that? We have 42 groups who started together in *Rooted* and said, "No, we're not stopping here. We want to continue to stay as a group together." And they are becoming groups—42 groups which is incredible.

I had a chance to be at our celebration this past Tuesday. So many stories, so many tears, and so many moments celebrating what God is doing in the life of our church through *Rooted* in such a way that we're going to run it back. The next session of *Rooted*, our spring session, starts later this month and there is room for you.

So if you have yet to go through *Rooted* this is an opportunity for you to jump in and invite a family member or a friend. Sign up today. You can go to the website tpcc.org/rooted and get registered. Alright?

Also, before we jump into the message, I want to do something. I want us to actually pray. I was reading earlier this week and I was just reminded of the gift and the privilege that it is for us to be able to gather together to worship Jesus.

And I want you to know that I have nothing to offer you outside of what is in this Word right here, outside of God's Word. And this is not a moment for us to come in and sing a few songs. This is a supernatural opportunity for us to not only hear the Word of God but to go and to live it out.



I firmly believe that Satan doesn't mind us gathering together so long as it doesn't transcend outside of these four walls, as long as we don't live like we believe this to be true. So I want us to pray and just come in with a heart posture that is ready to receive whatever it is that God has for us. So at each of our campuses, would you just bow with me as we pray?

Father, what a gift, what a privilege it is to be able to assemble together as Your church and to be able to worship You. And I pray that we do so in Spirit and in truth.

God, I pray that You are already working, that Your Spirit is working here, that You are working in each and every one of our hearts.

God, I pray that You would help me to do what I cannot do in my own flesh, to preach Your perfect Word. God, I pray that as Your Word goes forth that seeds are planted. God, I pray that You will begin tilling the soil of our hearts to not only receive but to live out what it is that You have called us to do. That others would come along and water that seed and ultimately, You are the One who brings the increase.

God, I was reading in 2 Corinthians and it says that Satan has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. And, God, that means that there is supernatural work that is required in us for us to come face to face with Your truth—for the veil to be removed from our eyes so that we can see You for who You are and that we can openly receive the love that You have for us.

So, God, would You work today? Would You move in our hearts, move in our minds. And, God, we pray that Your Son, Jesus, gets all of the glory, honor, and praise out of this. Everybody in agreement says: Amen. Amen.

Well, hey. If you're just joining us right now we are wrapping up a series that we've been in called *A Rebel's Guide to Joy*. And over the past couple of weeks we've been walking through a book of the Bible called Philippians. Philippians is a letter that a guy named Paul wrote to a church that he helped start in a city called Philippi—hence the name Philippians.

What you see as you read this letter is Paul's overwhelming sense of joy. Man, you cannot read this letter without seeing just how joyful Paul is. And it is ironic because of the conditions that Paul finds himself in while writing this letter. Our man is locked up. He's in chains. He's in prison and he's writing to his friends in Philippi in some of the worst conditions that he could ever find himself in. Yet he is joyful.

So, what we've been saying is, "If that is true of Paul, if Paul can be joyful in the worst predicament possible, how can we, as followers of Jesus have joy in all circumstances? How can we have joy in some of life's hardest predicaments? How can we have joy



when there is loss? How can we have joy when times are hard and when there is conflict? How can we have joy when our past comes and haunts us?

We have just been blessed over these past couple of weeks by Pastor Aaron and Pastor Ryan who have just poured into us from God's Word. And I not only call them friends, but I call them Pastor. So can we just celebrate our pastors Aaron and Ryan for the way that they have poured into us? Man, they truly are a tremendous gift to this church and I don't want to take that for granted.

We have one more topic to cover in this series. And today we're going to be looking at how do we have joy *When Money is Tight*?

What a fun way to close out this series. Right? How to have joy when money is tight. And before you check out on me—maybe you're new and you are like, "This is why I don't come to church. All they talk about is money," before you do any of those things, I want you to know that today's message is not about money per say. It's not about money or even our different financial situations, it's about something much deeper than that, something that is at the heart of how we view money and possessions.

In order to line that we're going to be in Philippians, chapter 4. So if you have a Bible go ahead and turn there, Philippians, chapter 4. And what we're going to be looking at here in Philippians, chapter 4 are some of Paul's last words. He is landing the plane. He is closing out this letter.

I was thinking earlier this week, "If this is me, if I'm in jail, penning a letter to some of my closest friends, how am I landing the plane? What am I'm saying?" I'm saying, "I'm innocent. Get me out of here. Send the best lawyer. Send Johnny Cochran right now. Right?"

I'm saying, "Hey. Appeal my case. Tell my friends and family members that I love them—some of my closest people who I care dearly about."

Paul doesn't say any of those things. He says something much different that I think that we can learn from. So, we're going to start in verse 10 and we're going to read through verse 13 right now. Here's what it says in Philippians, chapter 4, verse 10. Paul says:

"How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again. I know you have always been concerned for me, but you didn't have the chance to help me. Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have.

"I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength." Philippians 4:10-13 (NLT)



So a little context here. While Paul was in jail the Philippians said, “Hey, I wonder how our buddy is doing? Let’s actually show him how much we care about him. Let’s show him that we love him. We’re going to send Him some money.”

So, all of a sudden Paul gets a cash app notification for a couple a hundred dollars. No. What happens is the Philippians all put some of their money together and they sent it with this man named Epaphroditus, “Go and take this money to Paul. Tell him that we care about him. Tell him that we love him.” And these words, right here, this is Paul responding to that gift, that care package, that money that they sent.

And he starts out by saying, “Man, I am so happy. I praise God that you guys are concerned about me. He’s thanking them for being so generous. He’s saying, “Thank you for being so concerned about my welfare.”

But then he takes this turn. He says something a little bit unusual. I don’t know if you caught it. He says, “Not that I was ever in need.” Not that I was ever in need.—at first glance you’re starting to think, “Is Paul kind of saying to this church, ‘Hey, thanks but no thanks?’ I actually didn’t need that. So, yeah. I’m kind of good.”

Who says that when they are offered money? Parents, one of your kids ever said that when you offered them money? “Hey, thanks but no thanks. I’m good.” Never. They never say that.

It kind of reminds me of when I took my wife on our first date. We were in high school. And I took her on this romantic outing to Cracker Barrel. I had no money. She had lots of money according to high school standards. At the time she had a job. I didn’t. She was rolling in the dough.

But I said, “Hey, let’s go to Cracker Barrel. And I said, “You know what? Order anything you want. Get whatever. No. We’re not doing water. Get yourself a glass of orange juice. Throw some cheese on those eggs. Whatever you want. We’re ballin’ baby.”

And here’s what I know. I know in the back of her mind she was thinking, “Oh, how cute. This little boy thinks that I need his little money. Thanks but no thanks.”

You almost get that Paul is saying the same thing, “Hey, thanks but no thanks. I’m good.” That’s really not what Paul is saying here. He’s not being ungrateful. He’s not saying these words with pride. Paul is actually saying all of this stuff that is here to teach them a very, very important lesson. And it’s a lesson that you and I can learn as well. Look at what he says. He says, “I have learned how to be content with whatever I have.”

Paul is saying, “Man, I’m actually very grateful for the gift. I’m actually thankful that you have thought of me. I actually can use the money. Don’t get me wrong. But I’ve

cultivated my heart to be oriented around something different. Not be focused on what I do or don't have. I've been cultivating my heart to take this disposition that is centered on a state of being that is very, very different. I view money and possessions very, very differently than most people."

I think that is something that we can learn as well. But I think it is also important for us to know the history in which some certain, let me say faith streams of the church, have taught on money and possessions. This isn't the totality of how the church teaches it in general, but certain parts of it.

So you have what is called the prosperity gospel. Right? Where it's all about health and wealth and prosperity and God wants to bless your socks off and give you your heart's desire. Name it and claim it. Believe it and receive it. Alright? If you ever hear that—run. As fast as you can. Amen.

But then you have people who swing the pendulum all of the way to the other side. And they say, "Well, that's not true. God actually wants us to live a life of lack and to live an impoverished life and to endorse suffering so that we can become more dependent on Him. And I would say if you ever hear that, run as fast as you can.

Neither of those are true. Both of those two extremes actually take Scripture out of context and make them the whole counsel of the Bible, they are caricatures of what the Bible actually teaches.

And what we see, actually, in the Bible is that a life of joy a life of peace isn't found by pursuing all of our wants and desires and being healthy and wealthy. At the same time it is not to be intentionally living a life of poverty either. What we see, especially in Paul's words right here is that a life of joy is found in this statement of being right here:

Contentment

Contentment. A life of joy is found in contentment and I know that's not fun to hear. That is not fun at all. Actually, this is very hard for me. I don't want to be one of those preachers who get up here and act like I have it all together and that I don't struggle with anything. No. This is hard for me.

As I was studying for this sermon and preparing for this week, I almost texted Pastor Aaron and said, "Hey, can we switch weeks? Can you take this one? I can take Easter. I can preach the resurrection. I'll do that one, you do this one."

Contentment is hard. What's easy is actually:

Discontentment



And maybe you would say the same thing for you. Like, “Yeah, discontentment comes a little bit more naturally for me. That’s kind of my default position.” Discontentment is easier because we are surrounded by it.

Everything in our culture and everything in society is pulling us the opposite direction of contentment. You cannot watch a commercial without seeing a product or a service saying, “Hey, if you had this in your life, your life would be better.”

You cannot scroll through social media without comparing what you have with what somebody else has, where you are to where somebody else is. I mean the moment you get on Instagram it’s like, “They are on vacation. Again? In Turks and Caicos.”

“They just bought a new house with a four-car garage? Hold on. I know what she does for a living. How in the world are they affording that?” Keep scrolling. “She got engaged before me?” And then you leave a comment on the post, “Congrats! So happy for you.”

We’re discontent. But discontentment is not unique to our society. It’s not unique to recent generations. You can trace it all the way back to the Genesis narrative where God created everything. He created the heavens and the earth. He created the stars. He created the land, the birds, and the animals on the land. And at the pinnacle of His creation were human beings: Adam and Eve.

And God gives them two distinct things. He said, “I’m going to give them identity. I’m going to say, ‘Hey, let us make man in our image, we’re going to give them our likeness. Their identity is rooted in us.’”

And the other thing that He gives them is purpose. He said, “Hey, be fruitful and multiply. Reign over the earth. You have dominion over it. All of this is yours. You have access to everything that I have given you. Everything except this right here. This one tree. The Tree of Knowledge of good and evil.”

Then what happened? Well, Adam and Eve, they get the first ever recorded case of FOMO—fear of missing out—and they do the very thing that they are told not to do in an effort to get what they didn’t have. And what we see behind the very first sin was a desire for more. It was discontentment.

Satan’s first tactic to sabotage our relationship with God was discontentment. And it worked. And church, guess what? It’s still working. Today. Especially in the west. We take this approach of saying, “Hey, I am not okay with what I have. I am not satisfied with what I have.”

Oh, we never say that out loud. No, no, no. We would never say that out loud. That sounds greedy and that sounds ungrateful. So how do we phrase it? Well, "Just a little bit more. Just a little bit more and then I will have enough. Just a little bit more money. Just a little bit more space. Just a little bit more and then it's going to be enough."

Here's a question that I've had to wrestle with and because I wrestle with it I want you to wrestle with it as well.

What is enough?

Seriously, I want you to think about that. What is enough? How much is enough? Because I promise you, the moment you get the little more that you were asking for, the goal post just gets moved down the field. Your desires, they don't change. If anything, they get bigger. Your expenses increase. Inflation happens. Your family gets bigger so you need more space.

You end up visiting a friend's house that looks so much nicer than yours. And on the way home you're looking at your spouse like, "Did you see the backsplash in that kitchen? The marble countertops. Call the realtor right now. We're moving."

It's never enough. We become discontent. So what is enough? I think all of us have this opportunity to grapple with this reality right here. I say this all of the time:

"Enough" is a moving target.

It's constantly moving and we're constantly pursuing it trying to chase it and it only evades us. Enough is a moving target. You get the thing. You get the salary increase. You get the job promotion. You get the bigger house. It's not long before you're saying, "Okay, what's next? What is next?"

So we become obsessed with obtaining more only to become less fulfilled. It's kind of like what the great theologian John Mayer says in one of my all time favorite songs, *Gravity*. He says:

"Twice as much ain't twice as good and can't sustain like one half could. It's wanting more that's gonna send me to my knees."

Preach John. He said, "Twice as much ain't twice as good." The math ain't matching. It ain't equaling out. But then he says, "It's wanting more of these things that aren't fulfilling me that is ultimately going to drive me to my knees."

And in case that's not enough for you, or if you don't know who John Mayer is (we can talk after the service) the Bible is replete with the same message. It's filled with it.



Solomon, the son of King David... Solomon is the wisest and the richest person on the face of the earth. It's like Jeff Bezos' Hoop. Solomon has all of the riches and he comes to the end of his life and it's like, "It's not all that it's cracked up to be."

He writes these words at the end of his life in Ecclesiastes verse 5. He says: "Anyone who ever loves money, never has enough. Whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless." He would say, "It's like chasing the wind."

So I want us to know and notice what Solomon is not saying. He's not saying that having money is wrong. We say a lot of times that money is amoral. It's not good. It's not bad. Solomon is saying, "If you love money, you'll never have enough of it. And if you find your identity and security in your resources, you will do everything in your power to get more of them, or to keep from losing them."

I know people like that. I've been able to sit down with people in counseling, and trust me, money is not the problem. They have enough of it to go around. They've reached the success and they have the money. Money isn't the issue. Their focus has shifted from obtaining the money to maintaining it.

"How do I not lose this? How do I keep this? I can't lose it. I've climbed the mountain. I've got the recognition. I've gotten the respect I've always wanted from family and peers. I've made the money." But now maybe that's you and you're obsessing over doing everything in your power to ensure that it stays within your grasp. And if you're honest, it is exhausting. It is exhausting.

And here's the thing. It comes with a cost. It comes with a cost. And this is where Satan does his best work, because he is good at showing you the shiny toy, he's good at showing you the promotion, he's good at showing you the false promise of what could be—but what he's even better at is hiding the price tag. He's good at hiding what it's going to cost you. He's good at hiding how you're going to compromise, and the consequences of it. He's good at showing you what you're going to lose.

There is somebody in our church right now, I know this to be true, you're working so much, your marriage is on the brink of divorce. You're about to lose your family. You're losing your time. You're losing your morals and your ethics. You're losing your peace.

And Satan is dangling this carrot in front of you, but what he's hiding is the lack of peace and joy that will ultimately bring you down. It's like cotton candy. You get a taste of it and you're like, "Ah, what else have you got? What else have you got? I need something more."

So what Paul is ultimately saying here is something that all of us, you and I included can wrestle with. It's not about the things. The things aren't wrong:

It's not about what I have. It's about how I feel about what I have.

It's not about what I have. It's about how I feel about what I have. No matter what your financial situation is, this is true. If I feel that what God has provided is not enough then I'm going to constantly be spending my time reaching for more, chasing the myth that more is better.

Or, I'll develop this scarcity mentality. This scarcity mindset where I'll stress over wondering, "Do I have enough? Will it ever be enough?"

But hear me clearly. Contentment means appreciating what I do have even if I never get anything else because I know that Jesus has already done enough. Jesus has already done enough.

So Paul goes on to explain what contentment looked like for him, practically, in verse 12, Look at what he says. He says, "I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned this secret of living in every situation whether it is with a full stomach or an empty, with plenty or with little."

Church, this is Paul doubling down. This is him taking it to the two extremes of living. He says, "Man, I know what it is like to live with everything and I know what it is like living with absolutely nothing. Not only that, I'm going to have joy in both of those circumstances."

If I'm honest, that struck me. That struck me and I began to interrogate my own life and say, "Is that true of me? If I was to lose everything that I ever had, could I truly say, not the Sunday church answer, but could I truly say that I would be content? Could I truly say that I would have joy?"

And here's the question that I want to ask you too. If you were to lose everything materially, could you be content?

But I also want to acknowledge that for some people in our church, that's not an *if* statement. That's not a question. That's your reality right now. Right now you're walking through hard times. Right now you've lost some of the most significant aspects of your life.

And what I do not want to do is I do not want to diminish the struggle of what you're walking through and say, "Ah, just be content. Oh, just be grateful."

Poverty is not fun. I've seen it up close. I've seen people struggle. I've seen people cry themselves to sleep at night wondering how they are going eat the next day. Poverty is not fun. We cannot just say, "Just be content. Just be content."

Jesus did not do that. Jesus did not encounter people who were hurting and hungry and say, "Oh, just be grateful." No. What did Jesus do? He actually met their tangible needs. He helped to feed them and heal them and help to clothe them. And He told His disciples, "The things that you see Me doing? You go and do the very same thing."

And the disciples include you and me. That's why I'm so grateful for the work of this church and what we're doing to help meet people right where they are.

I'm so grateful for our outreach department that is mobilizing our church to make a difference in our city, especially in the impoverished areas of our city. And in a way that is not transactional, it's not like a one and done. It's relational and it's ongoing and it's done in a way to help bring people dignity and worth in the process.

I'm grateful for our benevolence department that helps people who are in need of financial assistance. I'm grateful for our many small groups who don't just show up once a week and say, let's study God's Word and that's it.

No, they actually get involved in the messiness of one another's lives. So when somebody falls on hard times, and is struggling financially, they are not just saying, "Man, that's tough bro. I'm praying for you." No they get down in the trenches with them and say, "Hey, bro. What do you need? We're here for you. We're not just fellow church members, we're brothers, we're sisters. How can we help you get through this very tough season?"

That's what the church is called to be and that's what the church in Philippi was doing for Paul. They were saying, "We know that you are in need. Let's actually help meet your tangible needs.

So if you are here and maybe you are struggling right now and money is tight and you've fallen on hard times or, honestly, you have lost everything. I want you to hear Paul's words clearly.

Paul is not saying that you cannot have ambition. Paul is not saying that you cannot get to a place of stability and that you should just be grateful for what you have and there is not a better type of life for you.

His words are meant to help you cling to the very person who promises to be with you, even in the darkest moments of your life. They are meant to give you hope and peace.

For all of us I think we cannot read that verse and also a verse that we'll look at here in a second without this takeaway right here:

Contentment is not natural. It's learned



Contentment does not come naturally. Contentment is something that is cultivated, that is learned over time.

What's natural? Discontentment. And those of you who have young kids, you know this to be true. Right?

My wife and I were privileged to take our kids to Disney World last week. Spent the whole day at Disney World. The very next morning they wake up and they are like, "Alright, Daddy. What's next?" And I'm like, "Whoa. Why don't you sit on this couch and let me practice this sermon on contentment with you. Can we do that?"

We have to teach them contentment. And guess what? It does not stop at childhood. We have to continue to learn contentment throughout our growth process.

And I don't know if you caught it. Paul alludes to this as a secret. He says, "I've learned the secret of enduring every situation." Well, what's the secret Paul? Don't hold out on us. Tell us. Well, if you keep reading in verse 13 he says what it is. He says:

"For I can do everything through Christ," everything through Christ, "who gives me strength." Philipians 4:13 (NLT)

Now this is a verse that we all know and we think of Philipians. Right? I mean you don't have to be a believer in Jesus to have seen this verse. You've probably seen it on a coffee mug or a t-shirt or somebody got a tattoo of it.

You probably saw it a couple of years ago on this guy's face, Tim Tebow. He's the one who really made it, not popular, but people saw this and they turned it into this triumphal thing like, "Yeah, I can do everything."

And Tim Tebow really believed that, almost to the point where he took it to the extreme. He really thought he could do everything through Christ, which led him to kind of make this move right here [cocky stance with arms spread wide]. "You can do everything but you can't do that to me."

No, but what happens is, we know the verse, we know the verse but do we truly know what it means? What it's not—it's not a war cry, a battle cry, "God is with me in everything and I can conquer everything through Him." That's not necessarily wrong, it's just incomplete.

Here's what Paul is saying by that verse. He's saying, "The secret to living a life of contentment is living a life with Jesus." That's what the secret is. That's how you live a life of contentment.

And I want to live a life through Jesus. That word *through* in the Greek, it's almost this word that means to rest in something. To be tethered to it. To be connected to it so deeply that you're being shaped by it, that you're formed by it.

So, when this is the posture that we take with Jesus, He strengthens us. He strengthens us to endure all of life's circumstances with contentment, because it's only by staying connected to Jesus that I'm able to live the life that He has called me to live. So Paul's like, "I'm staying connected to Him, because through Him I can do everything."

And Jesus would actually say something very, very similar in John, chapter 15. He would say to his disciples:

"Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do," what? Say it with me. "nothing." John 15:5b (NLT)

He's saying the same thing. He just kind of inverted it. You can do everything through Me. It's also, "If you get disconnected from Me, apart from Me you can do absolutely nothing." And Jesus would say, "In light of that, remain in Me. Abide in Me."

And that word *abide* I love it because it means to dwell in, very similar to Paul's word *through*. We have been called to abide in Jesus.

This goes back to Ryan's message a couple of weeks ago when he talked about apprenticeship. I don't know if you remember that, we apprentice our lives to Jesus, we get up under Him and we learn. That's what a disciple is. It's an apprentice, it's a learner.

And so, I'm apprenticing my life to Jesus. He is shaping me more and more into His image—shaping my character. And I'm so intimately connected with Him that not only does my character grow, but my faith grows too.

I'm no longer walking in my own power, I'm walking in the power of Jesus. The strength that I need to be content in all circumstances comes from my surrender to my Savior because I know who my Savior is.

The strength that I need to endure when I go through hard times is not because I'm strong, it's because He is. And I know that He is with me. And I know that apart from Jesus, I can do absolutely nothing. That's what this verse means. I'm so connected to Him that even as I walk through the dark times, I'm modeling contentment.

So what does it look like for us to abide in Jesus? As I'm studying God's Word that means that I'm not coming to the Word asking, "Hey, God. What's in it for me? God, what do you have for me?" A lot of times we can do that. We can put ourselves at the center of the narrative, at the center of Scripture.

The Bible is not about you. The Bible story includes you, but it's not about you. So as I read Scripture, here's what I'm saying. I'm saying, "God, help me to know more of You. God, help me to know Your character. Help me to know who You are. And in light of who You are, I now see who I am. And I also see who I am not."

So I'm abiding in Jesus and I'm saying, "Hey, help me learn more about You." I'm reading the gospels and I'm saying, "This is how Jesus interacted, this is how He treated people, this is how truthful He was. But this is also how gracious He was at the very same time." And then I go out and I ask the Holy Spirit to help me model that in real time.

I'm abiding in Jesus in my prayer life. And when I pray to God, I'm not asking for my desires to be met, I'm taking a very different posture and I'm saying, "God, help Your desires to become my desires." That's what it means to abide in Jesus.

That's how we live this life of contentment by staying connected to Jesus. It moves us from being at the center and lets God be at the center and saying, "Okay, because you are at the center, I'm content."

But if that's not enough then I want to give a few practical ways that we can model contentment. And all of this comes out of really abiding in Jesus. So maybe you want to write these down or take a picture of them—if not all of them, you pick a couple of them and say, "You know what? That's a growth area for me. I'm going to strive to abide in Jesus in that way."

So here are four of them. Here's the first one:

Abiding in Jesus helps us to establish reasonable standard of living.

Abiding in Jesus helps us to establish reasonable standards of living. And we can read that and we can be, "Alright, Kyle. What's reasonable? That's kind of subjective." And I get it. I would say this. Are you living within your means or are you living beyond your means?

There was a question that was asked to me years ago when it comes to this and it stuck with me ever since. It's convicted me so now I want to throw it out to you.

If Jesus was overseeing my personal budget, how would He manage my money? If Jesus was overseeing my finances, how would He spend my money? How would He give my money? How would He store, even save, my money?

That's a question all of us can wrestle with. And maybe you're first step is, "I don't even have a budget." So maybe that's where you start. And then say, "Okay, God. What have You given me? How can I live within the means that You have allowed me to have?"

Because it's all Yours to begin with. So I'm going to tithe, I'm going to give sacrificially, and I'm going to be generous."

Which leads to the next one:

Abiding in Jesus helps us to enjoy the habit of giving.

He helps us to enjoy the habit of giving. We all can take this posture where we say, "You know what? It's not mine to begin with." And it breaks the power of money over our lives. We say, "Because God gave everything for me including His One and Only Son, I'm going to give as well. That's going to inform the way that I steward my finances."

So we give. We give. We give sacrificially. We don't give foolishly but we don't give selfishly at the very same time.

Here's the third one:

Abiding in Jesus helps us to express gratitude.

It helps us to express gratitude. No matter your financial situation, this is something that each and every one of us can do—be grateful for what we do have.

And maybe your first step is, "I'm going to start a gratitude journal where every day I'm just going to write down one or two things that I'm grateful for. Things that I do have. Things that I can really appreciate."

And maybe you do it on a granular, minute level. Don't be afraid to get seemingly small, "I'm thankful for the friendships that I do have." "I'm thankful for the family You have given me."

"God, I'm thankful for the job. If I'm honest, I don't like it but I'm grateful for it. It provides a means of income and I'm going to steward it well. I'm going to show up on time and I'm going to be faithful with what You have given me."

"God, thank You for the living environment that I do have. It's not the most lavish thing, but it's something. It's more than what many people have."

"God, thank You for the food that is on my table." "God, thank You for the ability to be able to provide food that goes into my body."

That's something that I've tried to live out myself. I'll be in Costco placing a whole case of water in my cart and I'm like, "Thank you. Thank you for the water. God, thank You for what You have given me. Thank you for these crackers."

“God, thank You,” as I’m paying for a meal. “God, thank You for the means to be able to provide this meal for my family.”

All of us can express gratitude that doesn’t focus on what we don’t have but helps us to focus on what we do.

Here’s the last one:

Abiding in Jesus helps to eliminate worry.

Some of us are so burdened by worry, “What if it is all taken from me?” “What if I lose this?” “What if I lose my job?” “What if this next paycheck doesn’t come through?”

And abiding in Jesus helps us to develop this trust and this faith that God sees me, He cares about me.

He cares for the lilies and the sparrows. How much more, how much more does He see you and how much more does He love you? How much more will He provide for you? Knowing that God takes care of them, I know that He is going to provide for me also.

So I don’t have to worry. I don’t have to constantly be checking the stock market and my bank account and my check register—do you still use one of those things?

I don’t have to be bogged down with worry. Why? Because I know that God is going to take care of me. It’s the very thing that Paul would say later on in this letter to the Philippians. Look at what he says in verse 19. He says:

“And this same God who takes care of me will supply all of your needs from His glorious riches which have been give to us in Christ Jesus.”

“This same God, this same God who takes care of me, who has taught me how to be content no matter what I have, He is also going to take care of you.”

He’s going to supply all of your wants? No, no. no. All of your what? All of your needs from His glorious riches which are ultimately found in who? Come on church, ultimately found in who? Christ Jesus.

Church, we have been given everything that we need in Christ Jesus. He has given us everything. He has given us all we need. We don’t need to run to find joy and fulfilment in anything else. God has given it all to us in His Son, Jesus. He went to a cross and He rose from a grave so that we could experience the life that God has always wanted us to live. A life where our identity, our purpose, and our provision are all found in Him. Every single bit of it.

Which begs the question, why are we looking at everything else to bring us fulfillment? Why are we running to the things that ultimately leave us with the cotton candy? Why are we running to these things that only continue to leave a void in our hearts?

And God would ask the very same thing to His people. There is a beautiful verse in Isaiah, chapter 55 where God is speaking through the prophet to His people who are wrestling with the very same things—they are chasing after all of these things that are not substantial. And God would say this:

“Is anyone thirsty? Come and drink—even if you have no money! Come, take your choice of wine or milk—it’s all free. Why spend your money on food that does not give you strength? Why pay for food that does you no good. Listen to me, and you will eat what is good. You will enjoy the finest food. Come to me with your ears wide open.”

Oh, I love that, it’s almost like what we prayed for at the beginning of service.

“Listen and you will find life. I will make an everlasting covenant with you.” Isaiah 55:1-3 (NLT)

Church, is anyone thirsty? Is anyone here tired of living a life of discontentment? Is anyone here feeling a void that is in your heart and you’re chasing after the job, you’re chasing after the money, you’re chasing after the attention and the recognition. Anybody realize, “You know what? This is not all that it’s cracked up to be. It keeps me coming back for more and more.”

This whole time God is saying, “No, no, no. Come to Me. Stop chasing the fabricated forms of fulfillment and come to Me. I’m the real thing.”

It reminds me... A couple of years ago I took my family down to Atlanta to visit my brother. And while we were there we went to the Georgia Aquarium. Phenomenal place. Phenomenal place. And throughout the aquarium they had these interactive elements, these touch screens that you can actually go up and touch and learn about... They are often right next to the actual exhibit.

So my daughters would spring up to every one of these touch screens every time we went to a new exhibit. And they were like, “Whoa, so cool.” And they would touch it and they were like, “Oh, that’s awesome.” And they would find their fingers and look at all of these things that tell about the fish and where they live and how big they are and all of these different specificities of the fish.

And they were like, “Daddy. Daddy, come look. Come look. Look at this shark.” And I was like, “Baby, there is a real shark right here. Look at it. This is the real thing.”



And in a way, in a way, that is exactly what God is saying, “I’m the real thing. You’re running after all of these things and you’re thinking that they are exciting, you’re thinking that they are going to bring you joy and peace and fulfillment. But what you are ultimately longing for, the thing that you are looking for is ultimately found in Me.”

The same way that He said in Isaiah 55, “How much longer, how much longer are you going to chase after these things when ultimately what You are looking for can only be found in Me?” He’s giving this invitation to salvation and saying, “You come to Me and those longings will be fulfilled.”

Jesus would say, “If anybody drinks from this living water, they will never be thirsty again.” Jesus would say, “Hey, come to Me all who are burned out and weary and heavy burdened and I will give you rest. You’re striving for all of these things and you’re left with discontentment. Contentment can only be found in Me.”

I just want to ask today, what are you abiding in? Who are your abiding in? Because if it’s not Jesus then it’s falling short. And you can come in here and you can play church and you can sing the songs and you can serve—all meaningful things.

But at the end of the day if you have a vibrant, interactive relationship with God who is saying, “No. I give you everything that you need. That’s where true contentment actually is because I designed you. I created you. And I created you with what only I can provide for you and what you are longing for—the contentment that is in your heart that you are seeking can only be found in My presence.”

So I want to invite everyone at all of our campuses to stand to our feet. We’re going to enter into a time of worship again. We’re going to sing that song that we sang at the very top of service, *Gratitude*, and I want us to sing it like we mean it. I want us to sing it like we know that the only thing, the only person that we need is Jesus—that we are grateful for all that He’s done. We’re grateful for who He is, the sacrifice that He has made.

And I’m going to pray and as I come out of prayer we’re going to enter into this time of worship. But I want us to worship in Spirit and in truth. So join me as we pray.

Father, we thank You. God, we thank You for who You are. God, we thank You that You went to great length, the length of giving Your Son, Jesus, for us, who lived a life that we could never live and died the death that we deserved to die so that we could have a relationship with You.

And, ultimately, that satisfaction that we are looking for, that contentment that we are looking for, Father, I pray that You’d get our eyes not horizontal, but You’d get our eyes vertical to be able to see You for who You are.



God, I pray that You would help us to abide in You. That we would remain tethered and connected to You so that we're not focused on what we don't have but we actually see what we do have and we appreciate it. That we see You in all of Your glory and we know that even if we never get another thing, who You are and what You've already done is enough.

Today we express our hearts of gratitude. We're grateful for who You are. We're grateful for all that You have done. And I pray that if there are some wrestling with that today, Lord, that today would be the day that they would have an encounter with Your Spirit who begins to change them from the inside out and You would tell them, "Hey, I'm the real thing. I am all that you need."

Jesus, we thank You, we love You, we praise You. It's in your perfect and precious name that we pray. Amen.

