



Series: Living Life Backward

Sermon: Part 7: Joyless Living

Date: Sunday, June 18th, 2023

Christians can complain about their life or circumstances and they can even complain about God.

When we freely complain, it not only reveals our ungratefulness for what has been provided, but it strikes at the heart of _____ because He is good and only wants what is best for us even if we don't see it yet.

So if a person lives many years, let him rejoice in them all; but let him remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is vanity. (Ecclesiastes 11:8)

Knowing who God is, knowing what He has done for us, and knowing that our life has meaning because He is in our lives, well that is reason to _____.

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. Remove vexation from your heart, and put away pain from your body, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity. (Ecclesiastes 11:9-10)

When we _____ such pain, losses, and feelings year after year, we become empty shells walking around with smiling masks over them.

The more joyful we _____ to be in God, the more like God we become.

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 in them..." (Ecclesiastes 12:1)

Sin keeps us tied down in bondage, so the longer we are away from God, the _____ it is to come back to Him.

Before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain... (Ecclesiastes 12:2)

Ecclesiastes 12:3-5: In the day when the keepers of the house tremble... (Arms and hands begin to go weak and tremble) and the strong men are bent... (Legs and knees begin to weaken, sag, and bend)



and the grinders cease because they are few... (Teeth begin falling out) and those who look through the windows are dimmed, and the doors on the street are shut—when the sound of the grinding is low... (Eyes have trouble seeing and hearing begins to lessen) and one rises up at the sound of a bird... (It is harder to sleep) and all the daughters of song are brought low... (Music becomes harder to hear and less appreciated) they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way... (Become more and more fearful) the almond tree blossoms... (Hair begins turning white) the grasshopper drags itself along... (Walking becomes difficult) and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets... (Realization of the lack of importance of life priorities in light of eternity)

Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity. (Ecclesiastes 12:8)

Knowing that life is meaningless without being in an intimate relationship with God, that reality should motivate us to seek God first in all we do.

How we live _____ will determine if we are joyful and fulfilled or if we are resentful and bitter in our old age.

“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” (John 15:10–11)

“Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again, rejoice.” (Philippians 4:4)

Bottom Line: *The more joyful we choose to be in God, the more like God we become.*

Questions to reflect on this week or with others:

1. Whatever stage you are in, are you enjoying that stage of your life now?
2. Do the people around me think I am joyful? Are people around me drawn to God because of my joy in the midst of difficult circumstances?
3. Knowing that joy is something that we have to choose, what steps can you take to begin experiencing true joy that can only come from God?

Songs used in service: Good Good Father (Chris Tomlin), It Is Well With My Soul (Horatio Spafford), Jireh (Maverick City Music & Elevation Worship), Thank You (Mike Marshall)

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Any prayer requests?

Name: _____ **Email (so we can follow up):** _____

What can we be praying for you about?