

Addicted To Love (Part 2)

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Preacher: Kevin Smith, Senior Pastor

[0 : 00] Lord, I believe in you. Lord, I believe in you. Spirit, I believe in you. Before I read my text, I have a quick announcement.!

Well, we need your help. Please consider donating to this effort. We don't budget for disaster, and so here's an opportunity that our church has.

I know we've mentioned other financial needs, so this is coming as another, but it's a need that takes us outside of ourselves to serve those in Jamaica who have been, as you know, hit hard by the hurricane.

There is a disaster relief option in the drop-down menu on our giving page, so if you want to give to that, you can do it in that way, or I'm sure you can just bring a check to the church and put disaster relief on the memo line, and we'll make sure we get it.

This will also be a vision trip to plan another mission trip with more people in the new year, probably in early March. We plan to go back and take a large team with us, so we're doing reconnaissance in a couple weeks, and then we can hopefully prepare to take more people.

[1 : 38] So keep that in your prayers, and if you're able to give to that effort, please do. Like I said, it is not in the budget. All right, we are once again returning to John chapter 15.

We're looking at Jesus as divine and we as branches. Let's continue that study together. Let's ask God's blessing before we go to his word.

And Father, thank you for the privilege of giving. Giving not only of our treasure, but of our time, of our talent, even of ourselves.

And we are so grateful that you allow us, you allow us to take part in this work of sharing.

Thank you, Lord.

[2 : 57] have been so merciful to us. We come to your word now. We would hear your voice. We would obey you. We would follow you. We would rejoice and live in the privileges that you give us in Christ Jesus.

Lord, we want all that you have for us in Jesus. And so, Lord, help us to not leave anything on the table that you have provided.

So, be with us now. Use your unworthy servant to preach such a marvelous truth today. Oh, God, what joy it is to be able to preach this message today.

So, be with us and use your servant in Christ's name. Amen. John chapter 15, I'm reading verses 9 through 11. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.

Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

[4 : 14] That is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Please be seated. Thank you, choir.

Thank you, praise team. Appreciate you. Amen. Amen. Some time ago, I had the privilege and the sadness of pleading with a young man, pleading with him to go back to his wife.

I remember, I'll never forget what he said to me. Kev, doesn't God want me to be happy? And I remember saying to him, God wants you to be holy.

I have to tell you something. I was a little uneasy telling him God wants him to be happy. I felt very uneasy about that.

And since then, I've come to realize something more and more, that God wants us to be both, holy and happy.

[5 : 26] To abide in Jesus' love is to experience his joy, his deep, lasting, indestructible joy.

Remember last time, and I'm going to add some stuff here, so if you're taking notes, just listen and we're going to move on a little bit. Back up a little bit. Remember, Jesus calls us to abide in his love,

meaning to live dependent upon his love, his acceptance of us, his welcome, and his care of us. His love for us is what he has experienced, he says, from the Father. He gives us what he has received. And this love keeps us from idolizing acceptance from people.

This love transforms us so that we progressively reflect his love as we live dependent upon it. It causes us, his love causes us to bear the fruit of his character that we see in 1 Corinthians 13, that great chapter of love.

[6 : 51] We begin to look like Jesus because 1 Corinthians 13 is really a picture of Jesus. We begin to, as we depend on his love, experience his love, on a day-by-day basis, we become.

Love is patient and kind, does not envy, does not boast, is not arrogant or rude, does not insist on its own way.

It is not irritable or resentful. It does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails. As we abide in Christ's love, we begin to reflect that because that is the love of Jesus in such beautiful portrayal and reality.

1 Corinthians 13 was not written so you can have it at your wedding. Though it's not wrong to do that. It was written to the Corinthians telling them, you're not like this.

[8 : 07] You are divided in your church. That was a big deal in Corinth. They were divided within the congregation. They were, I'm of this leader. I'm of this leader.

I follow this guy. And Paul, even at the Lord's table, there was division at the Lord's table. And Paul writes to them and says to them, you've got all these gifts.

Y'all can speak in tongues. Y'all got miracles happening. But you're not loving each other.

Therefore, you are a zero. Repent.

He's telling them, repent. Because love is what's going to live on forever. Amen? Brian Chappell says something very helpful here.

He says, listen, I gotta follow this carefully. Why we do what we do is also how we do what we do.

[9 : 09] Y is love, right? How is also love. If why I serve God is also how I serve God, then greater love always precedes greater power.

Greater love leads to greater power. And in fact, since we only and always do what we love the most, then greater love is also the means to greater power.

He said, we do what we love. What do we love most? Who do we love most? As we abide in his love, we are overwhelmed more and more with his love.

And how do we abide in his love? He says, keep my commandments. He didn't say, I will love you if you keep my commandments. He's saying, I love you, my disciples.

Now, if you want to continue to experience that love in a real way, I'm not going to stop loving you, but if you want to continue to walk in that love and experience that love, and know that love in an ever-deepening way, keep my commandments.

[10 : 34] But we've got to be careful here, and this is why I want to add some things. We've got to be careful. For much wrong is done by Christians in the name of love.

Christ's love does not compromise Christ's truth. When you compromise Christ's truth in the name of love, you're not abiding in love.

But what you're doing is worshiping a false god. You're worshiping an idol. Some Christians, because of what we call love, won't speak about hell.

We won't talk about people's lifestyle choices that go against the word of God and their own soul.

We don't want to offend people. We don't want to be a downer or depress people. We don't want to judge people. We don't want to lose people.

[11 : 48] Let's just talk about his love. What happens when you do that, when you compromise truth in the name of love, you worship an idol, and idols steal your love and devotion to Jesus.

This is why the same writer of this gospel, the apostle John, at the end of his first letter, 1 John chapter 5, so many verses won't be on the screen.

This one might, I don't know, I don't remember now. 1 John chapter 5, here's what he says, the last two verses, and we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know him who is true and we are in him.

Oh, there it is. We are in him. That is, we are united to Christ. We're in the vine. We are in him who is true in his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Where did that come from? That's how he ends the letter. It seems like out of the blue.

[13:06] He says, keep yourselves from idols because idolatry steals our devotion to Jesus. Idolatry causes us not to live in love but to live in fear.

We cannot compromise Christ's truth in the name of Christ's love for that is not Christ's love. Instead, we are told in Ephesians 4.15 to speak the truth in love.

You see, love determines what we say and how we say it but we say it.

We cannot compromise Christ's truth in the name of what we call Christ's love. Now, back to our text. Abiding in Christ's love according to Christ's truth leads to Christ's joy.

Jesus' love for us brings us great joy. Now, I'm going to spend, this is it. This is where I'm going to camp here. Again, verse 11 follows verse 10.

[14:22] Right? That's usually how it works, isn't it? My wife's a math teacher. She can correct me if I'm wrong. So, by keeping his commandments, we are abiding in his love as he has kept his father's commandments and abiding his love.

Then he says, these things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full. Now, I got to make a confession here.

Over the years, I followed the example and it's my responsibility. I'm not blaming anyone, but I followed the example of many preachers, especially in the latter half of the 20th century, in talking about joy and happiness.

And we have said things like happiness depends on circumstances, but joy is deeper not depending on our circumstances, but on Christ.

Now, that sounds really good, but it's not true. You know, saints from yesteryear never said stuff like that. But somebody, I think I found this name.

[15:41] I'm going to go back and double check this. Somebody started teaching that somewhere in the 20th century and it seems to have caught on. The reality is this.

Happiness and joy are kind of synonyms and used interchangeably in the Bible. Here's one of my favorite passages that come Isaiah chapter 52 verse 7.

This is really beautiful and you know this passage. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, your God reigns.

Now, Paul takes that passage in, I think, Romans chapter 10 and uses it to talk that same language. He's talking about who brings the gospel.

But notice this. The gospel, according to Isaiah, brings and promises happiness. happiness. Happiness in God now, which those who believe the gospel are to receive.

[17:10] Another thing to think about, when you see the word blessed, blessed, or blessed, especially in the Beatitudes in Matthew chapter 5, blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are the, you know that passage?

The word blessed can also be translated happy. And many people do translate it that way. It's happiness in God, it's connected to God, but it's still happy.

The dictionary of biblical themes defines happiness this way. Is it up there? No, we don't have that one? Okay, we don't have that one. That's okay, I forgot.

Listen carefully. A state of pleasure, this is happiness now, a state of pleasure or joy experienced both by people and God.

True happiness derives from a secure and settled knowledge of God and a rejoicing in his works and covenant faithfulness.

[18:24] One of those Bible teachers of yesteryear, I think we'll have this one, one of my favorite writers, many of you know him, A. W. Tozer says this, the people of God ought to be the happiest people in all the wide world.

People should be coming to us constantly and asking the source of our joy and delight. He equates happiness with joy and delight. Why?

Because we serve a God who is happy and joyful. God is happy? Really?

Psalms 115.3 Our God is in the heavens. He does all that he pleases. That word please, don't miss it.

God does all that makes him happy. Whatever he pleases, that means whatever brings him pleasure. I hope you understand pleasure and happiness go together, right?

[19 : 33] If you're having pleasure, you're happy. You got me? Okay. Let me ask you a question. Do you see Jesus as happy?

Or do you see him as somber, serious, angry, maybe even a little depressed? Again, Tozer in his classic knowledge of the holy, the most significant fact about any man is not what he at any given time may say or do, but what he is in his deep heart conceives God to be like.

Most important thing is what a man or woman believes God is like. Always the most revealing thing about the church is her idea of God. Just as her most significant message is what she says about him or leaves unsaid.

What comes to your mind when you think about God? Based upon that, we might predict with certainty the spiritual future of that man. End quote.

What's the most important thing he said? How do you view God? When you think of God, what comes to your mind? What comes to your imagination? Is he this guy in heaven with the thunderbolt like Zeus ready to zap you into oblivion because you sinned.

[21 : 08] KJ, you sinned. It's coming. You didn't have your devotions today. You're going to have a horrible day. How do you view God?

What's your concept of God? I hope you get it from the word, by the way. If God is molding us into Jesus image and telling us to be like him, then we had better be clear about what he is like.

If we are to image Christ, if Jesus is gloomy, angry, always serious, then that's what we're supposed to be like too.

But if Jesus is happy and joyful, then his people should reflect that.

And I don't know about you, but I don't like being around people who are gloomy. And depressed and down and always negative and critical and resentful.

[22 : 35] It's hard being around folk like that. If you are behaving that, if that's how you live and you say you're a Christian, you're saying Jesus is like that.

That ain't what the Bible shows us though. In our text, Jesus believes joy is so important for our experience as his disciples that he says he's giving us his indestructible joy.

I say indestructible because anything that Christ has can't be taken away. He is, did you catch that? He wants us to know his joy, to experience his joy, that my joy may be in you.

His joy, his personal joy and happiness, Jesus says he has given it to his people. He's not gloomy. John Piper, seeing and savoring Jesus Christ says this, the glory and grace of Jesus that he is and always will be indestructibly happy.

[23 : 47] I say it is his glory because gloom is not glorious. I say it is his grace because the best thing he has to give us is his joy.

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I say rejoice. The Lord is near, Paul says in Philippians 4.

Rejoice always. He's writing, Philippians, he's writing from jail.

It's the most joy, Philippians is Paul's most joyful letter. He mentions the word joy so many times or synonyms for joy so many times in that letter and yet he is in the dungeon. And he's writing to the church and telling him, don't worry about me for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

I've counted all things lost that I may gain Christ and count them rubbish that I may know him.

Listen, Paul's like, I'm good. But Paul, you're in jail.

Paul, they got you in the stocks. Paul, it's gloomy. This ain't an American jail where you get three hots and a cot and get a degree and watch TV and work out in the yard and get buff.

[25 : 05] No, this is real jail where you have no rights. No rights.

No comforts. Bring me a blanket, please. That's the kind of place he was in and yet he writes with this indestructible joy.

It's crazy. It's crazy. Jesus' joy. His joy is happiness in the love, presence, and goodness of his father and doing his father's will.

We saw that all through the gospel of John already. His joy, he says in the gospel, Luke chapter 10 verse 21, his joy is in the father revealing truth to us.

Luke 10 21. In that same hour, he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children.

[26 : 17] Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. We're the little children, y'all. That God in his mercy will reveal himself and his kingdom to us.

Little children with dirty faces and stinky diapers. That's us. And yet Jesus rejoiced in this.

His joy is in rewarding our faithful service. Matthew 15, 21 and 23, by the way. He says it twice. He's telling a parable.

His master said to him, well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little. I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.

Jesus is a parable when his people are faithful to use what God has given us for his glory. We walk into the kingdom and the father greets us and says, well done.

[27 : 24] Enter into my joy. heaven is a place of joy, y'all. A place of happiness and joy. Come on somebody.

I hope somebody go on with me. His joy, oh here's a good one. His joy is in saving his people. And that is what, that joy is what sustains him through betrayal, trial, and death.

Hebrews 12, 2. You know this passage. Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

How did Jesus get through all of that? We've been looking at it in John 13. His heart's broken that Judas is going to betray him. We saw this.

He's sorrowing. How does he get through? this? How does he get through betrayal? How does he get through the kangaroo trial that he's going to suffer?

[28 : 32] How does he get through the cross itself? The torture and agonizing asphyxiation death upon the cross. How does he get through it?

Hebrews says our great high priest, that's what Hebrews is about by the way, stands between God and humanity, reconnecting heaven and earth through his mighty sacrifice of himself to cleanse for himself a people who will follow him wherever he leads.

This gave him joy. Knowing that there would be a people, that you would be his people in glory, saved, and watch this, beholding his glory and worshiping him.

that's the joy that sustained our mighty Lord through the darkest days of his earthly existence. His joy in us, as we abide in him, causes us to be filled with his joy.

His joy gives us joy. joy. As you and I are living in dependence upon his love. Wow!

[29 : 53] He's the most joyful person who ever lived. He's the most happy person who's ever lived. Paul connects love and joy too. In Galatians 5, 22, the fruit of the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, etc.

Love and joy. The first two manifestations of the Spirit's presence in the life of God's people, the first two things he mentions are love and joy.

That's right in our passage. That's John 15. Love and joy. Love and joy. The Spirit produces this love and joy as we lean heavy upon Jesus, nor more of his great love for us.

After all, listen, what can produce more joy in anyone's heart than knowing that you are forever in Christ, you are forever in the center of his love.

You who are a sinner, you who have rebelled against God, you who have told God, I can do it my way, I don't need you unless I call you. You and I who woke up every morning before we were in Christ saying, what can I do for me?

[31 : 05] It's all about me. you and I who have maybe done some nasty things to people, maybe even some crimes against humanity, and yet you and I are experiencing that love, that deep, deep love of Jesus.

He has chosen us for this love. How can we not be joyful? How can we not be happy? eternity is before us. When we close our eyes in this life, there is life to live.

There's more living to be done, honey. You gonna live on. There is more glory. This life is battling practice for the life to come. And you can't lose it.

You can't lose your reservation. You can't lose that gift. Oh my goodness. I guess that's what Paul, Romans 5, I mean, he talks about how the Holy Spirit, you know the passage I'm talking about?

Romans 5. I'm getting excited. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[32 : 24] Through him, through him, Jesus, we have also obtained access by faith into this grace, this undeserved love and kindness in which we stand, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that sufferings produce endurance.

Endurance produces character. Character produces hope, and hope does not put to shame,

because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Listen, this love and joy is so indestructible that even suffering can't destroy it. As a matter of fact, suffering only serves to increase our joy, because we know that God is doing something in the midst of it.

I'm reminded of the people of Israel when they, oh my gosh, have you read the book of Nehemiah? I mean, people of Israel, they had returned to Jerusalem after the exile, and messed up again. I mean, God had delivered, God said, look, 70 years, look, y'all really messed up in Israel. I had to move, he said, I had to move y'all out of my land. This is my land. Y'all acting a fool. Y'all gotta go. [33 : 48] But he never, but he never turned his back on them, even though they had turned their back on him. He couldn't let them, he said, how can I give you up? I'm quoting scripture.

He couldn't give them up because he loved them so much. So he said, 70 years, you're gonna be in Babylon, you're gonna be in the Persian Empire, 70 years, but then I'm gonna bring you back. So 70 years, they come back to the land, book of Ezra, book of Nehemiah, they're back in the land, they're building the temple, they're building the walls of Jerusalem, and then they sinned. They fell right back into the same old foolishness. But Nehemiah 8:10 says this, go your way, eat and eat the fat, drink sweet wine, send portions to anyone who has nothing, for this day is holy to our God, do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

Now, this is in the midst of their sin. Ezra, the scribe, had just finished reading the book of the law. The people saw how they had failed once again to keep the word of God. They began to weep. But God was showing them grace in the midst of their weeping. Nehemiah, the governor, and Ezra, the scribe, and the Levites began to say, hold it, hold it, we know you sinned against God, but listen, he's keeping covenant, he is faithful to the covenant, we know you're messed up, but repent, by the way, but listen, don't weep.

[35 : 24] Don't mourn. God is showing you grace and mercy. You're still his people. Rejoice. The joy of the Lord is your strength right now.

Rejoice. Even in the midst of our sin, as we call upon God for forgiveness, he restores the joy and gives us strength to get up. That's what gets me up.

Knowing that God loves me. Knowing that he won't let me go. That's what gets me out of the dirt.

That's what gets me to get back on my feet and say, let's go, Jesus.

I'm ready to keep going. That's because I know he loves me. That's what causes me to get up and rejoice because I know I'm forgiven. I'm cleansed. I have hope in this life and the life to come.

We are thankful. full. And because of that we find strength in the joy that he gives us. Jesus came to fulfill that vision. In him we have experienced the greatest kindness we could ever hope to receive.

[36 : 29] And joy is the proper reaction to who Jesus is and all that he has done. Joy comes when our reality meets his reality in love.

For Paul says in Romans 14, for the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Whoever thus serves Christ, in other words, whoever serves Christ in this way, is acceptable to God and approved by men. The kingdom is a kingdom of joy.

Are you in the kingdom? God when we fail to abide in Christ's love, living in dependence upon it, we become joyless and unhappy people.

God still loves you, but you're not experiencing your birth right. does God want his people to be happy?

[37 : 43] Oh, you better say yes. Oh, big yes. Big ups, as Billy would say. Yes, he does. Holiness leads to happiness, and happiness in Christ leads to holiness.

holiness. Did you catch it? I'm just telling you what he just said in those verses. We experience his love more and more by keeping his commandments.

Holiness. happiness. And then we abide, as we abide in that love, we experience his joy that fills up our own joy.

But happiness and joy in this world does not rule out sorrow. Jesus is the happiest being in the universe, but he was also a man of sorrows acquainted with grief.

See, this is where the Bible gets real, y'all. This is real stuff now. We're not walking around with smiles plastered on our face as if everything is good. All things were together for good.

[39 : 00] It doesn't say all things are good. There's bad stuff in this world. We're experiencing people getting shot. We're experiencing economic issues.

We're experiencing all kinds of problems in our country. Some of you more than others. These are not the greatest days of America or the world for that matter.

The Bible is real. We've seen Jesus sorrowful in John as I mentioned before. Indestructible joy does not mean there is only joy.

1 Thessalonians 1.6, Paul writing to this church, listen to this church, you became imitators of us and of the Lord for you received the word in much affliction. How did they receive the word? In much affliction. Bad things were happening. They were facing persecution and trial in the midst of the word coming to them and they believing the word of the gospel, the gospel of happiness, they received affliction.

[40 : 16] But watch this, you receive the word of the Lord and much affliction with the joy of the Holy Spirit. How'd that get in there? In the midst of the affliction they were experiencing, yet the spirit of God was giving them joy.

this is reality. So will you embrace suffering as well as joy for the glory of Christ? Not joylessness, but suffering.

Hebrews 13 and 14. Hebrews 13, 13 and 14. Therefore let us go to him, that's Jesus, outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. Let's go to him.

Let's follow him outside the camp, outside the city where he was crucified. Let's go with Jesus outside the camp to bear his reproach.

For we, listen, for here, here, we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.

[41 : 21] The answer then to wherever we can yet have joy in a face of suffering depends on what city you are seeking. what city holds your citizenship?

What kingdom are you living for? See, that would determine if you can experience his joy in the midst of your affliction and suffering and pain.

You see, if you're living for this kingdom, for this world, for this country, this city, this is what your heart has captivated your heart, then you will experience these pains and you will be crushed.

Oh, but if you recognize where your citizenship really is, if you recognize that your citizenship is in heaven and glory, some of which you taste now, that glory, you experience some of that even now. If you are focused on that heaven, that city, that citizenship, that kingdom, if that's where your priority is, then in the midst of suffering in this city, you can still have joy because your kingdom is not being touched.

[42 : 38] We, Hebrews, Hebrews 12, for we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken. America is doing this.

Chattanooga, wherever you're from, trembling and shaking, but the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, the kingdom where Christ is king, didn't even hit a speed bump, is glorious and good.

What kingdom are you seeking? are you more a citizen of this world? Are you more a citizen of the United States of America than you are of the kingdom of God?

You see, our joy in Christ and his kingdom, not what happens here is the best witness, the best witness that we can give.

Joy in the kingdom. That's what makes people, what makes people say, what do you have? What do you have? Are you a patriot for the kingdom of heaven?

[44 : 03] That's what I want to know. Father, we need joy. We need that joy that Jesus promised and we, Lord, we want it.

Father, we plead with you. Help us to live in the love of Christ. Help us to abide in the vine. Help us, Lord, to lean heavy and depend us upon his love and acceptance so that, Lord, we might be filled with his joy.

Some of us right now need that joy even more because we're going through hard times. Some of us need that joy because we have our eyes on the wrong city.

Deliver us from the idolatry. that sneaks up on us so often. And give us joy in Christ, joy in your kingdom.

For Jesus' name and Jesus' sake we ask for king and kingdom. Amen. Everyone would please stand as we sing our closing song.