

What Would it Take?

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Good morning, Lighthouse! Are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

It seems that most everyone is looking for happiness, but finding that real, lasting happiness is very hard to come by.

One would think that with so many unhappy people in the world, that perhaps unhappiness is God's will.

Just the opposite is true!

1 John 1:4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

God dedicated a whole book in His Word to our happiness!

What would it take to be truly happy?

I did a Google search in preparation for today's message to see what were the top things that people believed would bring them genuine happiness.

I found an interesting quote from a contemporary author by the name of Dan Gilbert who said:

"We treat our future selves as though they were our children, spending most of the hours of most of our days constructing tomorrows that we hope will make them happy..."

Most people have the same wrong ideas about what will make them happy. Here are the supposed top five:

'If only I could make a lot of money, I think I would be really happy.'

'If only I could travel and escape this life I am stuck in, I would be really happy.'

'I think if I was famous, I would be really happy.'

Some thought that if only we could get the right people in office, we could be really happy.

One person said, "If only I could find someone who would love me and cook and keep the house clean, then I would be really happy." (And as far as we know, she still hasn't found him).

What would you put in this blank this morning?

If only I could _____ then I would be really happy.

A couple of weeks ago I pointed out to you that most pastors, and the pastors leading the greatest numbers of followers, thousands in many cases, are all telling you to do virtually the same thing to be saved; by praying some version of something called a 'Sinner's Prayer'.

Many of you here today, after praying as instructed with no change taking place, were later taught 1) what the Bible really says and 2) what it really means to believe; by an unknown Pastor in an obscure Church in South Texas and you now know you are going to heaven; you now know you really are born again!

And now that unknown preacher in South Texas is presuming to tell you how to be truly happy.

Why would anyone listen? Well, I can't answer that. I suspect that most will not listen or take it to heart.

Most won't, but some of you will...and you are the ones God is sending this message to today.

So, for those of you willing to listen, here we go...

I promise you that with one exception regarding whatever you put in your blank, there is someone who has accomplished or received what you are wishing for and they still are not happy!

There is but one thing you can put in your blank that will indeed bring about real happiness; want to hear it?

"If only I could fulfill the purpose for which God created me, then I would be really happy."

To say it another way: "If only I can be what God created me to be, then I'll be happy."

In more than 70 years, the only truly happy people I've ever met are those people who are actually accomplishing what God created them to do and to be.

Isaiah 43:7.... for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

I can say this with authority and firsthand knowledge because I am one of those happy people.

What is even more beautiful is that everyone in the sound of my voice can be one of those happy people, too, if only you are willing to receive and act upon the truths you are about to hear!

In order to be what God created you to be and to experience the fulfillment and happiness that comes with it, first of all:

I. You must be born again!

A. Sin has destroyed your potential to be what God created you to be and that has to be dealt with first.

1. **Romans 5:6** For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

2. Because of your sin you do not have the strength necessary to accomplish your life's purpose, because you are just as the Bible says you are, "ungodly".

3. The most "godly" looking person here today is still just a sinner, for as **Romans 3:23** declares, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"! Here is the standard Gentile condition prior to salvation:

4. **Ephesians 2:12** That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

5. Folks without hope and without God in the world have no chance at happiness whatsoever!

B. When we understand the gospel and we place our trust in Christ to save us from our sins, we are re-created internally and eternally in the image and power of God.

1. **Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

2. **Ephesians 2:1** And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

3. Because of our sin, every one of us either was or still is "dead in sins."

4. My spirit which was "dead in sins" was made alive, "quickened", "born again", when I trusted Jesus to save me over forty-five years ago.

5. The death, the burial and resurrection of the only perfect One who knew no sin; God Himself, in the body of a man, was enough to pay for my debt of sin in full!

6. Jesus died in my place, and because He is God, He died in your place, too!

7. When I trusted Him to save me, the life that Jesus lived was credited to me as a free gift - and now I stand before God as one who is alive in spirit, in-dwelt by the Holy Spirit, and now I have strength; and by His power I am now able to fulfill my purpose.

C. There is still a problem however:

1. Being saved alone does not in itself make you happy.
2. Just being saved does not mean that you are fulfilling your purpose.
3. Just being saved and headed to heaven does not automatically mean you will experience fulfillment and joy in this life.
4. I know some saved people who are very unhappy; that should not be the case, but sadly, it is.
5. Salvation does not guarantee you will be happy, but you cannot be happy without it!

II. For you who are saved, if you want to be happy, you must make some new choices!

A. It is by the choices that we Christians make that God is either glorified or dishonored in our lives.

1. **Joshua 24:15** ...choose you this day whom ye will serve; ...as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. Joshua was living for Jesus, not Joshua!
2. Just who are you serving?
3. Americans, by-in-large, do virtually everything they do in their own self-interest.
4. It wasn't always that way.
5. "Yeah, I know he supports abortion, but he is going to send me a stimulus check."
6. Jesus wasn't acting in his own self-interest when he laid down His life for my sins.
7. Real servants of the Lord do not live for their own self-interest.
8. And while we are on the subject, true public servants are not in it for their own self-interest; good luck finding one of those today.
9. I promise you this, if you live for your own self-interest the way most of America does, you may have a lot of stuff, but you will be among the most unhappy people on this planet!

B. The choices that glorify God must be real.

1. "I choose Christ over the Devil."
2. "I choose Christ over dishonesty."

3. "I choose Christ over drugs and alcohol."

4. "I choose Christ over depending on the government."

C. Those kinds of choices are obvious and right; but not enough.

1. The choices that bring God glory are when we choose Christ over ourself.

2. Listen to Jesus in

Luke 9:23 And he said to *them* all, If any man will come after me, let him **deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.**

3. As you can see by the Lord's statement, this is something that continues on a daily basis.

4. Every day is filled with choices that either glorify God or rob Him of His glory.

5. Someone I know just got two job offers:

a. One was with a major corporation with good pay, lots of benefits and some Sundays off.

b. The other was with a small family-owned business; decent pay, less benefits and all Sundays off.

6. A choice like this is a no-brainer for a true servant.

7. Some of these choices are harder than others; I noticed that Deer Season opens on Sunday this year!

III. Our choices that glorify God the most are not just passive, they are active!

A. Often, we think we are living Christian lives when we don't swear much, we don't cheat our neighbor and we are not drug addicts or drunks.

1. All good, but still not enough; ask yourself:

2. What are you actually doing for His glory?

3. How faithfully are you doing it?

4. And how are you going about it?

5. The Bible states without apology in

Ephesians 3:21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

6. Bringing God glory as a working, functioning part of one of His churches is how the Bible says it is to be done.

7. How do we love an invisible God?

8. We don't have to figure that out: God says we are loving Him when we love each other.

9. How do we serve an invisible Christ?

10. We don't have to figure that out either;; this Church is the Body of Christ!

B. Time, talent and treasure is what God has given every one of us to work with; all in different and oftentimes changing measure.

1. The real question comes down to this: How many of us are spending the first and best of those three on ourselves instead of on God?

2. Is that sin?

3. Yes, you know that it is; it is robbing God of His glory.

4. But it is worse than that; if only you could see what blessings God has for those who live to bring Him glory!

5. And worse yet, you will never be happy!

In Conclusion:

Some come to Church when they don't have something better to do, and some of us come to Church because **there is nothing better to do!**

Psalm 144:15 ... *happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.*

Who is your god this morning?

Isn't your god who or what you put first?

I cannot see your heart, and the Bible tells us that our heart is so deceitful that we cannot even know it ourselves.

But there are some ways to tell:

One way you can tell is by looking in your checkbook to see who you spend the first and best of your treasure on.

Another way you can tell is by looking at your day planner to see who gets the first and best of your time.

Another way to tell is to look and see what you are doing with the areas of ability in which you excel.

God wants you happy! The only way that is going to happen is when you are fulfilling the purpose for which you were created.

This life is too short to spend it unhappy!