

I. ME

- A. Welcome
- B. Series
 - 1. All becoming something/someone different.
 - 2. Let's choose on purpose who and what we will be.
 - 3. What we did as church... chose 5 values
 - 4. Can help transform individuals and communities

II. WE

- A. Most of us have some kind of picture of who/what we want to be in 5 years
 - 1. One thing that we probably all have in common... all the things we want to have and be have in common...
 - 2. Happiness.
 - 3. We all want to be happy.
 - 4. Typed in "How to Be..." Top auto-fill answer? Happy.
- B. **The pursuit of happiness is behind almost every decision we make.**
 - 1. Why that outfit?
 - 2. Why that spouse/school/meal/exercise routine?
 - 3. Why wars are fought... we want your stuff b/c it'll make us happy/ we want our freedom b/c it'll make us happy.
 - 4. It's the motivation behind good choices... eating healthy so we feel good and live longer to enjoy happiness
 - 5. And it's the motivation behind bad choices... I think THIS will make me happy NOW so I'll buy it, take it, drink it, smoke it, sleep with it, get rid of it.
- C. Nothing wrong with wanting to be happy...
 - 1. **God wants us to be happy.**

- D. Problem is most of us don't really understand what happiness is...
 - 1. We think of life and our pursuit of happiness like **rolling hills**.
 - 2. Happy means you have more highs than lows
 - 3. Stay on the highs as long as possible
 - a. Make dumb choices that we think we get us there or keep us there
 - 4. Do whatever you can to avoid the lows
 - a. Avoid anything that might be painful/avoid anyone whose pain might affect us/ etc.
 - 5. But that's not really how life works... it's never just high or just low...
- E. Life is more like **train tracks**
 - 1. On one side of the tracks are all the good things that bring beauty, pleasure, and contentment.
 - 2. But at the same time on the other side are things that bring pain, hurt, disappointment.
 - 3. We are in the middle of both at the same time
 - 4. That's why you can be in the middle of something great and still feel like something is missing.
 - 5. Or you can be having the best day ever and have it come crashing down in a moment.
 - 6. **Example**- playing with kids but being mad about the house.
- F. But this is the reality where God works...
 - 1. **Real life is simultaneously painful and beautiful.**
 - 2. And he says that we can be happy in that daily, messy, collision.
 - 3. And it's a happiness that can affect those around us...
 - 4. It's what we are calling Contagious Joy.
- G. Paul talks about how this works in Philippians.

III. GOD (Philippians 4:4-7)

A. Paul

1. Philippi (Named after Phillip II of Macedonia_ Alexander's Dad)- Colony of retired soldiers
2. First European City in which Paul preached
3. 60 AD
4. In prison facing possibility of being executed... yet shows us how he chose joy.
5. Talking to a group of Jesus-Followers
6. Not J-F? Kind of listening in on the "secret stuff"
7. You'll be able to try some of it too, if you want

B. V. 4

1. Command- "Always be joyful. Always be rejoicing"
2. "That's dumb"- how do you command feelings?
 - a. "Don't be sad"
3. Somehow- **Joy is a choice**
4. Ok choose your attitude maybe...
5. BUT "Always?!"
 - a. Even in horrible times?
6. Misunderstanding has made a lot of people leave church.
 - a. It's not saying sadness is a sin (**Mental health and depression**)
 - b. It's not fake it til you make it
 - c. It's not ignore your circumstances and just sing Christian songs
 - d. It's not avoiding pain and people who are hurting by giving them pat answers and out of context Bible verses.
7. What Paul is talking about is happiness that stares pain in the face, accepts life for what it is, and yet can still choose joy.
8. How is that possible?
9. **Secret- "In the Lord"**

10. The joy that Paul is telling them to choose is based solely on and in Jesus.
 - a. If you are a Jesus Follower- you know that no matter what circumstance you are in, Jesus is in it with you.
 - b. Might sound trite... but it's not... it's powerful.
 - c. **Trust is the foundation of joy.**
11. **Jesus**- the one who conquered death, the one through whom everything was made and through whom everything holds together... is with you IN the middle of whatever you are in.
12. AND... he has proven that he loves you unconditionally and will die for what is good for you.
13. You can trust him.
14. Is it always fun? No
15. But in him you can have peace and choose joy b/c it's based not on your circumstance but who is with you in it.
16. It's not a happiness that depends on you trying to grasp as many highs as possible... therefore it's secure, it's unlimited and it can be shared and spread...

C. V. 5

1. **Joy leads to peace with others.**
2. B/c you have this joy that doesn't depend on your circumstances or your control... you are free to yield your personal rights for the better of others.
3. Other people don't become obstacles to your happiness b/c...
4. You don't have to fight for your happiness. What you think you need or want.
 - a. Respect, possessions, reputation
5. Your joy comes from knowing who you are and where all good things come from.
6. And you can be patient... b/c the Lord is near... the time is coming when everything will be set right.
7. But still... how do we DO this??

D. V. 6-7

1. Prayer.
2. **Prayer sustains joy.**
3. Prayer is weird.
 - a. All-knowing, all-powerful God, yet we are told to ask.
 - b. Being honest with God AND ourselves about what we want
 - c. Aligning ourselves with his heart.
4. Not just, "Oh God please! If you don't then everything is over!"

5. Not apathy or inaction
 - a. Good to make plans and work toward goals.
 - b. But in your action, in your choices, align yourself with his ultimate good.
 - c. Acknowledge that we really aren't in control.
6. Trusting that he knows what he is doing... and choosing to thank him for that and what he has done.
7. **In every situation we can either choose... Why me? Or Thank you!**
8. That trust will produce a peace that will guard your anxious heart and your overactive mind.

IV. YOU

- A. Might be cheesy- let's use the train analogy again...
- B. Joy is the result of trusting the conductor and which window you choose to look out of.
- C. **Who do you trust and where are you looking?**
- D. You are on the train of life... There is a **conductor**, someone moving this thing forward... do you trust him?
 1. Often we try to conduct the train ourselves with a little toy steering wheel... and get so angry, so exhausted, so anxious...
 2. That's why we tend to take ourselves so seriously... we can roll with the punches b/c we are so busy with our steering wheel...
 3. **Example-** Stern Kids in the grocery cart
 4. We think it all depends on us... we refuse to trust that there is a conductor who knows what he is doing.

5. "Well I wouldn't have chosen take that turn at that speed!"- Probably not and you would have wrecked the whole thing.
6. Choose to trust the conductor

E. Train again-

1. Out one side is everything that brings pain, hurt, sadness...
2. The other is beauty, contentment, peace
- 3. Which window will you focus on?**
4. Which window will you use to filter your journey?
5. Looking out the joy window does not mean the other side isn't there, it doesn't mean you're pretending not to see it... it means you are choosing what you will focus on. What you will dwell on, what you will define your life by.
6. It's your choice.

F. Every morning this week try this prayer...

- 1. God help me trust you.**
- 2. Help me see the good you have given me**
- 3. Thank you.**

G. Watch what happens.

1. You will find a weird happiness that always fights its way through the darkness of life.
2. You will bring happiness to others by choosing not to take yourself and your wants so seriously
3. You will learn to be content with what God has given you.

H. This happiness/joy is offered to everyone.

1. John 10:10

2. You simply have to choose to trust that God loves you enough to have come and died for you.

I. Prayer for those who want to trust.

V. WE

- A. Life is a messy collision of pain and joy.
- B. God is ready to meet us right in the midst of all of it.
- C. What if you didn't have to stress about every decision you needed to make?
- D. What if you didn't feel like you had to fight for what you deserve?
- E. What if you didn't have to take yourself so seriously?
- F. Would you be happier?
- G. Would the people around you be happier?
- H. It's what happens for anyone who chooses trust and thankfulness.
- I. Because of Jesus...
- J. We can enjoy real happiness in the middle of real life.**