

HOW TO BE HAPPY

Matthew 3:13-17

I. OBSESSED WITH TRIVIAL PURSUITS

- A. Two Simple Questions:
 - 1. When was the last time you felt happy? When you bought that new car. When you moved into that new house. When you got that promotion.
 - 2. How long did the *happy* last?
- B. Can Money Buy Happiness?
 - 1. “Is *more* always better? Is *better* always *more* or can it be *less*? Is the most expensive always the *best* you can get?” (Leonard Sweet)
 - 2. A sign of our time: *Luxury* has become the new norm. Now we need *one-of-a-kind* experiences to make us feel special.
 - 3. When money is the only thing that talks, kindness and compassion go for long walks, bribery replaces blessings, harmony is silenced by greed, and only the strong survive.
- C. Can Success Ensure Happiness?
 - 1. “If I were to name what I consider to be the worst sin in America it would be the sin of being too busy.” (Charles Allen)
 - 2. “Sunset Fatigue: When we come home at the end of a day’s work and we’re just too tired, or too drained, or too preoccupied, to love the people to whom we have made the deepest promises.”(Ortberg)
- D. Can Pleasure Bring Happiness?
 - 1. Many people go through life looking for little happiness fixes through food, drugs, sex, shopping, or alcohol.
 - 2. “The pursuit of ultimate pleasure, the attainment of ultimate success, the acquisition of ultimate wealth – none of these is enough to bring lasting satisfaction. The happy wears off.”

II. PRACTICE THE PRESENCE OF GOD

- A. Take Time to Be Holy!
 - 1. “Time has become the ultimate luxury – the most expensive and extravagant thing we have.” (Sweet)
 - 2. We’re in a time famine.
- B. The Fatigue Factor.
 - 1. We need more sabbaticals – time to learn and explore the secrets of the soul.
 - 2. Just say NO! We need to learn what to keep and what to throw away.
 - 3. We need to learn how to relax.
- C. When Was the First Time You Felt Happy?
 - 1. “*This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.*”
 - 2. Do you want to be happy? Experience the joy of pleasing God!

Prayer Concerns: Members – Burney Biesel, Edie Ford, Ruth Dale Hurt, Gwen Steward ... **Friends** – Lawrence Carolin, Emily Davis, Reggie Deloach, Molly Kate Duncan, Jean Hansford, Delores Hearn, Blake Holden, Jeff Joyner, Dewaine Moncier, Jr., Sheena Moore, Jimmy Patterson, Allen Voss, Tim Walker, Todd Warren, Rudy Welch ...

Christian Sympathy is extended to *David McCutcheon and family* in the death of his mother, *Connie Overton*, who died on Wednesday, January 2.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Almighty God, creator of all things. You bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things. We are all your children and we long to hear you say, “This is my beloved daughter, this is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased.” Open your heaven and descend like a dove upon each one of us; make plain your plan, your purpose for our lives. Help us to remember what you told us through the prophet: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; when you pass through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you. You are precious in my eyes, and I love you.”

As you have loved us, help us to love one another. It’s not easy to really love. Sometimes we’re too proud, sometimes too cold, sometimes too tired, sometimes too preoccupied, and sometimes too hurt to love. But then we remember your Son. We remember how he bore our suffering on his shoulders and carried our rejection in his heart; how he was wounded for our transgressions and led to the slaughter like a lamb, and still he loved. When we begin to love like that, your heaven will open and we will hear you say, “This is my beloved child, with whom I am pleased.”

Hear us now as we pray the prayer your Son taught us to pray

THE LORD’S PRAYER: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power,

and the glory, forever. Amen.

MATTHEW 3:13-17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

EPIPHANY

The season of Epiphany began on January 6 (Epiphany Day), and lasts for five Sundays and the beginning of the season of Lent. The word Epiphany means *to show*. *Manifestation* is another word used to describe the meaning of Epiphany. It is the manifestation of the glory of God in sending Christ into the world. Epiphany has also been called *Theophany*, meaning the appearance of God. The color for the Epiphany season is green for new life.

SERMON SCHEDULE

January 20	<i>See for Yourself</i>	John 1:29-42
January 27	<i>Changing Jobs</i>	Matthew 4:12-23
February 3	<i>When Everything Changes</i>	Matthew 17:1-9
February 10	<i>That’s Tempting!</i>	Matthew 4:1-11