

Session 2 Joy and Unity Under Pressure (Jn. 15:11, 17)

“Let me drink from the river of Your pleasures as I delight in Your beauty” (Ps. 36:8; 37:4)

Go ahead and turn in your Bibles to **Matthew 24**. **Matthew 24**. Tonight we’ll be doing session 2 on **John 15:11, 17**. Tonight’s message will be entitled *Joy and Unity under Pressure*. Let’s go to **Matthew 24** first, though.

Let’s pray. Father, we thank You, Lord, for Your presence. Lord, thank You that we can draw near You, Father, in worship, Father, through the blood of Your Son. Lord, that we can come boldly before Your throne. Father, thank You for drawing near to us, Father, when we draw near to You. Father, we ask You in the name of Jesus, Lord, in these next few moments. Father, we ask You for increased measures of the light of the Holy Spirit, Lord, to touch our minds. Father, we need Holy Spirit illumination. Lord, enlighten our understanding. Father, as Your Word, Father, enters our heart, Father, would you bring light. Would You bring understanding? Living understanding. Revelation, Father, concerning the things that are near and dear to You. Father, we ask You that You would declare, through Your Spirit, the glorious things, Father, of Your Son to our hearts. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Matthew 24, again a familiar passage. It’s where the Lord is speaking with His disciples. Jesus had finished His public ministry in **chapter 23**, and in **chapter 24** the apostles, they come to Him in private and they ask Him a question about the dynamics that will take place in the generation of His return, but in **verse 6, Matthew 24:6-7**, Jesus delineates the different things that will take place. He talks about wars and rumors of wars. He talks about disease, earthquakes, just all kinds of social disturbances. Ethnic conflict, civil war, global wars, and so forth, but He gives His exhortation in **verse 6**, and He says, “See to it that you are not troubled.” In other words, see it to it that you’re not weighed down with worry and anxiety.

Very early on in this chapter, Jesus is already addressing at least two emotional things that are important to the human heart. In **verse 4**, He says, “See to it that no one deceives you.” He addresses the issue of our hearts being engaged with truth, but here in **verse 6**, He calls us to not be weighed down with anxiety, that as these things emerge it is undoubtedly very easy to get weighed down with worry, but Jesus’ exhortation, and I would say even stronger than exhortation, His commandment to us, is that we not be given over to anxiety.

Now, what is interesting is that of course Jesus, as I mentioned earlier, in fact, it says it in **verse 3**, He is having a private moment with His disciples describing the unique dynamics that will take place in the generation of the Lord’s return, and He gives them this commandment. He says, “See to it that you are not troubled. See to it that you are not weighed down with worry and anxiety.”

What is interesting is that a few days later, which is why we’re talking about this, in **John 14**, specifically **verses 1** and **verse 27**, He tells His disciples again, “Do not be troubled,” but not only that, He begins to give really line upon line insight into the knowledge of God, into the heart of the Father, the love of the Father, the relationship between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the access that we have to God’s presence, and the invitation that we have to interact with the Lord in the place of intimacy as the way forward of not having a troubled heart.

So, **Matthew 24:6** says do not be troubled. He gives the commandment and then He moves on, but as He continues this private session with His disciples, because **Matthew 24**, **Matthew 25**, **Matthew 26** is the Lord's Supper, and so we've got a couple of verses on the Lord's Supper in **Matthew 26**, but **John 13-14** gives us details in terms of the conversation that took place at the table, and in this conversation Jesus is giving His apostles now insight into how not to be troubled, and it comes through understanding the revelation of God's love, the love of the Father for the Son, the interaction between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the access that Jesus provides us to God's presence through the cross, and then the call for us to interact with Him in that deep and meaningful way, again, as the antidote to anxiety.

The issue of anxiety, studies show that right now, probably 20% of Americans are plagued with some kind of an anxiety disorder. Now, I want to give a qualifier. There are some people who deal with anxiety because of different physiological challenges, so there's medical attention that needs to be given to that, but I believe that the vast majority of us are not in that situation. The vast majority of us deal with the issue of anxiety because we're dealing with the issue of confidence, confidence in God's leadership, because anxiety, ultimately, what it deals with, it deals with the issue of loss. Anxiety is about loss. It's about fear of loss.

Now, **Proverbs 12:25**, you don't have to turn there but for those of you who are taking notes, **Proverbs 12:25**, here's what it says. It says that anxiety in the heart of a man causes depression. Anxiety in the heart of a man causes depression, but a good word makes him glad. A good word makes him glad. So, when I think about **John 13-17**, I think of that good word. It's a good word that is designed to bring gladness to our hearts. In fact, we'll talk a little bit more about that in just a few moments, but the good word of the love of God, the love of the Father for the Son and the love of the Son for the Father, therefore the Son's love for us and so forth, and the glory of God and our access to interact with God in a deep and meaningful way. That news is designed to bring gladness and joy to our hearts.

But the point is that as things continue unfold, **Matthew 24**, as things unfold, the issue of anxiety is only going to increase, and we're going to look at a few verses, because what I want to do tonight is I want to give a little bit more of the why behind the what of why the issue of pursuing our dynamic interaction with the Father and the Son, unto that remaining joy that Jesus promised in **John 15:11**.

He said, "I've spoken these things to you that you may have joy that remains." I want to give a little bit more of the why behind the what of the severity of what lies ahead of us, that the issue of joy is not just about a little Holy Spirit tickle feather so we can laugh at church, but it truly is about a matter of survival, because a troubled heart is a vulnerable heart. I want to say this again. A troubled heart is a vulnerable heart, but a heart that has got the oil of gladness that comes from our interaction with the Lord, that heart that is vibrant, that heart that is connected with the fellowship of the Lord, is a heart that is guarded and protected from the fears, the anxieties, the temptations, all the different things that are being thrown our way and will continue to be thrown our way as things unfold in the generation of the Lord's return.

So, this issue of anxiety is not going to go away. It is only going to increase, and again we'll look at just a few verses that will make you go, "Wait a minute this is pretty intense." So, this issue of joy, gladness of heart, it really is a matter of

survival. Yes, it makes life easier to have to go through life with a vibrant spirit and we have got time to cultivate that before the Lord, but it's more than just about feeling good tomorrow. No, this is about being able to weather the storms that are upon us, of which we are seeing some of the gusts of winds of those storms already emerging.

*As I mentioned earlier, anxiety has to do with the issue of loss, fear of loss, and it's interesting that Jesus, in **Luke 10:41-42**, when He's talking to Mary and Martha, He says, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and you are troubled by many things, but your sister Mary, she has chosen the necessary thing, that good thing," and here comes the key phrase, "that cannot be taken away from her."*

The issue of worry and anxiety is about fear of loss, and that is because we have anchored our hope and our soul in that which can be taken away from us. The key to overcoming anxiety, and again, I recognize there are those who are exceptions to the rule because of different physiological components, and I want to be sensitive to that, but for the rest of us, much of our anxiety is rooted in the issue of the fear of loss, because we've anchored our hope in that which can be shaken, in that which can be taken away.

*So, when looking at **John 13-17**, again, it's really Jesus giving a theology, so to speak, I mean, He's really laying it out, and there's great truth of what we can engage ourselves with as we choose that better part. **John 13-17** gives us insight into what that good and better part is that cannot be taken away. They can take our money, they can take our lives, they can take our belongings, they can even take our reputation, but the one thing that cannot be taken is a vibrant interaction with the Lord, receiving His life-giving joy, His power, His peace. Interacting with His glory. God sharing things that are near and dear to His heart, and sharing it with us, and having a vibrant spirit, being conformed into the image of the Son of God. That cannot be taken away from us at all. Therein lies the secret to confidence, is being anchored into laying hold of that which cannot be taken away from us.*

I. OVERVIEW

- A. The primary theme Jesus speaks to His disciples about in **Jn. 13-17** is the subject of God's love and glory. Jesus' main objective is to lead the Church into the revelation of God's divine love. It is our destiny to experience the glory that He possessed with His Father before the foundations of the earth. Our destiny is to fully engage the fellowship of the Godhead forever.

*Paragraph A. Just a real brief overview. Again, this is our second session, and some of you were not here when we taught this course, so I just want to give a couple of introductory thoughts. Again, the primary theme of **John 13-17** is the issue of the love of God and the glory of God. **John 13-17** gives us tremendous insight into the nature of God's love. There are at least five elements of God's love that are spoken of in these five chapters. The Father's love for the Son, the Son's love for His people, the love that His people are to have for each other, the love that the church is to have back for the Lord, all rooted in the understanding of how God feels about His Son.*

Jesus' main objective, I believe, in these five chapters, is to lead us into the revelation of God's divine love. It is our destiny. It is our glory to enter into this relational dynamic between the Father and the Son. It's us being brought into the inner circle. There's something about us that we always want to be in the inner circle. Well, that cry for being in the inner circle has been answered by Jesus giving us access to the ultimate inner circle. I cannot think of an inner circle more

inner circle than the inner circle of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the intimate interaction between the three, and we've been invited into the conversation.

I think about it often, and not one of them goes, "What is this dude doing over here? Where did this joker come from? Hey, quick, hurry, let's change the conversation because we don't want Him to know what we are talking about." No. The openness that is there. The free access that comes through the shed blood of the Son of God is just absolutely amazing, that you and I have access to that inner circle, and to enter into the dialogue that They are having with each other.

By the way, this is not our topic for tonight, but there are several passages, most of them are in the Old Testament, where we see some of the things that the Father says to the Son. So, we're not even left to our imagination to figure out what they're talking about. The Scripture actually tells us what it is that they're talking about. What they are discussing. Like, one of them is: The Lord said to my Lord, sit at My right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. A lot to be said. That's a giant conversation that we're allowed to peer into that He wants to speak to us about.

- B. The primary destiny and inheritance of the Church is to experience deep intimacy with the Trinity. We are called to an experiential union with God (intimacy) and unity with the saints. (Jn. 13:34; 14:11; 15:4-7, 9-10, 12; 17:10-11, 13, 21-23, 26). We interact with the Trinity.

Paragraph B. Again, the primary inheritance of the church, there's several things that are part of our inheritance, but the primary inheritance of the church is the experience of deep intimacy with the Trinity. Deep, experiential union with God, and union with the saints. That is our glorious inheritance, to have this vibrant interaction with the Father and the Son, deep intimacy with God, and deep union with one another. Jesus says, "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

- C. Jesus' purpose of His instruction in Jn. 13-17 was to equip His followers to walk in victory under the growing global pressure. He taught His disciples that in dialogue with the Godhead, our hearts will be filled with peace and joy to keeping us from falling away under pressure.

¹¹*"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you..." (Jn. 15:11)*

¹⁷*"These things I command you, that you love one another." (Jn. 15:17)*

¹*"These things I have spoken to you, that you should not...stumble [fall away]." (Jn. 16:1)*

³³*"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace..." (Jn. 16:33)*

¹³*"... these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled..." (Jn. 17:13)*

*Paragraph C. Jesus' purpose of His instruction in **John 13-17** was to equip His followers to walk in victory under the growing global pressure. That's why we started with **Matthew 24**. I want to encourage you that as you go and study **John 13-17** to keep it in the context of what Jesus talked about in **Matthew 24**. It's several days apart, but I really believe that when Jesus is saying, "Let not your hearts be troubled," in **John 14:1** and then **John 14:27**, that He really is picking up on the conversation that He started with them several days before in **Matthew 24:6**, when He says, "Do not be troubled," and He begins to give line-upon-line insight in how we can actually walk that out.*

So, He's instructing His disciples in how to actually walk in victory under growing global pressure. Now, of course, in their generation there was a tremendous amount of pressure in terms of the persecution of the church, the newness of the church, the challenges that came with the growing of the church, but it has an ultimate application to the generation in which the Lord returns. He taught His disciples that, in dialogue with God, our hearts are filled with peace and joy and it will keep us from falling away under pressure. Our hearts filled with peace and joy. It's the thing that many, if not most, if not all, human beings long for, is to have lasting peace and lasting joy.

*The New Testament speaks of peace that transcends all understanding, a peace that is indescribable, and then the real sense of well-being and certainty that comes when the oil of gladness touches our hearts. It's one of our great longings. It's actually one of the reasons why most humans pursue the things that we pursue with such vigor and with such focus, is because we're after peace and joy. The problem is that those things, when they get shaken, our peace and our joy is lost. Jesus, in **John 15**, says, "I'm offering you something else. I'm offering you a joy that actually remains. A joy that is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, according to **Galatians 5:22**."*

So, He's teaching the disciples that the pathway to peace and the pathway to joy is interacting with the Lord, number one, and number two, obeying the Lord. You know, it's like that old song, some of you more experienced citizens, notice I didn't say older, some of you more experienced saints will remember this old song. "Trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey." No, I'm not going to sing it. No, no, no, no, no, no, no. The Bible says an inheritance hastily gained will not be blessed in the end, and what's going to come in the room if I sing, you all can't handle it. I'm just kidding. Okay, alright. Speaking about joy and unity under pressure, there you have it.

*It is the thing that we long for the most, and again, in **John 13-17** it's about the love of God, the glory of God, but it's also about how to interact with the Lord and the call to obey the Lord, that our interaction with Him and the obeying of Him is the key to lasting joy.*

*Now, there are, let's see here, there are, right there in the notes, there are five objectives that Jesus gives. Five objectives. **John 15:11** He says, "These things I've spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you." That's a giant tip-off that what He discussed prior to that is absolutely critical for us to walk in that lasting joy. He said, "I'm telling you a bunch of stuff, now that I'm done talking about it, I've told you this because this is the way to have lasting joy." You go, "Okay."*

*Then in **verse 17** He says this: These things I command you or I've spoken of these things that you may love one another. So, the next thing He says, "I'm telling you some insight, some things for you to consider, because walking these out, therein lies the secret to be able to love one another." These things I command you that. Instead of "that" put the word "because," or "so that." These things I've told you because I want you to love one another, or these things I've commanded you so that. The reason that I've told you this is so you would love one another.*

*Forgiving love. Walking in the power of forgiving love. In the earlier sessions when we start talking about **John 15**, we talked about the commandment of loving one another is not just having the feeling of love and affection, though there's definitely that component to it, but it's the power of forgiving love, that it takes supernatural help from God to walk out*

what I like to call forgiving love. In fact, I believe that that is the primary, not the only, but the primary fruit that Jesus is wanting us to bear in **John 15**. The fruit that remains is the obeying of His commandment, and then He says, “And this is My commandment, that you love one another.”

It takes abiding. It takes the supernatural activity of God that comes by interacting with God to love one another, because, again, if all Jesus said, and I’ve said this before, if all Jesus said was, “Look, love one another,” I go, “Okay, that’s cool.” You can go down to the nearest TV show that tells you that. And He goes, “No, it’s not just the requirement of loving one another. It is the standard by which you’re called to love one another.” In **John 13**...

The issue of loving one another, that’s not the challenge. The challenge is the standard by which He calls us to love one another. So here’s what He says in **John 13:34**, He says, “I give you this commandment that you love one another as I have loved you.” That’s the standard. I want you to love each other the way that I have loved you.

You go, “Okay.” But then you have to take **John 15:9**, and you have to bring that into the equation, because in **John 15:9**, Jesus defines how it is that He loved us, and He says, “As the Father has loved Me, so I have loved you.” So, **John 15:9**, As the Father has loved Me, yes, so I have loved you. Therefore, **John 13:34**, a new commandment I give to you that you love one another as I have loved you. It’s absolutely important, but the point is that it’s supernatural. We do not have the capacity within our souls to love Him that way except for this active interaction with the Father and the Son called abiding.

John 16:1, Jesus says, “These things I’ve spoken to you that you should not stumble, you should not fall away,” so again the insight...now the verses before **16:1**, He was actually talking about the issue of being hated by the unbelieving world. He said, “If they hated Me, they will hate you as well. They will be filled with rage and anger.” And then He says in **16:1**, “These things I have spoken to you, that you would not stumble.” This is a very, very important subject matter because there is this very subtle belief, most people won’t say it that overtly, but if we listen to people very, very carefully, there is this suggestion that if we would just package things just a little bit more differently, then the world will respond, and that is rooted in a fundamental belief that people actually want Jesus. The Bible says they don’t.

The Bible makes is very, very, very clear. Jesus said that men loved darkness, **John 3:17**. Men loved darkness. **John 1:11**, it says, “He came to His own and His own did not receive Him.” Except by the grace of God touching our spirit, touching our mind we cannot say yes to the gospel, and there’s a rage that exists within the hearts of the unbelieving world, and that rage is only going to increase. Jesus says it is going to come to a point of manifest hatred because of My name. So, this growing thing in the culture, that is actually creeping in the church as well of seeking to win over the world in the way of the world and therefore identifying with the world in a way that is not consistent with the gospel, is going to cause many people to trip up.

So, Jesus says, “Look, let me tell you about the condition of the world. They hate Me, just you hated Me before you came into My kingdom.” You’re like, “Well, I didn’t really hate You. That’s kind of intense.” The Lord goes, “Nah, from My

perspective, that is what you were doing.” **Ephesians** makes it very clear that you were by nature children of wrath. That’s who you and I were before we came into the kingdom.

Let me tell you something. Jesus did not come to make good people better. So, this issue of the condition of the unbelieving world as we were before we came to Christ, is something that is not popular anymore these days. So, the gospel, now, is about Jesus coming to broken people who do sinful things rather than sinful people who do things that are sinful and that bring brokenness to our lives and to those that are around us. You see, because if you’re broken you don’t need a Savior. You need a therapist, but if you’re a sinner, you need redemption. You need the cross and all of its intensity and violence, and the shed blood of a glorious Savior who demonstrated His love for us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died.

So, this falling away that Jesus is addressing in **John 16:1** is rooted in people who are having the wrong idea about the condition of the human race, and thus, having gone on the journey of perverting the gospel, because the gospel to, quote, “broken” people is a different gospel to people who were sinners, those who were enemies of the cross. Again, such as you and I were.

Jesus continues in **verse 33**. He says, “These things I have spoken to you that you may have peace.” So, in **John 13-17** He’s addressing the issue of remaining joy, the issue of loving one another, the issue of not stumbling, and the issue of stability, which is what I think of when I think of peace, and then again, **John 17:13**, the fulfillment of joy. In other words, that we would enter into the mature experience of joy.

- D. Jesus prophesied a coming time of great pressure on the earth and that many will be gripped with negative emotions¹ due to a **disconnect** from Jesus through the lack of prayer (**Mt. 26:41**) and a **disconnect** (**Rom. 11:25**) from the plan and storyline of heaven—the gospel.
- E. The COVID crisis (Spring 2020-Spring 2022) showed emerging signs of deteriorating youthful resilience. In 2020, a larger-than-average amount of young adults (ages 18-24) reported signs of anxiety and depressive disorder (56%). Compared to all adults, young adults are more likely to report substance use (25% vs. 13%) and suicidal thoughts (26% vs. 11%).

²³“**For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people.** ²⁴**And they will fall by the edge of the sword ... and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring;**
²⁶**men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth ...**” (**Lk. 21:23–26**)

Paragraph E. Covid, the Covid crisis, and regardless of our political stances on it, I’m not addressing that, I’m just talking about just the impact of all the dynamics that came along with Covid, that’s what I mean by the Covid crisis. All the dynamics. It was a pop quiz. It was a pop quiz. And here’s what happened during this Covid crisis. It showed emerging signs of deteriorating youthful resilience. I want to say this again. Covid showed emerging signs of

¹ Mike Bickle uses the acronym F.O.L.D for Fear (Lk. 21:26), Offense (Mt. 24:10), Lust (Lk. 21:34) and Deception (Lk. 21:8).

deterioration of youthful resilience. One of the things that marks youths is resilience. Physical resilience, even a sense of emotional resilience, a sense of I've got my whole life in front of me, so we can plow through anything type of deal.

But the prophet Isaiah, in **Isaiah 40:30** says there's a crisis that is coming to the earth so intense that even youths will stumble and fall, and young men grow tired and weary. So, in 2020, there was a larger than average number of young adults from the ages of 18-24 that reported signs of anxiety and depressive disorders, up to about 56%. It was higher than compared to the adults, those 25 and older. There was also a higher increase of substance abuse, 25%, and an increase of suicidal thoughts, all in the context of this Covid crisis. And it was a pop quiz.

Here's what Jesus says in **Luke 21:23-26**: And there will be great distress. Instead of great distress, say "great anxiety." Great anxiety. And so, the issue, isn't it interesting, there is a lot of talk about mental illness today, more than usual, and it's only going to get worse, because Jesus says that there will be great distress. In other words, mental health will be an increasing issue.

He said there will be great distress, then He says there will be great wrath upon the people. In other words, there will be rage. Just anger. We see this happening in the culture. Then He says they will fall by the edge of the sword. There will be death through conflict, murder, civil wars, international wars. He says it again. There will be distress of nations. Again, great anxiety, great pressure will come on nations. Then He says, "With perplexity." In other words, the pressure will be such that people won't be able to wrap their minds around what is happening because of the intensity, the frequency, the scope and the speed by which things are happening.

Again, between 2016-2020 we had a pop quiz. 2015-2020 there were just so many things that were happening, and they happened fast. It was a pop quiz. Jesus goes on to say that not only will people be perplexed, but He says men's hearts will fail them because of fear. Now, here's the interesting thing. He says their hearts will fail them for fear, and the expectation of those things to come. So, it's not just the issue of what is happening now, they're beginning to do the math. They're going, "Oh my gosh. What is next?" And the question of what is next will only increase the distress and the perplexity and the fear that resides within the human heart.

- F. Isaiah gives the pastoral answer to the church which is "**waiting on the Lord**", the experience of entering the Trinitarian conversation. The Spirit calls the Church to her *inheritance* by experiencing God's love in the context of engaging with the Trinity in fellowship.

³¹But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isa 40:31)

So, the prophet Isaiah, he says, "You know what? Even the young people they will grow tired and weary, but," **verse 31**, "but those who wait on the Lord." That is Isaiah's pastoral answer to the church. Wait on the Lord. Instead of saying, "Wait on the Lord," he says, "Enter into the experience of engaging into the Trinitarian conversation," or the way Jesus says it: *abide*. The prophet Isaiah says wait on the Lord, Jesus says *abide*. It's the same thing. The heart that abides, the heart that engages in this Trinitarian conversation, they are the ones who will have that strength that is renewed. There's a renewing, there's a refreshing that happens on the inside by the Spirit, the life-giving joy of Christ, because it touched

our hearts. We begin to soar. There's a certain sense of internal levity. Yes, there will be pressure. Yes, we will feel the pressure, but it won't crush us because of the life-giving power of Christ as operating inside of us.

II. THE TEMPORAL JOY REMOVED

- A. Jesus and the prophets describe the Great Tribulation in perilous ways. The sin, its consequences, and judgments are severe in their intensity and comprehensive in their scope.

³⁵***“For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.” (Lk. 21:35)***

⁶***Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left [Isa 13:12]. (Isa. 24:6)***

¹⁵***So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. (Rev. 9:15)***

Let's go to page 2. So, what happens is, Jesus, the apostles, and the Old Testament prophets, they describe the generation of the Lord's return as perilous. In other words, it's full of danger and it's risky. Yes, there are glorious things that will take place at the same time. The power of God moving in and through the church, the grace of God to love Him by way of the First Commandment will be established. Clarity in the gospel. Unity around, again, the principles of the Gospel where the church will be unified in faith. The glory of God being manifested hundreds of millions, a billion plus souls coming into the kingdom. Power to heal the sick. The day the Lord manifestation of God's judgments resisting the powers of evil. But yet at the same time there will be a great conflict, a tremendous conflict in the earth.

The prophet Isaiah, **Isaiah 24**, you don't have to turn there, I've got a couple verses there, gives probably one of the most concise details about what the crisis will look like in the earth, just one, two, three, four. And again, the reason I'm taking my time to talk about this is because I want to alert us to the importance of pursuing the joy that remains. Jesus talks about this joy that remains. It's not just something that just kind of improves our lives a little bit, though it does. There's pressure that exists in the earth now, and this pressure only increase, and the remaining joy is the thing that will be the anchor for our soul.

- B. Isaiah 24:4-13 gives a detailed layout of the scope of God's global judgments. The shakings are so severe, they affect the normal **rhythms** of domestic and social life (24:7-13) and the **condition** of the environment, which is significantly affected (24:4, 18-20) through droughts, disturbances in the vegetation, and violent quakes, all because of the **sin** of humanity (24:5-6).

⁵***The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. ⁶Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left. (Isa. 24:5-6)***

Paragraph B. **Isaiah 24:4-13** gives us a detailed layout of the scope of God's global judgments. He says these shakings are so severe that they literally begin to affect the normal rhythms of domestic and social life. And again, we have a pop quiz just right in our review mirror. Again, I understand are lots of different dynamics, but I'm just talking about the crisis. There was literally a day when everything was just normal. In fact, the TSA reports, for those of you travel, prior to Covid we were transporting about 2.3 million passengers per day all across America. 2.3 million passengers per day. That

number went as low as a 90,000 during Covid, probably a little lower. Let's just kind of round it up. 90,000. It stopped domestic social life.

Isaiah 24:7-13 also talks about the condition of the environment. There are all manner of environmental things that will take place. So, is climate change real or is it not? I don't know, but I do know this: Isaiah prophesies the conditions of the environment will change, and the scripture says it is man-made. It's called sin. It ain't cars but it's sin, the sin of humanity, where creation begins to react. There will be droughts, disturbances, vegetation, violent quakes and so forth, because of the sin of humanity.

- C. Isaiah also highlights the severe emotional and psychological impact God's judgments will have on humanity. All joy is removed, and anguish, bitterness, and confusion have taken root.

⁷The new wine fails, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh.⁸The mirth of the tambourine ceases, the noise of the jubilant ends, the joy of the harp ceases. ⁹They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink is bitter to those who drink it. (Isa. 24:7-9)

Paragraph C. Isaiah also highlights severe emotional and psychological impact of God's judgments. Severe emotional and psychological impact of God's judgments, that it will have on the human race. Here's what it says: all joy will be removed and anguish, bitterness, and confusion are the things that will take root. All joy will be removed. Parties will be shut down. Temporal happiness gone. Music will stop. It says right there the tambourine ceases, **Isaiah 24**. The tambourine ceases. That means the music stops. The jubilant and the joy of the harp ceases. Music comes to a stop.

Not only that, it says, "They shall not drink wine with a song. Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it." In other words, those who seek to medicate themselves through alcohol will find it ineffective. That will be the intensity of the distress that will touch the earth. One of the things that is amazing, it says that the music stops, it says that the tambourine stops, the harp stops, in other words the music stops, but one of the reasons why it stops is because it's setting the stage, this is not in the notes, I'm kind of getting a little happy over here, because it's setting the stage for **verses 15-16**, because there is a song that actually emerges. It is a song that says, "Glory to the Righteous One." It is the church that will actually sing.

Here's the point. The reason why the church is singing is because they have embraced the **John 15** reality. They've embraced that buoyant joy that Christ offers. Again, in the midst of the global distress when the singing and the music stops, there is a song that emerges from the hearts of the saints.

- D. Social gatherings and parties no longer satisfy, and alcoholic drinks will lose their pleasure.

¹⁰The city of confusion is broken down; every house is shut up, so that none may go in. ¹¹There is a cry for wine in the streets, all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. (Isa. 24:10-11)

Paragraph D. Social gatherings, parties will no longer...and by parties I don't necessarily mean bad parties, just the gathering of people coming together for social purposes, they will no longer be satisfying. Undoubtedly, I think there are bad parties in this as well, but social gatherings, parties, will no longer satisfy. Alcoholic drinks will lose their pleasure.

- E. There is tremendous confusion, and destruction is such that no one can go into their homes. There will be a cry for alcohol to deaden the pain and anguish, but will not be found or satisfy.

¹³... *the land among the people, it shall be like the shaking of an olive tree, like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done. (Isa. 24:12-13)*

Paragraph E. There will be tremendous confusion and destruction so that no one can even go into their homes to find refuge. There will be a cry for alcohol to deaden the pain and anguish but it will not be found or satisfy if it is found. So, again, I want to kind of give the landscape of what Jesus is really alluding to in **Matthew 24** when He says these things will happen, see to it that you are not troubled. A couple of days later He's at the communion table with the disciples, and He begins the line upon line insight into the love of God and the glory of God and our access to it to interact with the Lord in a meaningful way.

- F. John 15 gives an in-depth practical road map to secure hearts filled with divine joy. Jesus gave His instruction to equip hearts with joy and to equip the church stay in unity under great pressure.

¹¹*“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you...” (Jn. 15:11)*

¹⁷*“These things I command you, that you love one another.” (Jn. 15:17)*

John 15 gives us an in-depth, practical road map to secure hearts filled with divine joy. I want to say this again, Paragraph F. **John 15** gives us an in-depth, practical road map to secure our hearts filled with divine joy. Jesus gave us His instructions to equip hearts with joy and to equip the church to stay in unity under great pressure. **John 15:11**, I've spoken these things to you that My joy may remain in you. **Verse 17**, these things I command you that you love one another.

He goes, “I'm telling you these things because if you engage Me in this way, drinking of the superior pleasures of the gospel, **Psalms 36:8**, that we will be abundantly satisfied if we drink from the rivers of His pleasures, which is really referring to the love of God, the presence of God, He says if you engage with this you will have remaining joy and you will have the grace to love one another, walk in unity with one another in the midst of the pressure, because the exact opposite is what's happening in the unbelieving world—joy removed and conflict everywhere.

Yet, in the midst of that, the power of the Gospel will prevail by having a witness of the glory of the gospel and the power of Christ manifested through those who are interacting with the Lord in a meaningful way. They will have the remaining joy of Christ and the grace to love one another in the deep and a meaningful way.

III. THE PROMISE OF JOY AND UNITY UNDER GREAT PRESSURE

- A. In John 15, to abide points to the idea of dwelling. Jesus calls us to actively live in the place of spiritual union with the Trinity. So much of this has to do with our thoughts, as they are an indicator of where we live. Abiding is about our thoughts and our internal dialogue.

Let's go to page 3. The promise of joy and unity under great pressure. Because, again, I think when there's pressure I think those are the two things that go away: the sense of certainty within our hearts that comes from joy, the sense of well-being, and conflict begins to kick in because all of our natural survival instincts, so to speak, begin to kick in. When under pressure the last thing that most humans do is to look out for others.

You know, the thing that I thought was interesting, this is going to get me into a heap of a lot of trouble, but that's okay, I remember a couple years ago when they were prophesying about just the different crises that were coming to America, and I'm not going to get too specific since you don't know what I'm talking about, but they were talking about all these different things, and man and people were starting to get canned food and all of that stuff. I'm not saying that I'm against that but the emphasis was on getting the food and putting some in my basement and all that kind of stuff.

Then one day it hit me how different that is for what we saw in the book of Acts. What we see in the book of Acts in Acts II is a prophet Agabus, he prophesies that there is coming a famine to the whole world, and when he prophesied a famine was coming, here's what the church did: they went, "Man, I hope the saints in Judea are going to be okay." They began to take up offerings for them. I remember thinking I was hardly seeing anywhere was I seeing the kind of response. What I saw was self protection as opposed to going, "Man, if this is true, man the churches in the inner cities, man they're going to be hurting. We got to get our resources together and what about the third world countries? Hey, let's come up with a plan so that when this stuff happens, we can actually take care of our brothers and sisters."

My point is that pressure engages all of our survival instincts and therefore being a threat to the commandment to love one another, unless we actually engage in the Trinitarian dialogue. We engage in the Trinitarian dialogue, and the life-giving joy of Christ begins to touch our hearts and we began to receive the grace to actually engage in the commandment of loving one another, the exact opposite of what is happening in and what will happen in the unbelieving world.

So, in John 15, Jesus points to this idea of abiding, which is the idea of dwelling. When He's saying abide, He's saying remain or He's saying dwell. Jesus calls us to actively live in the place of spiritual union with the Trinity. When He's talking about abiding, He's saying, "I want you to be intentional, I want you to be active. This this is not passive. I want you to be intentional. I want you to put it in your schedule. Set aside time to begin to engage in this spiritual union that has been given to us by the born-again experience.

Now, so much of this has to do with our thoughts. It has to do with our thought life. Our thought life is an indicator of where we live. I'll say this again. Our thought life is an indicator of where we are abiding or where we are living, because abiding has so much to do with our thoughts and our internal conversations. I'm going to say this again. Some of you are going, "Get this guy off stage now." No, again, I'm talking to myself as well. So much of our thoughts are an indicator of

where we live. Abide, remain, dwell, live. Jesus is pointing to, I like the way Misty Edwards says it, what happens behind the face. Abiding is about our thoughts and our internal dialogue.

- B. When we are ourselves more aware of what we are thinking about, we discover that much of our thought life is a conversation either with ourselves or with others; those thoughts are where we live. Abiding is the call to shift our internal dialogue by interacting with the Spirit.

³*You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. (Isa. 26:3)*

²*Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:1–3)*

Paragraph B. When we ourselves, we actually just take a moment to stop and think about what we are thinking about, you'll find out that much of our thoughts are actually a conversation. It's not just a list of concepts that go through our mind, it's a conversation. We're either having a conversation with ourselves, which is called self-preoccupation, or our conversation is with someone else, and usually we're kind of mad at them. And we're winning the argument too. It's good. I mean it's like Perry Mason on steroids. I mean, we are judge, jury, and prosecutor, and all of our best arguments are coming through our minds. You know, people sometimes tell me, "I don't know if I'm angry or not." I'm like if you're having an argument in your head with somebody, you're ticked. I read it in a book, never done of myself, I've just met tons of people that has happened with but anyway. You're like, "Man, you've got a lot of clarity on that." Nevermind.

But now, but really, our thoughts are in conversation. They're either a conversation with ourselves or a conversation with someone...Now it's not always an anger thing. It could be a work-related thing. It could be a project, it could be an idea. But it is a dialogue that is happening in our hearts and in our minds. What abiding is and what meditation is, is shifting that conversation. Abiding is simply shifting that conversation. A guy goes, "Man, how do I meditate?" The answer is this. You do it all the time. We do it all the time. The way that God designed us and the way that God wired us, He designed and He wired us to meditate. The way our thoughts go, this conversation that goes on an inside, that is what meditation is. Jesus simply calls us to change the conversation.

*One of our leaders in the GPR pointed this out about a year or two ago, and that is that is **Psalm 1:3** it says blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord and on His law he meditates day and night. You all know the verse. Well, the next chapter, so **Psalm 1** is the **Psalm** about the honor and the integrity and the power of God's word, and the delight that we can experience in engaging with God's Word, and the prosperity of life that meditating on God's word brings. **Psalm 2** is the exact opposite. It's about the nations, it's about a culture raging against the Word of God, but here's the point that this leader pointed out.*

***Psalm 1:3** says, "And on his law he meditates day and night." **Psalm 2:1** says, "Why do the nation's rage and why do the people plot a vain thing?" The Hebrew word for plot is the exact same word for the word meditate. So, in **Psalm 1** we have the man who meditates on God's Word, and in **Psalm 2:1** we have the man who meditates on vanity. He ponders a vain thing, and what is a vain thing? It is the things that are temporal, the things that are not of eternal significance, plus things that are directly against the Word of God.*

So we, paragraph B. when we ourselves are aware of what we're thinking about we discover that much of our thought life is a conversation either with ourselves or with others, those thoughts are where we live. Abiding is the call to shift the internal dialogue by interacting with the spirit and I just so appreciate the simplicity of this principle. Abiding is simply saying thank you to the Father for a particular truth and asking Him to show us more. It is that simple. **John 15:9**, Jesus says, "As the Father has loved me so have I loved you. Say, "Jesus, thank You, or Father, thank You that You love Your Son. Show me more."

And we begin to develop this muscle of just, little by little, just speaking these simple phrases to the Lord. I'm not talking about an unbroken dialogue, because the Lord is training us. He's teaching us how to pray. He's helping us in this journey of changing the conversation, but it literally is that simple. **John 15:11**, He says, "These things I have spoken to you that My joy may remain." Say, "Jesus, thank You, that You've spoken these things to me. Show me more." Or, "Jesus, thank You, that there's joy that remains. Show me more."

Just that simple phrase, and again, I've found in my own life I have found I can get hit by that arrow and I'm in a funk, boom, in a minute, and I have found that if I engage to take a moment and to speak that phrase to the Lord, that it's just a matter of time where my own emotional state shifts, but when I don't engage in that phrase, in that dialogue, and I seek to kind of grit my teeth and just to kind of push through by my own strength, it just makes for a very, very long week.

So, we simply just speak the phrase. Say, "Father, thank You. Show me more." All of **John 13-17** is just loaded with phrases that we can express gratitude to the Father for, and then ask Him to show us more. Some of you may say, "Man, that sounds simple." It really is that simple. Father, thank You that You love Your Son. Show me more. Jesus, thank You for offering me joy that remains. Show me more. You know, we can pace in the prayer room, sitting in the chairs, singing the worship song, driving in your car home, laying on your bed, like the **Psalms** says, "I will meditate upon Your Word in the night." Just simply speaking those phrases to the Lord.

- C. Our way, the way we live and operate, is deeply connected to our thought life. Jesus promised that as we actively participate in the Trinitarian dialogue, the life flow of God will release and a growing sense of Jesus' divine joy and pleasure upon our spirit as God is revealed in us.

⁷For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. (Prov. 23:7)

¹¹"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." (Jn. 15:11)

A few more thoughts. Paragraph C. Our way, the way that we live and operate, is deeply connected to our thought life. Again, our way, our mode of operation, our manner of living, is deeply connected to our thought life, and Jesus promised that as we actively participate in the Trinitarian dialogue, the life-flow of God will release a growing sense of Jesus' divine joy and pleasure upon our spirit, as God is revealed in us.

- D. In John 15, Jesus gives two primary reasons for the purpose of His instruction in this chapter. He wants His people filled with His vibrant *life-giving joy* (15:11) and secondly, Jesus wants a church in *deep unity* towards with another and deeply rooted in forgiving love (15:17).

⁷“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom ... ⁸All these are the beginning of sorrows. ⁹“... they will ... kill you, and you will be hated ... (they) will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.” (Mt. 24:7–10)

¹⁷...that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—¹⁹to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge ... (Eph. 3:17–19)

Paragraph D. John 15. Jesus gives two primary reasons for the purpose of His instruction. He wants His people filled with vibrant life-giving joy. Secondly, He wants His people to walk in unity with one another, that in the midst of a culture where there will be nation against nation. There will be betrayal. There will be that hating of one another. In the midst of that pressure, those who give themselves to that Trinitarian dialogue, there is the power, there is that grace of that deep, Rooted forgiving love, resulting in us walking in unity with one another, and in a culture where there's so much suspicion and hate, offense and accusation, there is the grace of God, or the life-giving joy that can touch us. Joy is an emotional fruit that comes independent of our circumstances, but it comes from our interaction with Jesus. Amen. All right. Let's stand.

Again, there are those who have some physiological issues, and again, I want to be sensitive to those, and you can continue to consult with your doctor and then also believe for the Lord to touch you with healing, but continue to follow your doctor's instructions until you are healed. But then there's another group that there's just this sense of heaviness, and you're kind of thinking, “Man, this is my lot. I have to bear this,” and the Lord goes, “No, you don't have to bear this. You don't have to bear this.” In fact, the bearing of it, when we're continuing to walk this out in our own strength, only perpetuates that dynamic in our soul. What we want to do is we want to give ourselves to abiding in the Lord.

*It says in **Psalm 45** that Jesus was anointed with gladness above all of His companions. **Nehemiah 8:10** tells us that the joy of the Lord is our strength. There's this invigorating, strengthening component that comes with the joy of God. Let's close our eyes and ask the Lord to touch us. I don't want to embarrass anyone, this doesn't mean there's anything wrong with you, it's just our emotional makeup. If you're going, “You know what? That spirit of heaviness, I'm acquainted with that and I've been asking the Lord for a breakthrough,” if that's you and you'd like to receive prayer I want to ask you to come to the front. We want to take a moment and pray for you.*

It says He gives a garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, and again, the real issue here is that you don't have to bear it. You don't have to bear it. You can share it with trusted friends, and there's some of those dynamics, but also begin to actively engage in this Trinitarian dialogue. It will take time, but Jesus promises the joy that remains. Some of you have been feeling a sense of condemnation because of this, a sense of the spirit of failure, but I just want to expose that for what it is. It is a lie of the evil one. It is a lie of the evil one. The Father's love is towards you, and He just wants us to interact with Him, because therein lies the joy. Therein lies the joy.

*Again, it won't happen overnight, but part of what happens in **John 13-17** is this call to simply believe our Father's Word.*

- E. Joy is an “emotional fruit” that comes, independent of circumstances, from our interaction with Jesus. It is the fruit of the Spirit. Peace is a state of being, while joy is the inward experience of well-being and confidence. Joy comes as we connect with the Spirit and He reveals in us the love of God, the purpose of God and His power. The revealing of the knowledge of God (intimacy) is what produces the pleasure of joy in our heart.
- F. There is a time coming in which temporal joy will be removed and there will be a culture of offense and betrayal. The pleasure of joy drives out and protects our heart from dark emotions and empowers us to express the love of God more consistently to those around us. Joy unlocks and empowers the heart to love.