

Why we long for happiness?

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Date: 19 October 2025

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[0:00] The topic that I was given is, have you ever wondered why we long for happiness?! Have you ever wondered why we long for happiness? And already you may be wondering what I'm going to say about this.

What does the Bible have to say about happiness? And it's a fairly intricate and complex subject for a Sunday evening. And as I was preparing this week, I had to flow this week, so I wasn't in the best of conditions.

And as I was lying in my bed with my head pounding and my body aching, I thought, well, this is a topic that is not one that I want to be thinking about. How do I long for happiness? I was certainly longing for happiness this week.

But as I went down the rabbit hole, as it were, of what the Bible says about happiness, that you realize it's actually not a rabbit hole, it's a whole warren.

There's a word from worship down, if you can remember that from your high school days. It's a whole warren about what the Bible says about happiness. Now, I've chosen the passage that we have read tonight from Philippians chapter 4.

[1:08] And you might find, you might have already picked up on the clue about where we're going with this. But let me just dive into a question for you.

So, have you ever wondered why we long for happiness? Now, Nelson, not Samuel, but Nelson Rockefeller once asked, he said this, they asked him this, how much money does it take to make a person happy?

And I'm sure this has actually been put on the screen here in Brunswick before. But his answer famously was this, just a little bit more. And I think this frank response gives us an insight into the human soul.

We are tempted to think that we'd be happy with just a little bit more. But I think actually we'd be tempted to admit that for many of us, it's actually going to be a lot more to make us happy if we were to truly answer that question.

Let me share another rather shameful and shallow but true story of a conversation that I had over 20 years ago. So, I was in a group of friends, Christian friends, and we were talking salaries.

[2:20] I don't know if that's a taboo subject, but we were talking salaries. And I had just come from a very meagre salary. I was earning 5,000 pounds, 100 pounds a week. And I sat in a new job and I was earning 10,000 pounds.

And I said, in that company, I said, you know what, I think I'd be comfortable if I was earning 30,000 pounds. And I was kind of mocked at the time because the average age, believe it or not, in 2004, the average wage was 22,000 pounds.

That's the average wage in the UK. And here was me saying, well, I'd be comfortable if I earned 30,000 pounds. Well, it's not long. 30,000 pounds comes and goes and you realise that maybe you need double or triple that.

And then that comes and goes and, well, you could keep going down that route, right? And that is probably a shameful story for me, just to repeat that.

But that was a conversation that we had over 20 years ago. But what would it make, what would it take to make you happy? You see, I don't think the question of do you want to be happy is a difficult question for us to answer.

[3:30] It's a self-answering question in a sense. But the more tricky question is this. What would it take to make you happy? You know, the lie, the lie, I would be happy if.

And it's not really a new thing, is it? It's the same lie that the serpent whispered to Eve in the garden saying, yes, you know, you would be happy if you ate off that forbidden fruit. And it's the same empty lies that he uses today.

You know, I'd be happy if I had a better job. I'd be happy if I had more money. I'd be happy if I had a bigger house. I'd be happy if I had a partner.

Or I'd be happy if that partner treated me better. I might be happy if I had a different partner. I might be happy if I had a child. Maybe I've had two children. You know, and it's, I would be happy if.

And it is always just out of reach. You know, we humans always seem to think that we want what we cannot actually have. Though in many cases, in many senses, we've actually already got what we wanted.

[4:38] But our, our, our, I'd be happy if moves, the goalpost moves very, very quickly. You know, that's true with jobs. It's true with houses.

It's true with talents. And as I say, maybe even very often with spouses. And I shouldn't say that in a Christian context. But if we want to look at this question from a worldly point of view, then that would be the case.

You know, the job never seems to be enough. The ideal job just seems to be slightly out of our grasp. Or it is just not available. You know, the house never seems to be big enough.

Or not in the right location. Or it's not quite one that we want. We might recognise even the talents that we've been given. And that we have. But there's just this niggling envy about somebody else's abilities.

And you just need to look at divorce rates in this country to notice that there is always something that we're looking for more in marriage. And that is quite a sad place to be.

[5:41] You know, the problem is made worse, I think, by the fact that we think that if we had the right job or the right house or the right skills or the right partner, then we'd be happy and content. But these things are always just out of our reach.

And so is contentment. Or so the world's wisdom would have us believe. The search for happiness based on our circumstances in life creates this restlessness and this discontent in our souls.

And that brought me on to thinking about this passage that we read tonight. And I'm just going to reread it because you might just see where we're going to go with this. And in verse 10 it says this, I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me.

You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I'm speaking of being in need. For I have learned in whatever circumstance I am to be content. I know how to be brought low.

And I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.

[6:49] And I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Well that's the Apostle Paul. He testifies that he has learned to be content in any and every circumstance.

His is not a constant search for the right circumstances that will bring him happiness. He is content wherever he is. But that's not the position of so many in the world today.

And it's sadly so of many Christians too. I want to share with you a quote of C.S. Lewis. And he says this, If I find myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.

And I know that that has been on the screen downstairs before. Or it's certainly a quote that many of us will have heard. You see I think this is the crux of the matter. You know when we preach the gospel to the lost, we tell them that they have a God-shaped hole in their lives.

That there's only one who can save them from themselves, from their sin and from a certain eternal death. And that is Jesus. And yet Jesus is not only the answer to man's sin problem, but Jesus is the answer to tonight's question as well.

[8:06] You see, Paul isn't some kind of self-help guru who's taught himself to be content for being contentedness, or for being content's sake.

So that he might be able to say that he's happy in any and every circumstance that he finds himself in. No, Paul is pretty clear that it is Christ within him that has enabled them to learn to be this way.

And I use that word learn because that is a word that we find in here. And Paul uses that in his passage in verse 11 there, for I have learned this contentment.

You know, Paul is pretty clear that it is Christ in him that has enabled them to be that way. There's another quote that Rachel did contribute. I will give her that. So there's another quote that I'll use tonight as well.

It's from Elizabeth Elliott. And I'm sure some of you guys will have read this as well. And it says this, The secret is Christ in me. Not me in a different set of circumstances.

[9:11] And she is speaking on the same line. She's speaking about being content as well. You know, I could fill, any of us could fill pages and pages of I would be happy if.

But here's the truth. Our ultimate happiness will only be found in a relationship with Jesus Christ. You know, the answer to our question about why we long for happiness.

Well, tonight we're going to focus on the word happy. But the adjective, or rather the noun, the word longing is maybe where the root of the question lies.

Why do we long for happiness? And I don't think that I'd probably need to tell you this, but it is just good to reaffirm it to ourselves tonight. But we are created in the image of God.

God says that. He says, let's make man in our own image. And God wants to have a relationship with us. In fact, there's another verse in Scripture that would say that the dwelling place of God is with man.

[10:13] But our sin has separated us from him. And so in the very heart of our souls lies this void that we as humans so desperately want to fill.

Now, I've kind of skipped from the word happiness to being content without really covering it. And as I was going through this, there's a lot of verses.

In fact, you'd be amazed. There are thousands of verses that covers the words that we might associate with happiness. And some of them will be joy, or joyful, or cheerful, or happy, or pleased, or sometimes the word merry.

Okay. And they each have a slightly different aspect to them, whether it is something that is caused by a set of circumstances, or whether it's coming from within.

Or I'll give you a verse that I'm going to read just now. It's in Esther chapter 5. And it's not one that we should take any lessons for.

[11:14] But it's this. It says, So not every time that we come across a word about joyful, or gladness, or to be glad, it's going to be always in a positive context.

Because, well, if you read the story of Esther, you'll find out that Haman's so-called happiness was very short-lived. But it is interesting when you start to just look at where all the words, and you just need to read through Paul's letters, as we've read Philippians, and as we're going through Galatians, every time the word rejoice, or joy, or pleasure, or delight, that comes up in Scripture.

And literally, there are thousands and thousands of verses that you could read. And as I say, as you start, as I was going through this in the week, there are so many different avenues that we could take tonight to think about why we long for happiness.

And what does happiness really mean? And where does it come from? And you could spend hours and hours on it. I actually hope that you go away and you start to maybe, if you highlight your Bible, you may even just pick up on this, if you've got a Bible that you do that with.

But as you start to read through and you start to look for those words, I mean, even just on the page that we've just read there in Philippians, you'll see that word numerous times in each of the verses about Paul's joy and his rejoicing, and the fact that he encourages other people to rejoice.

[12:50] So seeking for happiness and longing for happiness really is because we are made for that. We were made by God. We have got a God-shaped hole in our lives because we have rebelled against him, and man is desperately trying to fill it with so many other things.

And yet, if we want to know what lasting joy looks like, then we'll come to Scripture. And I want to think about that over just five points tonight. So we'll be fairly brief, but there's five points that I want to think about.

And that is out of so, so many points that we could have. The first one I want to think about is the source of happiness. What is the source of happiness? And what I'm going to do is I'm going to have a quick look at either a worldly type of wisdom and then what the Bible says, or we'll have a look at what the Bible says, and then we'll have a look at what the world would say.

You know, modern culture would say that the source of happiness is an external source, and it's emotional. You know, happiness is often seen as a feeling or a state of satisfaction, and it's dependent on our achievements or our pleasure, our comfort, our self-expression.

And in that kind of wisdom, you know, happiness is temporary, and it's easily lost when our circumstances change.

[14:04] And I think if you just think about the world today, you just see that you don't have to necessarily... In fact, you can pick up any newspaper and see that, that in circumstances, people, happiness is either made or broken, and that is the world's wisdom.

But when we come to the Bible, we see that the Bible would teach us that happiness is internal. I want to use that word guardedly, but I'll explain what I mean.

And it's not only internal, but it's spiritual. You know, true happiness. And often, when we come to Scripture, we see that word used as joy or blessedness comes from a relationship with God, trusting Him.

It comes from gratitude, not from external circumstances. You know, it's described in Scripture as something that is stable, something that is steadfast, that is enduring, and something that we can have even in suffering.

Philippians 4 and 4, if we just looked earlier in our chapter, it says this, Rejoice in the Lord always. True happiness comes from God, not from our circumstances.

[15:07] Derek didn't know this, but Psalm 16, the verse that Derek quoted tonight, said this, You make known to me the path of life. In your presence, there is fullness of joy.

At your right hand are pleasures forevermore. You know, real joy is found in God's presence, not in worldless success or in comfort. You know, Jesus teaching on happiness.

It equals this. You come to Matthew chapter 5, and we're dealing with the Beatitudes. And each of the Beatitudes begins with blessed are. Now, that word blessed, it can also be a word that's translated as happy, satisfied.

But blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, those who make, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Jesus redefines happiness as being connected with a spiritual quality, not an external success.

You know, the key difference between a biblical, what the Bible says about happiness and what the world says about happiness is this, that biblical happiness is rooted in God's presence.

[16:11] Now, that might not seem apparent on the face of it, but there are a few verses that I want to leave further on. When you cast your mind back, I want you to think about this. What is the source of our happiness?

What is the source of biblical happiness? And it is found in God's presence. Not what the world would say happiness is found in, which is often rooted in our personal circumstances that are so prone to change.

So, the first one I want to think about is just the source of happiness. The second thing I want to think about tonight is just life goals. So, what is the goal of life? What are our life goals?

You know, the modern view is this, that happiness is the primary goal in life. Do whatever makes you happy. And it's associated with self-fulfillment and personal freedom.

You just need to look at what comes across our television screens or your X feed and you'll see that people just do what they like because they think it will bring them some source of happiness.

[17:13] The Bible tells us, though, that happiness is not our ultimate goal. It actually says this, it says that happiness is a by-product of living righteously and loving God and, by extension, loving others.

Matthew 6, verse 33 says this, Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added to you. Which is contrary to what the world would tell us about happiness and that happiness is not the ultimate goal, but it is a by-product.

You know, obedience to God brings happiness. We probably know that in our own lives. Psalm chapter 1, verses 1 and 2 said this, Blessed, there's that word blessed again. That can be translated as happy.

But blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, but his delight, in verse 2, but his delight is in the law of the Lord and doing what God would have us to do.

You know, it brings about this deep sense of well-being that comes from living according to God's ways. And there are so many scriptures that I could take you to tonight that would show you this, that if we did what the Bible said that we should do, we would probably avoid a lot of the circumstances that make us unhappy.

[18:43] You know, there's loads of choruses that we're going through my mind as we're preparing, but you remember that one that we used to sing, trust and obey, trust and obey. There's no other way but to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

And obedience brings about this sense of well-being. And I'm using slightly different words, but you'll see how they're all connected to what we might just refer to as an umbrella term as happiness.

So the key difference between what the Bible says and what the world would say is that the Bible would say that happiness is a fruit of godly living. But the kind of modern world would say that, you know, happiness is the purpose of life rather than the by-product.

So we've thought about the source of happiness is in God's presence. God's presence itself brings about that deep, enduring joy and peace and rest as different words that you will see will come up in relation to happiness.

And then second of all, life goals. So our life goal is not to be happy. Our life goal is to be obedient to God and the by-product of that is happiness. But I want to think about something a little bit more deeper than that.

[19:59] And it's this, what is happiness's relationship with suffering? Because life is not a bed of roses. And if you were ever in a Bible study with my granddad, he would say, well, I don't know why you call it a bed of roses because I wouldn't like to land in a bed of roses.

But what is happiness's relationship to suffering? Well, the modern view would say this, that suffering is typically seen as an obstacle to happiness. It's something to be avoided or to be minimized.

And happiness often means being free from pain or difficulty. Life is a breeze. That's what the world would have us think. But when we come to the Bible, we see that suffering can produce joy because it develops faith and character and hope.

You just read about that in Romans chapter five. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope.

And hope does not put us to shame because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. You'll see that some of the references that I've used will help us to just underline the point that I made earlier, that happiness is found in God's presence and God's presence comes to live within each and every child of God.

[21:20] You know, there's joy in trials. It's something that we don't often want to think about. But again, you come to James chapter one and it says this, count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

You know, the Bible acknowledges suffering, but it teaches that even trials can lead to deeper joy, deeper reliance on God.

And as we are put through some of these trials of various kind, then the testing of our faith on God produces this steadfastness. And that is what, when we ask people, excuse me, why we long for happiness, we're not just longing for some kind of, some kind of merriment on a Friday night, but most people are looking for something that is deep and lasting and enduring.

A peace, a rest, a happiness that carries them through life rather than bouncing from one weekend to the next. Again, we can come to 1 Thessalonians, reading chapter five, verses 16 to 18, and it says this, rejoice always, pray without ceasing, giving thanks in all circumstances.

You know, trusting and thanking God, even in hardship or trial, leads to a lasting kind of joy. And that is so contrary to what the Bible, what the world would believe, which is this, that modern happiness usually requires the absence of these things, but yet biblical joy can exist through pain and hardship.

[22:58] Only on point three, and I hope they can last to the last two. The first point was about the source of happiness.

The second point was on about the, you know, the goal of life. The third point was its relationship with suffering. The fourth point that I want to just cover briefly is around the focus. The focus, and this is around our focus, and what I'm thinking about here is, is our focus on ourselves, or is it on others?

And when I say others, again, the chorus that we used to sing in Sunday school, if you were brought up in a, if you were brought up, going to Sunday school, you might have sang a song that says, Jai, so Jai for Jesus, Jai, O-I, Jai, O-I, this is what it means, Jesus first, yourself last, and others in between.

They might not have sung that, but that was one that came to mind as I was thinking about this, but it's the focus on ourselves, or is it on others? You know, the Bible says this, that joy grows from, joy grows within us from loving and serving others.

Happiness comes through humility and service. You read in Acts chapter 20, verse 35, it says it is more blessed. That's that word, blessed again, it's more happy.

[24:18] People are, you're more satisfied to give than to receive. The modern view is this, that happiness is very self-centered. It's what we're taught in school, it's what we're taught on our TVs, it's how we've been conditioned, and it's very self-focused.

It's about maximizing our own pleasure, our own comfort, our own success. However, I just want to slightly caveat that, because modern psychology would, as it kind of starts to align with scripture in a sense, because it supports what the Bible teaches around gratitude and purpose, and anybody who's been on any kind of mental health, whether you're in a line management position at work, and it's dealing with employees with mental health, or in other circumstances, and we've all been touched by this, you'll have heard of these things, about being grateful, and about journaling, and about serving other people, that makes us happy.

So, actually, we've kind of come through, maybe like the last, I mean, for all times it's been the same, we're very much self-centered people, but some modern psychology would maybe affirm some of the things that the Bible would say, but they're not right because they're right enough themselves, they're right because they agree with what scripture says.

So, maybe both nowadays the world's view and the biblical view are slightly aligned, but the Bible tells us that that is God's design for love, and love is demonstrated by serving others, by looking after others, by being selfless in a way, and you'll even see some of the rhetoric that came out of Turning Point USA after the death of Charlie Kirk, where that was very much his motto, which was faith and family and sacrifice and serving others, and I'm sure many of us have seen some of that recently is very much taking away focus from ourselves and putting on other people.

You know, in the day in which we live, that is the way that we have been conditioned very much to focus on self, and we live in a day of comparison, you just need to flick through your Instagram feed for any length of time, and you're always comparing, and I've actually looked at some of yours this week, not that I want to compare, but you know, I wish I had the legs and the bikes that some people have, or I wish I'd been on the holiday that other people had, or whatever it is, that nice restaurant that you went to, you just compare what you've been doing to what somebody else has been doing.

[26:54] It's a natural thing that happens to us all, but we live in a world where comparison is really a dangerous, dangerous thing, and we start to compare what we have to what other people have, and I don't think anybody has been affected on this, not been affected by this, but it's certainly affected my family over the last few years where, and I want to say this very kindly, but setting aside the clinical and the medical issues that may be associated with this, a number of people in my family have taken their own lives in the last few years, and some of the, some of the things that they, and I'm going to use the word guilty of, but say that carefully and it's affected me rather than anyone else in these circumstances, but they were very self-absorbed.

Now, as I say, set aside the clinical and the medical issues that may have surrounded some of these incidents, but they very much were focused on how they were different to other people, and it was, and it was, I'm saying, I use the word game, but it was a, it was a, it was a game of comparison in that sense, and it was a very dangerous and a disastrous outcome to be caught in that where you're always comparing and you always think that you don't have what other people have and you'd be happy if you had what they had, and it goes back to what we said at the beginning of this, this topic tonight that we, we think we would be happy if, and that can have disastrous, disastrous outcomes, and I'm sure that everybody will know people who have been affected by that, but I say that kindly because, as I say, that has affected our family in many ways over the last few years, but lastly, I just want to think about this, number five, and it's about duration, what is the duration of happiness?

You know, I think we, in our world, we see people that bounce on a Monday morning, they are not happy, when you come midway through the week, they're a little bit more happy, and when it comes to a Friday afternoon, they're absolutely elated to get out the door at whatever time that they are skipping out slightly early, but then they just do it all again week after week, and they bounce through this, almost from a crisis to a crisis, and they turn to things to fill that void, and it never really fills the void, but happiness, what the Bible teaches this, happiness is something that is eternal and unchanging, I want to be careful when I say that, because what I mean by that is that it's anchored in God's promises and in eternal life.

John chapter 16 verse 22 says this, no one will take your joy from you, and that is the lot for us as Christians, that is our lot, we can have a deep-rooted and a steadfast and a stable happy, a stable joy, a rest, a peace, I'll come on to some of these words in a little second, and it's not necessarily the circumstantial happiness that the world thinks is happiness, but it is something that is much more deep and meaningful, and as God gives us that, we find that that is amplified when we're in His presence and when His presence is in us.

You know, as I say, the modern world view is this, that happiness is often temporary, it's a fleeting emotion, and it's tied to changing circumstance. Excuse me.

[30:17] So I guess the question is this, should we be happy? Well, actually, I've got a little curveball in here, right, but should we be happy if we are rebelling against God, right? Three people that I want to think about, two have definitely been rebelling, one hasn't, but remember the question that God asks Cain, and he says this, why are you angry?

Why has your countenance fallen? And it's because he was trying to do things on his own way, how he thought he should live, rather than how God would have him.

You then come to David, and the same question can be asked, you can read several Psalms, and you know, Psalm 13, 34, 51, different times where David has gone out, and he's rebelled against God, and he's committed adultery, and he's lied, and he's committed murder, and he poses the question about why the joy of his salvation, why the joy of the Lord, why just the joy that he should have within him has been removed from him, and he pleads with God that that might be restored, and some of these circumstances are very much David's own doing, some of them are other circumstances that David finds himself in, and he's away from Jerusalem, and we've covered that recently, and, but, the question about should we be, expect to be happy when we're rebelling against God, well, the fact is, if we are actively rebelling against God, if we're not living according to his word, if we're not obeying him, then we'll not know the joy of his presence in our life, we'll not know the joy of the salvation, and therefore, there should be some kind of trouble within us, there should be something that is restless within us, as we long for God to be part of our lives, to be in our lives, to be controlling, to be guiding, to be sustaining us, to be comforting us, and if we are, if we have chosen a life that is pushing God out, and we're actively sinning, then, then, maybe that, maybe that rest, and that peace that he affords might just be absent.

I was also thinking about Mary Magdalene, she comes to the tomb on that morning, and she meets the angels, and they ask why that she has been crying, and she says this, they have taken my Lord.

Again, the Lord was taken from her presence, and that's what had upset her, and that should upset us too. When the presence of the Lord is not with us, we should be, I would use the word troubled, you know what I mean by that?

[32 : 36] I don't think we should necessarily be, there's no despair, but certainly we should be like David, and we should be seeking to restore that, and a verse that I'll often use in 1 John, if we are faithful, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and our relationship is restored, and God's presence can come back in, and even though the Holy Spirit never believes a believer, once they are saved, we definitely experience the loss of the joy of the presence of the Lord, when we follow a path that is not in accordance with the scripture.

Then sometimes other than that, just the normal cares of this life can get us down, and it comes down to the last three verses that I want to leave with us. One of my favourite verses that I used to, again, if you grew up in a Sunday school, you would remember this, in Matthew 11, the Lord Jesus says, come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

And this word rest is associated with the word that we've been thinking about, about the happiness, that underlying joy and peace and rest that comes from the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus often also says, my peace I give to you, John 14, but the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, not as the world gives peace. Jesus is acknowledging that the world does give peace, does give happiness, but nothing that is lasting, nothing that is true, nothing that can compare to the joy and the peace and the rest that can come from him.

[34 : 24] He says, let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. Which takes me to the beginning of that chapter in 14. It starts like this, let not your hearts be troubled.

Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms, if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself that where I am, you may be also.

You know, in a sense, true, enduring, godly, God-honoring happiness will only be ours when we are removed from this world and we are present with Christ.

But we're given the ability and the resources, the Holy Spirit, I've just read that in the last few chapters, the last few verse quotations there, the resources to be content in this world with what we have and with what we do.

So I just want to ask tonight that it might be our desire that we may live lives that encourage, that challenge, that support, that we pray for each other, that we become like Paul, that we be contented in each and every circumstance that we find ourselves in and that we are not contented when we don't have that peace and that presence that only God affords us when we come to him.

[35 : 47] Now let us pray. Heavenly Father, we come before you tonight. Thank you for this opportunity that we've had to think about this subject of contentment.

Our Father, we remember that Paul would write to Timothy that contentment with godliness is great gain. Our Father, something to be sought after, something to be treasured.

And our Father, we thank you that you have given us the ability to experience this contentedness in our lives by sending your Holy Spirit into our lives to help us, to guide us, to keep us.

And our Father, as we have just considered why we long for happiness tonight, our Father, we just pray that these scattered thoughts may be helpful, that we might just think on them and ponder them and that it might just help us to answer some of the questions that our unbelieving friends may have.

And even when, Father, we as your people find ourselves in times of difficulty, that we just draw close to you for your comfort and your care, that you may support us, that you may lead us through the difficult times of life.

[36:57] And our Father, we thank you that you have given us this hope that is within us, that we will one day go to be with you and that we will be like you for we will see you as you are.

And our Father, we thank you that all of that is promised to us in and through the person of your Son, the Lord Jesus. And so, our Father, we just ask that we might remember what we have thought about tonight. And our Father, as we ponder this during the week, our Father, we just ask that you would bring us into the knowledge and the good of this, that we might be happy and contented people, happy to serve you and happy to serve others as we make our way through this life.

And so, our Father, we just ask that you be with us. We thank you again for our time together. We just ask for these things. Give them thanks in Jesus' name. Amen.