

We're going to be in Ecclesiastes 11-12. We will for a moment flip over and look at Job 38. So if you know your Bible well, you've got to be thinking, "Both Ecclesiastes and Job? This is going to be a great morning." If you don't, you'll see very quickly what I mean by that. So let's get started. Ecclesiastes 11, starting in verse 9, "Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes." Now if we just stopped there, every one in the Western world would say, "Yes and amen." Because if I could simplify this, here's all he said. "Use your vitality, use your strength, use your energy to chase after what's in your heart and chase after what your eyes want." You will not meet anyone in Western culture who would say, "No, don't do that." If you do meet someone, they're in some sort of movie where they're painting some sort of prudish, old school fool who is trying to crush the dream of some young up-comer who just wants to follow their heart. So no one is going to disagree with Solomon here early. But the next line will cut the "amens" more than in half. "Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment." We just lost a lot of amens. So everybody is like, "Yes, follow your heart. Yes, chase after what your eyes desire." But if you flip the, "Just remember you'll be judged for that," and almost everybody hopped off the bus. Because our position is, "Who are you to judge me?" And most of us take that position even with God. "Who are You to judge me? Wouldn't it be wrong of me to deny the desires of my heart? Wouldn't it be wrong for me not to chase after the dreams of my heart? Wouldn't that be the greater sin?" So Solomon goes, "No, chase it. Run. Go. But just remember, you'll be judged."

And then he'll do something similar in verse 10. "Remove vexation [anxiety] from your heart, and put away pain from your body. . ." Now I want to stop there again. In the West, we excel at this. We excel at removing fear and anxiety from our hearts and minds. And we do it most of the time by numbing. So here's what happens to us that isn't true all over the world. If we're having a really crummy day, we can just go buy a cake and eat it, and we'll just feel better. We can just go and get a 2 liter bottle of sugar and caffeine, suck that thing down and it will just be better for a little while. Maybe if that's not your drug, we can roll it up. You can grab you some Crown, put a straw in that bottle and make it go away for a little while. If you want something stronger than that, you can get it on the street or as a prescription. Now let me be very clear, so you can hear what I'm saying and what I'm not saying. There are times where chemical imbalances in the mind require medication in order for us to walk in a playing field we can operate in. I'm not anti-medication. I am anti-medication if you're using it as a crutch to not address your heart issues. That is a wrong use of medication. If you've got a chemical imbalance that needs to be addressed, then yes use it. So I'm not anti-drug. Don't hear me saying that. Praise God for science, and praise God for how He has given us some of these things. But these things were not given to us as something to numb our heart but to rather survive in situations where biologically we need the help. So we're excellent at putting vexation away from our bodies, out of our heart. But then look what he does here. He's going dark again. It always starts so good, because we want to agree with him. "Yes, let anxiety be away from my body. I don't want to experience pain. Let's get rid of that pain. Yes and amen. Preach it, Solomon." But then look at where he goes. "Remove vexation from your heart, and put away pain from your body, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity." That word "vanity" is the Hebrew word for "meaningless." "Put away vexation from your heart, put away pain from your body, but it's all meaningless anyway." I just want to hug him. I want to go, "Come barbecue at my house, man. Come on. It's better than you think. Do you need meds? Come here, man."

And then look where he goes next. Ecclesiastes 12, starting in verse 1, "Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them". . ." Most of us cannot fathom that. Most of us cannot fathom that there would come a time in our lives where we hated being alive. Most of us cannot comprehend being frustrated that we woke up. He's going to start to describe the aging process here. Watch this. ". . .before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain, in the day when the keepers of the house tremble. . ." Okay, how do you take care of yourself? With your hands. If you get old enough, your hands will begin to tremble and you will not be able to keep your house like you once did. ". . .in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent. . ." Your strength is in your core, in your back. The strong men being bent means that your physical strength is now gone. ". . .and the grinders cease. . ." What's he talking about? Teeth. And this written when they can't just jam some plastic up in your face and have teeth back. ". . .and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed. . ." What's he talking about? Eyesight. For my parents and in-laws to read a menu at a restaurant requires like seven feet of space. Sometimes I just have to explain to them, "Chicken. You can get chicken here, any way you want it." So your eyes fail. Let's keep going. ". . .and the doors on the street are shut. . ." You can't hear. ". . .when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low—they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way. . ." Have you ever been going the speed limit in I-35 and someone's in the left lane driving like it's a school zone. And you blow past them to give them a dirty look, and it's like some old lady or old man? What's happening in that moment is the speed at which life operates has become scary to them. Now if you're older in here, I'm not hating. I'm just reading the Bible. Don't get upset. I love old people. Come to my house. We can do dinner at 3:30. This is just what the Bible says. Let's keep going. It's not over. ". . .the almond tree blossoms [or turns silver], the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets—before the silver cord is snapped, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity." So this is a very, highly problematic text. If I could boil it down and make it simple, here's what Solomon just said. "Hey, chase after your dreams. Chase after the desires of your heart. If your eye see something that it wants, take it, but just know that you're going to be judged for that. And if you live long enough, you'll hate that you're alive. You will die and then remember that judgment I was talking about. You'll be there then. And don't forget that all of life is meaningless." That's what we just read. So do you see what I'm saying. Don't you just want to hug him? You definitely don't want to hang out with him. He's about as pessimistic as it gets.

Now, you solve this text by looking at its two imperatives. There are two imperatives, two commands in this text that lead us to Jesus Christ and lead us to a solution of the problem in this text. Ecclesiastes 11:9, the first word is what? Rejoice. So the first imperative, the first command, the first thing that God is commanding us to do out of this text is simple. Rejoice. Now here's where it becomes problematic. We've already read that we get judged for that rejoicing. We are, by our design, rejoicers. We are, by our creation, worshipers. Our problem is not that we rejoice, but rather that we rejoice wrongly. So Romans 1 would unpack it like this. Romans 1 says that you and I prefer creation rather than the Creator, who is forever praised. Did you hear the problem there. You rejoice and worship, but you worship creation, not the Creator who is the One to be forever praised. Verse 28 of Romans 1 says we have failed to acknowledge God. What is that except a failure to rejoice in what we should rejoice in, but rather we rejoice in shallow, temporary things that are here in one moment and gone in the next. The reason some of you can swing from elation to despair so easily is that you rejoice wrongly. Your rejoicing is in the wrong place. It's for the wrong thing. Surely you can see we were meant to worship and rejoice. It happened all over the metroplex last night when the Mavs won. Grown men and women elated at the fact that we hit some shots down the stretch. The place was packed, there was screaming, painted bodies, same colored shirts. It looks very much like a cult from the outside. If you didn't know the sport, you'd be just like, "This is really weird." But we're worshipers. We're rejoicers. It's what we do. The problem is our rejoicing is broken, which is why we're judged for rejoicing wrongly.

So the first imperative actually shows us the problem. The second imperative actually fixes the problem. So let's look at the second one. The first word of Ecclesiastes 12:1 is what? Remember. So "rejoice" throws out the problem. Our rejoicing is broken. So the question we have to answer is this. Is there a way of remembering that redeems our rejoicing? The answer is a resounding "yes." One of the rhythms you'll see established in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation is this idea of remembrance. "Remember. . .remember. . .remember. . ." In fact, a better way to read Ecclesiastes 12 would be to put "remember your Creator" in front of all those phrases. Because if we could read Hebrew, it should sound really redundant. "Remember your Creator before your eyesight goes. Remember your Creator before your hair falls out. Remember your Creator while you can still hear. Remember your Creator while you've got your teeth. Remember your Creator before skull cracks open. Remember your Creator before your spine breaks. Remember your Creator before you're terrified of the world." It's this rhythm, it's this beat that's found throughout the Scriptures.

Now what you see in this idea of remembrance, specifically in the Old Testament, is three categories of remembrance. Remembrance number one is, "Remember who I am." So God is going to do this in a couple of great ways. Flip over to Job 38. Throughout the book, Job has been saying out loud if he could just get a hearing before God and say, "God, I can't believe You did this to me. I think you made a mistake. I can't believe these hardships that have befallen me. Surely You meant this for someone else and not me." And Job has promised his friends that if he could just get a hearing before God, then God would see that He made a mistake. Don't gasp at that. We've all been guilty at one time another of thinking it. Probably none of us have been guilty of saying it like our boy Job to be written down, but most of us have thought it. And God is finally going to respond to Job. So let's look at that. Starting in verse 1, "Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me." That's a phone call I'm hanging up. You've got the God of the universe that's going, "Who is this that uses words without knowledge to Me? Who's going to darken My door and wave a finger in My face? Dress for action like a man. I'll ask you and you can answer the questions since you're so brilliant and so much smarter than Me. You can answer these questions." Just as a rule of thumb, when God asks questions in the Bible, really dial in, because God doesn't need to know stuff. So when God asks questions, He's not asking questions. It's like when you go to your children, "Um, what's this?" You know what that is. You're making a point. "Pick that up before I hurt you." That's what happening when God asks questions. So let's look at His questions. "I will question you, and you make it known to me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements— surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed'? Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it?" Do you hear what's happening there? God is just simply coming to Job going, "Hey bro, we're different. You and I, we're not the same. And I see you're smart, and I see you've been working out, you're a little bit swole and you've got some strength, but you're not Me, bro." Did you cause the dawn to be? No you didn't. Okay. Do you tell the ocean where it can go? No, that would be Me. I do that. Did you decide that the ocean would be evaporated to form clouds? No, that was me also. What were you wanting to talk about? Now Job, upon hearing this, tries to relent. He's like, "You're right. You're right. I'm sorry." And God is like, "Uh uh." There is a whole other chapter. "Where were you? . . .Where were you? . . .Where do the goats have their babies? . . .Where are the bears? . . .Do you see the antelope? . . .Do you see the ostrich? . . ." He just starts to unpack all that's going on in the universe. What He's doing to Job is going, "Remember who I am. We're not the same. You and I are not equal. Don't attribute your limited sensibilities to My unlimited reality. We're not the same. Remember who I am." This also comes out in moments of worship. One of my favorite is Psalm 147:4. "He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names." So just for you to put this into perspective, we're shooting telescopes to the farthest reaches of space so that they can then shoot their telescope farther into space so we can see what God is saying, "I put

there and named." So even in this little hint of worship that our boy David is doing, He's saying, "We're different, man. I'm God; you're not. I see better than you. It has taken you thousands of years of innovation to get a picture of what I've been holding together since the beginning. We're different, you and Me." But that's just the first bucket. "Remember who I am."

The second bucket is, "Remember what I have done." Now, this first one is out of Exodus 12:14, concerning the Passover feast. If you'll remember, Israel is enslaved to Egypt. They are under harsh taskmasters. God sends Moses to Pharaoh and says, "Let my people go." Pharaoh has a hard heart and refuses, so God rolls up His sleeves and starts throwing out plagues. He sends frogs, turn all water into blood, blacks out the sun and on and on it goes until Pharaoh refuses to relent. And so God sends the harshest of judgments and says, "The firstborn son in every Egyptian household will die on this night." And then He goes to the people of Israel and says, "Kill a lamb, take the blood of that innocent, spotless lamb and wipe the blood of that lamb on your doorposts. And the angel of death will pass over. Then the Bible tells us, in the middle of the night, there arose a great cry among the households of the Egyptians as they awoke to their firstborn sons dying. And then Exodus 12:14 says this, "This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast." Now what's going on here? This is not, "Remember who I am." This is, "Remember what I've done." If I could make it even more specific, "Remember that you did not do this. You didn't pull out a sword and lead your people out of slavery. I got you out of slavery. You didn't call out the frogs. I sent the frogs. You didn't make fire fall from the sky. I sent fire from the sky. You didn't turn the water into blood. I turned the water into blood. You didn't part the Red Sea. I parted the Red Sea. You didn't defeat the Egyptian army. I defeated the Egyptian army. Don't forget I did this. You didn't do this. I did this. Yeah, you got out of slavery, but you didn't get out of slavery because you were awesome. You got out of slavery because I'm awesome." And that's this other category of remembrance.

You see this again in Joshua 4:5-7 as the Israelites were crossing the Jordan into the Promised Land. "And Joshua said to them, "Pass on before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, 'What do those stones mean to you?' then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever." Once again, this is not, "Remember who I am." This is, "Remember who I am." So, "I am the One who delivered you from slavery. I'm also the One who got you out of the desert and into the Promised Land. I am the One who overcame your unbelief." Do you remember why they didn't go into the Promised Land? They sent the spies in and all but two came back and said, "Man, the people over there are really huge, and the walls are tall. I don't think we want any part of this." So God's punishment was to let that unbelieving generation die in the desert. God was making bread fall from the sky so they would be fed, and they started complaining about it. They started recalling slavery favorably. "Remember how sweet it was to be a slave? Remember how great it was back then." You can't chuckle, because you do the same thing. Israel is absolutely a picture of what we do. We're no better. We just have the covenant of the cross. We just have the blood of the covenant that covers us in the same kinds of attitudes and behaviors.

And then the third category of remembrance is, "Remember what I've commanded you." God's commands in Scripture are about lining you up with how He designed the world to work. So when God says, "This is what marriage should look like," God's not trying to give you a horrible marriage. How would He be glorified in that? He's trying to lead you into what marriage was meant to be. When God puts parameters around sex, He's not being a killjoy. He invented it. The thing was His idea. He's not trying to rob you. He's trying to lead you into the gift that it is. So all the commands of God are not about taking from you what's rightfully yours, but rather leading you into the fullness of what God's creation was meant to be. So the commands of God are never a horrible thing. They're always a beautiful thing in that, if you obey them,

they'll lead you into life and, when you fail to obey them, you'll come face to face with the reality that you need a Savior. You will fall short, and you will fail. Anyone who says they don't is a liar, a self-righteous liar. You do fall short. Now you might be hitting better than your brother or neighbor. But you compared to the holiness of God fall unbelievably short of God's ideal. So this is at Sinai when the law is handed out. Deuteronomy 6:6-9, "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children. . ." One of the things that you'll be able to really dial into as you study the Bible is that God knows how humanity works. If you have children, you know that you don't teach the commands of God to your children in a singular setting. You don't take them when they're 10 and go, "Here are the commands of God. I'm glad we had this talk. Good luck." You need diligence, don't you? I mean, it's an on and on and on teaching. The older I get, I'm not sure it even goes away when they leave your house. You just do that until you die. You remind your children the commands of the Lord. So God knows that it's going to take diligence in regards to unpacking His commands to your children. Children, by their nature, are rebellious, even the most good-tempered ones. ". . .and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." Do you see what He's doing there? "You should see all of life through the lenses of My commands." When your spouse is getting on your nerves (if that happens to you), you should see that through the lenses of the commands of God. Love your wife like Christ loves the church; respect your husband as the church does Christ. When your kids are driving you crazy, you should see that through the lenses of the commands of God. I am to impart to them the wonders of the Creator. I am to diligently teach them the commands of God. When I'm at work, when I'm at home, when I'm at play, the lenses by which I see the world are God's commands. Where I fall short of those commands, it simply reveals that I'm in need of a Savior. Which is great, because He has provided one.

Now this is the drum that beats throughout the Old Testament. "Remember who I am, remember what I've done and remember My commandments." And then going into the New Testament, Jesus doesn't disassemble this rhythm. He doesn't change the beat at all. So you've got this rhythm, this beat pounding away in the Old Testament, and Jesus steps into that groove and furthers it. At the Passover supper, with His disciples, He takes the bread, He breaks the bread and says, "This is My body, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." Now start to tie these things together. Back here it's, "Take the blood of a spotless lamb and put it on your doorpost. And by the spilling of that innocent lamb's blood, death will not touch you." And now Jesus is going, "I'm the Lamb. That was about Me. That was a shadow of what was to come in Me." And then He takes the cup and says, "This is the blood of the new covenant. As long as you gather, drink this in remembrance of Me." And then the apostle Paul is going to see that Jesus just steps into the beat that God had already established, and he is just going to push it even farther. In 1 Corinthians 11:26, he's going to say, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." And then if you really read the New Testament, you'll find that Paul is constantly preaching the gospel to people who already believed the gospel. Why? Because remembering rightly redeems your rejoicing. If you can remember who God is and what God has done, specifically in Christ, that redeems the brokenness in your rejoicing and you won't rejoice wrongly anymore.

You'll find this throughout the Pauline epistles. Romans 1:13-15, "I want you to know, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome." 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, "Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you— unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures." Galatians 1:6-9, "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some

who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed." He dedicates whole chapters to reminding believers of the gospel in Ephesians 1-2, Philippians 1-3 and Colossians 1-3. You do any of the Pauline epistles outside of 2 Corinthians and Paul preaches the gospel to people who already know the gospel. Why? Because if you remember rightly, that redeems what went wrong in your rejoicing and you won't rejoice in the wrong things.

Now let's go back to Ecclesiastes, and I'll show you how this works. Ecclesiastes 11, we're going to pick it up in verse 9 where it went so wrong. "Rejoice, O young man, in your youth. . ." Now let's just stop, because I'm going to be judged for that. So let's see how remembering rightly, remembering who God is and what God has done, redeems the brokenness in my rejoicing in my youth. So I am 36-years-old. So I'm young, I have a lot of energy, I have a strong vitality, I love life, I love to play and goof around and I love being 36-years-old. So how I rejoice in my youth isn't in my strength, my ability, my will to make things happen. What I'm rejoicing in is that God saw fit in His mercy to save me early and that, in calling me to Himself early in life, I went, "This is what I want in a wife." And my list had some things that are probably on everybody's list. I wanted her to be hot. That's on everybody's list. Who goes, "Meh, she could be all right"? Nobody does that. So I wanted her to be beautiful. I wanted her to love the Lord. I wanted her to understand the gospel. I wanted her to join me in what I felt God calling me into. So I went into the marriage not blind. I went into marriage, because of my relationship with Jesus Christ, knowing if you put two sinners in a house together, there are going to be some difficulties. So I didn't go in with some blind, romantic notion that we're going to skip around in euphoric bliss all the days of our marriage. I knew I was going to have to extend grace and that grace was going to have to be extended to me. So even when I was dating, if I would see a lack of that, I'm out. If there were things you were holding on to back to back then, that you weren't going to freely give over to the Lord so we could go wherever God calls us, then it just wasn't happening. I didn't have to fight those battles. We built our first house ever as a married couple down in Dallas, and we lived in it for three months before Highland Village First Baptist Church called me and wanted me to be their pastor. My wife picked the floors, picked the counter tops and picked everything in that house, and we're there three months before I was like, "Um Boo, I think we need to go here." Do you know what her response was? "If that's where God is calling us, let's go." So I was looking for that. I was looking for a girl who knew where I was weak, where I fell short and still loved me. Because I knew once we lived in a house together, she would only see even more of my shortcomings. I didn't want her loving a mirage. I wanted her loving me. Now these were things I looked for. Why? Because God saved me. And as we've had babies, they have been born into a house that tries to serve Him, love Him, follow Him and have made Him the basis of how we do life, how we do discipline and how we engage one another. The Scriptures are read every night before we go to bed. We sing and worship together. We've done communion with our oldest because she's a believer. We pray as a family, and we handle situations that happen through the lenses of the gospel. We talk a lot about extending grace. We talk a lot about the wickedness of our hearts and how we need Jesus to fix the wickedness of our hearts. We talk a lot about that stuff. Why? Because God saved me before I had kids. So I rejoice in my youth, not in my will, strength or effort, but rather that God tuned me in to who He is early. And so I rejoice in that.

Now some of you might be thinking right now, "Well man, I sure wish He would have done that to me earlier. I sure caught some stuff on fire in my early days. My first marriage would have worked out differently, my kids might be in a different spot than they are right now if I would have just known this." I would just tell you this. You're alive right now. You're not dead. A man or woman who does not understand the gospel lets his past destroy him. The man or woman who understands the gospel lives today in the grace and mercy of Christ that covers all of yesterday's mistakes. And if your kids are wayward, that's on them, not you. No one is a perfect parent. If your kids are awesome and you're gloating in that, you're a fool who is stealing and touching the glory of God. If your kids love the Lord, it's because God extended grace to them. If they don't, you're not to blame for that. Are we called to walk in wisdom? Are we called to impart the wonders of God to our children? Yes. Did you know the wonders of God then? No? Then it's on them, not you. Now, do

you owe your kids an apology? Yeah. Should you sit down with them and go, "I didn't do what God commanded me to do, and I need to ask your forgiveness for that"? Yes. In fact, what a great showing of the gospel for you to be willing to do that and not walk in your pride. So I rejoice in my youth, we rejoice in our lives in that God has dialed us in to Him now.

Now let's look at this next part. "Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes." One of the things that happens when God opens up your heart and mind to the reality of Jesus Christ is your desires and your heart change. So what you want after you've been made new is very different from what you wanted before. Because what I wanted was to be a powerful lawyer that crushed people, made tons of cash and had a spectacularly hot wife. That was Matt Chandler's plan. God's plan was extremely different. But He changed my heart. I have never mourned the loss of any of that. He changed my heart. I would look at men who loved their wives and children well and I'd go, "I want that." I would look at men who would just seem to walk in freedom with their money, with their time, with their energy, those who were bondslaves to Christ, and I would go, "I want that." And there would be times that I would be so far from that, but there would be this desire in me to be that. I watched guys handle the Word of God and I'd want that. I'd see them quote Scripture, know the Bible and see how it's all woven together. In fact, I remember the first time I heard Tommy Nelson up at Denton Bible speak. I just felt like an idiot. I was just like, "There is no hope for me, none at all." And then you come to realize he's been digging in that book for decades. What I can do today is get in the Word and ask the Lord to fill my heart with it and fill my mind with it. That's what I can do today. He started to change my heart, change my desires and then freed me up to pursue that new heart desire and those new things my eyes wanted to pursue. Do I fall short of them? To this day. Am I under judgment? No. Why? Because I can remember who God is and what He has done for me in Jesus Christ and know that there is no judgment for me, that there is no condemnation for me, that there is can't even be an accusation made against me that Christ hasn't already paid for.

So how do we get to the place that we remember in such a way that redeems our broken rejoicing? There are three things. Number one, you have to believe. The theological term would be "regeneration." Until you push all your chips in, it doesn't happen. Until you go, "I'm Yours. I submit my life to You and acknowledge that I'm not perfect, that I'm far from Your ideal, but I'm going to trust in and believe that You love me, that You paid the price for my shortcomings. And I'm going to pursue You," until you push your chips in, that will never happen. I just have to believe that for some of you this morning it's time. Do you know why some of you keep coming back week after week after week despite the fact that you're offended by most of what I say? Have you ever thought about how odd that is? Do you know what's happening. Do you know why you're intrigued? Do you know why you're wondering? Do you know why you want to get to the bottom of this? Romans 8 says God is calling you, He is wooing you to Himself. And I have to believe that some of you who come here week in and week out who haven't pushed your chips in yet, maybe today will be the day of salvation. Maybe today you go, "I'm not perfect. I still struggle. I'm still not sure I understand, but I'm in." And that's the first step in remembering that repairs our rejoicing.

Now the second thing is you've got to learn to preach the gospel to yourself. If you're going to remember rightly, you've got to constantly preach the gospel to yourself. This weekend at our singles retreat, I preached out of Hebrews 12 that says, "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith." Why? Because He started this, and because He's going to finish this. I need to constantly remind myself that God has done this. I haven't done this. I already told you what my plan was. So I need to remember that I am not great, but He is great. And I need to remember that, in my weakest moments, Christ's love for me is unwavering because of the cross.

And then the third thing is you need to learn to walk by the Spirit and not by the flesh. That's not spooky. You need to not walk by the matter of your will. "I'm going to make myself remember so that my rejoicing is redeemed!" How's that working for you? That's not how it works. We want to daily ask the Holy Spirit to remind us. We want to invite the Holy Spirit to point out where our rejoicing is wrong. We want to wake up every day and ask for a fresh anointing. We want to

ask for an awareness. We want to ask for a drawing unto the glory that is the Father through the Son. We want to ask for those things, plead for those things and ask the Holy Spirit to do it. Because He will. It's not spooky. There are no candles involved. There's no floating in the air. You just ask the Spirit to remind you of Jesus. That's what He does. The Spirit glorifies the Son. So if you want to remember clearly what Christ has done so that your rejoicing is corrected, then you ask the Spirit to constantly remind you of the wonders of Jesus Christ. You walk by the Spirit, not by the flesh.

Now, I feel this text and let me tell you why. I have been the pastor of this church coming on nine years. I have done three dozen funerals at this church. Only one was for someone over the age of 30. It almost feels like this is a safe place for old people, but if you're in your 20's, you're in trouble. So here's what I know, and I might be accused of fear-mongering here. Fear-mongering is when you exaggerate the truth. I'm not going to exaggerate the truth. Some of you have already seen your last Christmas, and that has nothing to do with age, it has nothing to do with fitness level and it has nothing to do with how you eat. My point in saying that is what I'm trying to unpack for you today is not surface level, temporary, "Be a good husband/wife, raise good kids, watch your mouth, don't watch rated-R movies," superficial things. What I am pleading with you about is eternal things and an eternity that is closer than any of us want to actually admit. And so my plea to you today is consider Jesus, remember who He is, remember what He's done and let that remembering redeem the brokenness of your rejoicing.

Let's pray. "Father, I thank You for these men and women. Again I thank You for the opportunity just to be together, to open up Your Word and have it press on us. It's my hope that, where we have forgotten who You are in the midst of difficult circumstances, You would just remind us that You're God, nothing has taken You by surprise and that You are aware of our circumstances. My prayer is that we would remember what You have done, specifically in the cross, by imputing to us, giving us Christ's perfection and putting on Him the wrath You had towards our sin. I pray that You would help us to experience the gospel and not just understand it. We love You, we need You and no man is able to do what we've talked about today outside of Your Spirit's power. So Holy Spirit, come and move, stir and point us to Jesus. We love You. It's for Your beautiful name. Amen."