

Right before the 11:15 service last weekend, Josh Patterson came into my little room back here and said, "Hey, when service is over, don't jet out. I need to talk with you." And he had some tears in his eyes. Now Josh doesn't cry. He has a hard heart and just doesn't cry. So that kind of threw me off. I was like, "Is everything okay?" He responded, "No, everything is not okay." And then he left. So then I had to come out and preach to you knowing that something had caused Patterson to be weepy, but I have no idea what it was. So as I'm preaching, in the back of my head the entire time, I'm running through scenarios of what it might possibly be. I finish the sermon, walk back to my green room and Josh is in there with his head in his hands. So I just sit down next to him and go, "What in the world has happened?" He said, "Last night, Mo Murray (one of our associate IT guys) took his own life." So it has been a long and difficult week for us on many layers. So I just want to address some few things. Some of you will think I'm being a little too harsh. I promise you I'm not. So let me run through just a couple things before we get to our main message.

When something like this happens, the default mode for a lot of people (I believe because they're ignorant of what the Bible teaches) is they begin to try to speculate at how someone could love the Lord, how someone could be a believer in Christ and do such a thing as this. In fact, there are even certain fringe elements of the Christian faith that would consider what Mo did to be an unforgivable sin. Who could love the Lord and be in despair like that? Well, a great deal of the big names in the Bible. Let me run through just a couple of those so we can establish very early on that you can love the Lord and still get to a very dark place, a place so dark you despair of life. The Bible tells us that, as Moses leads Israel out of Egypt and into the desert, they begin to grumble, complain and say that slavery was better than what God was getting them into. They wore Moses out, and Moses said, "If this is the weight You want me to carry, it's too heavy." And he asked God to kill him. You can see this playing out in the life of Elijah. If you went to Sunday school, you know the story of Elijah calling down fire and killing all the prophets of Baal. If you're sarcastic, it's a fascinating story. Because he mocks them while they pray for their false god go do something. He's like, "Maybe he's taking a nap. Maybe he ran to the store or something. I don't know. Keep praying." So after that moment when fire falls from the sky and consumes the altar and the prophets of Baal, Elijah begins to run from Jezebel and he begins to despair of his life and asks God to kill him. God's response is, "You need to sleep and get something to eat." We could keep on going and look at Jeremiah's sorrows, we could look at Nehemiah's tears and we can even look at the apostle Paul, who looks like he's wearing a cape on top of a tall building. He said in 2 Corinthians 1:8, "For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself." You can be a saint of God, you can love the Lord and find yourself in extremely dark places. You don't have to pretty up the Christian faith. The Christian faith isn't that you're great. The Christian faith is that He is great despite you not being great. So that's the first thing I needed you to understand and see from Scripture, that ultimately it's not impossible for people who love the Lord to end up in places of despair.

The second thing I need you to hear me say is that what Mo Murray did was sinful and selfish. All week long, we have dealt with despair, frustration and guys who are putting this on themselves. I can't tell you how many people we've had to sit down with this week and tell, "This wasn't you. There wasn't anything you could do." Mo was loved well. Grace was extended to him repeatedly. Mo had battled suicidal thoughts and depression since he was a kid. There was an unbelievable group of men and women around him who loved him, walked with him and encouraged him. So it's not impossible to be a child of God and fall into despair. What Mo did was selfish and sinful, and it was not beyond the saving

work of Jesus Christ. All of Mo's sins were just like yours and mine; they were future sins when Christ died on the cross. Which means Mo's last sinful, selfish act was covered by the blood of Jesus.

Now here's the way I want to encourage you this morning. Some of you do wrestle with bouts of depression and bouts of despair. The Lord gives us weapons to deal with that. We like to make the Psalms cute. The Psalms are not cute. They don't belong on t-shirts. Because David says in Psalm 42, "My tears have been my food day and night." So if you'll take a step back and hear what he's saying, David is going, "I can't sleep and I am so down and depressed that the only thing I can eat, the only way I can function is to lay and sob day and night. I am too depressed to sleep. I am too depressed to eat." And what he does is he begins to preach to himself. He's like, "Why are you cast down, O my soul. . . Hope in God." He begins to remember how God has been faithful historically. So here's the other thing I want you to hear me say. God did not abandon Mo in his darkest hour. Mo had all the weapons available to you, to me and to anyone else to combat the lies of the enemy in that moment. In a weak moment, he did not pick up those weapons, he believed in the lie and he took his own life. Let me encourage you this way. To be 99% known is to be unknown. To be 99% known but 1% not known is to be not known. If you have areas of your life that you're not being honest on, if you're trying to throw out this aura of being better off than you are, being more capable than you are, not stuck in the things that you're stuck in, you have given the enemy a foothold that he will joyfully take advantage of. It's why it's not enough for you to simply be in community, but for you to be honest in that community about where you are, even if that means you saying, "I'm in a dark place." Second thing, don't over-spiritualize your struggles. Sometimes you just need help. Sometimes it's a chemical issue and you just need to get help. Please don't hyper-spiritualize and go, "Well isn't Jesus enough?" Yeah, but I bet you've been to the doctor for other things. Jesus is enough, but you've had a surgery. Jesus is enough, but I had a resection with a tumor in my brain. I didn't go, "Well Jesus is enough. Forget that." It's called common grace. You need help, so get help. This is a safe place for you to struggle with whatever as long as you're willing to struggle. So I want to encourage you and push you to be known. I want to encourage you and push you to take advantage of the weapons God has given you to combat despair. That's the gathering of His people. This thing that we're doing in here even today, it's a Godordered thing. "Don't neglect this. Come together. Be reminded of how good I am. Be reminded of how mighty of how mighty I am. Be reminded of how good I have been, and I will continue to be." You have been given other brothers and sisters who are as imperfect as you are. Sometimes what people need you to be is not strong, but for you to be weak. And in your weakness, they are encouraged. In your weakness, they're pushed further into their relationship with Christ. So I'm asking you, don't hide in your despair. It never ends well. And I'm not saying you'll take your life; I'm saying you'll isolate yourself and rob yourself from the joy that Christ died to bring you. What a stupid exchange that is.

Let me end with this. I knew Mo. He had been to my house several times. He was just one of the quirkiest, most awkward human beings I had ever been around in my life. He had such a strange, wonderful sense of humor. He was very warm. So my kids loved him. He was like a jungle gym for the kids. My fear is that this will be all that you ever know about Mo. He was an IT guy. He served you in ways you didn't see. You are a better believer in Christ, more plugged in here than you would be if it hadn't have been for Mo.

Tragedy like this is one of the few things that wakes you up from the routine you begin to walk in. So when a tragedy occurs, it kind of wakes you up and you begin to see, "Hey, this is important, and this isn't important." But on a normal day, those lines are very blurry. On a normal day, what's ultimately important and what's not so important is kind of a gray area. But in tragedy, all that becomes clear. So routine and rhythm can be a good thing, but it can also be a bad thing. It's a good thing because you need rhythm and you need routine in order to be productive, to work hard and to make the most of the life God has given you. Routine and rhythm become a bad thing when you forget why you began the routine or rhythm in the first place. So let me give you a common picture. A young man graduates from college, meets and marries his girl, is making \$18,000 a year and that's working for them. Next thing you know, somebody is pregnant, and then all of a sudden that \$18,000 is not going to work. So the young man pours himself into his job and

begins to work long hours with a Puritan work ethic. He's up early, he's there late, he's gaining promotions and it's all under the legitimate motivation of, "I want to provide for my family." It's what God has called him to. It's what God has asked of him. So his rhythm is a good thing. And then weird things start to happen. The waters get a little muddy. "Look at all these toys in the living room. We need a play room." So the house gets a little bit bigger, the mortgage gets a little bit bigger and daddy has to work a little bit longer. And then you need a pool for little Johnny. He has a place for his toys, but we can't go to one of the sixteen neighborhood pools or the ones at all the gyms around here. We need one in the backyard. So we drop \$60,000 into what we're going to get back as \$10,000 whenever we sell our house. I'm not anti-pool, so I'm not judging. I would love to come swim in your pool. In the end, we spend money on that, and before long, daddy is working longer and longer hours, doing more and more work, getting more and more done, staying late, leaving early and in the middle of it all he's actually neglecting to do what he set out to do because he forgot why he got into the rhythm to begin with. So instead of providing the one thing his family needs (i.e. himself), he instead buys them off with trinkets, toys and new things to distract them. In the ten years I did college ministry, I never met someone who came from a really poor background whose parents loved them and were around a lot, who was really bitter about the fact that they drove a trashy car and wore a "Knights of the Round Table" t-shirt instead of a polo shirt. I've never met that kid who hated his dad because they were poor. But I have met devastated young men and women with very expensive cars and very nice clothes whose daddy and mommy was never around. And I'm not equating wealth with neglect, so don't hear me saying that. Even some of you in here are extremely wealthy men and women who have loved your family well and you got all those long hours out of the way early before your kids were old enough to deeply affect them. So please don't hear me equating a BMW to bad parenting. I don't think that that's accurate or fair. But what I am saying is this is how a routine and rhythm can betray somebody who started with pure motives. So tragedy wakes you up to that. Let a guy begin to neglect his family and have his kid get sick. Let a guy who neglects his family get sick himself. You let a mom neglect her family and let something start to fall apart. All of a sudden, you become awakened, jostled out of that rhythm and you can see better. You can see better what that routine is and why you got into the routine.

I'm coming upon ten years of being here, and I have to wonder if we haven't forgotten why we do what we do. If I were to pull you aside and say, "What's this all about? Why are you here? Why are we in groups? Why are we in Sudan? Why are we in Guatemala? Why are we doing Communities in Schools? Why are we doing these things?" I have to wonder if you would know the answer. And I'm not talking about logistics. So I want to answer the question: What are we doing here?

Before we can answer the question of what we're doing here at the Village, we have to get higher. We have to get high enough to see what God's doing. Because if the Village Church isn't doing what God is doing, then it doesn't matter what the Village Church is doing. So no matter what we're doing, no matter what kind of crowds are coming, no matter what kind of money is in the bank, no matter how successful we look, if we're not doing what God is doing, then we might as well all sleep in. So I want try to answer the question: What is God doing? And I want to make it more simple than that, because there are a billion things we could do on that. I don't want to get into what God governing or sovereign over. That's not the question I want to answer. The question I want to answer is: What's the mission of God? What's the point of all this? So if you look at creation, it seems a bit superfluous. If you begin to look at the universe, it just goes on and on and on. It just seems a bit over the top. If our God is the Creator who creates everything that is, if He's involved in where the stars stay, if He's involved in your cellular mitosis, what's He doing? What's His mission? What's He about? What is He trying to accomplish? I think if you ask people this, most evangelicals will answer this wrongly. They answer it wrongly by using the Bible. So let me try to expose a bit of that.

I think people look at the world and themselves, and through our cultural lens, they assume that God's mission is about us. "The reason everything exists is so that God might save me, might rescue me and might ultimately have children like we have children where we want to see them mature, safe and well put together. That's kind of like the mission of God." And they will point to the fact that God created us. They will point to all the verses in the Bible where God loves

us, provides for us, cares for us, shields us and protects us. They'll point to that and go, "See? Isn't it obvious? We're the point. We're what God is after." Now, God is for you, God does love you, God does provide for you, He is a shield about you and He is the lifter of your head, but there is a motivation behind all that lifting, protecting, guiding and love that goes well beyond you.

I'm going to take you to one of the most famous verses in the Bible to show you this. If you are from Texas, you have been given this passage on a bookmark, a coffee cup or something. You will know this text even if you have no church background. So let's look at it. Psalm 23, starting in verse 1, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness. . ." Now if we just stopped there, you can argue quite a bit. He is shepherding us, He is loving us, He is restoring us, He is providing for us and He is laying us by streams of still water. You can see God's activity toward us. It looks like we are the point. You can do this with a hundred other texts, except the root of His motivation, leading, laying in green pastures, leading to still waters, restoring of the soul, is clear in the text. Let's look at verse 3 again. "He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake." So why does God love you? Why does God pursue you? Why does God shepherd you? Why does God care for you? It's not because of you. It's for the sake of His name. It's for the praise of His glorious grace. There's a class called Perspectives in World Religion, and near the end, they'll unpack what they call cat and dog theology. Here's how they break it down. A cat goes, "My owner feeds me, cares for me and cleans up after me. I must be God." A dog goes, "My owner feeds me, cares for me and cleans up after me. He must be God." That's why when you come home your dog is all over you and your cat couldn't care less. Far too many evangelicals are feline in their theology. "Well God loves me, and He's for me. I must be the point." When you're the point, everything falls apart.

I know some of you are like, "Chandler, I don't know that I'm just going to give this to you if all you have is Psalm 23." So let me give you some more texts that were compiled by John Piper and can be found here:

- God created us for His glory (Isaiah 43:6-7). I want you to think about this. The reason you exist, the reason you are is for the glory of God, the name and renown of God. The praising of His infinite perfections, that's why you exist. You're not here for fellowship. God was not lonely and decided to make you because He was just tired of being alone after eternity of being alone. God was perfectly content within the Godhead. God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit did not need to create you. He did create you for the praise of His glorious grace. That's why you exist. It's the reason you're alive.
- God calls Israel for His glory (Isaiah 49:3).
- In Jeremiah 13:11, we find out that He tells the nation of Israel, "I didn't pick you guys because you're awesome. I picked you because you were the smallest, crummiest tribe there was." So even with Israel, it wasn't about Israel. In fact, even to this day, God delights in making much of Himself through people who are lacking. You should be very grateful for that.
- God rescues Israel from Egypt for His glory (Psalm 106:7-8).
- God raises up Pharaoh to show His power and glory (Romans 9:17). I know Romans 9 is a wildly unpopular Scripture, but it's in the Bible. You ought to check it out. In Romans 9, the Scriptures tell us that God allowed Pharaoh into the pinnacle of human power. So Pharaoh pretty much is ruler of the world at that point in history. He has a slave force of millions, a massive empire and a massive army, and the Bible tells us that God gave him all of that so He could crush him to show that man at his pinnacle is tiny compared to God on His worst day. We see that even the destruction of Pharaoh was about the name of God.
- God defeats Pharaoh by the Red Sea to show His glory (Exodus 14:4; 17-18).
- God spared Israel in the wilderness for the glory of His name (Ezekiel 20:14). I have never ceased to be comforted by the fact that God never just outright destroys the nation of Israel. They get it right for a couple verses in the Old

Testament. Right behind almost every verse of commendation is, "All right. You want t go that way? We'll go that way." And so God never destroys them or completely annihilates the nation of Israel, and He does it for the sake of His name.

- God gave Israel the Promised Land for the glory of His name (2 Samuel 7:23).
- God did not cast away His people for the glory of His name (1 Samuel 12:20-22).
- God saved Jerusalem from attack for the glory of His name (2 Kings 19:34; 20:6).
- God restored Israel from exile for the glory of His name (Ezekiel 36:22-23; 32).
- Now Jesus shows up and fits right into this rhythm. Jesus sought the glory of His Father in all that He did (John 7:18).
- Jesus told us to do good works so that God would get glory (Matthew 5:16 & 1 Peter 2:12).
- Jesus warned that failure to seek God's glory makes faith impossible (John 5:44). Now I want to stop and push on that a little bit. Because here's what I know about some of you that you might not know about yourself yet. Some of you are here because you believe that, with certain actions and certain behaviors, you can put God into your debt. You believe that you can live in such a way that God will owe you. And when you don't get what you feel like you're owed, you'll get frustrated and angry that God has not given you what He never promised to give you. The good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ is not that everything starts working out your way; the good news of the gospel is that God is enough, regardless of your circumstances. You get Jesus – that's the gospel. That's the good news. So you can't have saving faith if you're really in this for you.
- Jesus said that He answers prayers so that God would be glorified (John 14:13).
- Jesus endured His final hours of suffering for the glory of God (John 12:27-28).
- God gave His Son to vindicate the glory of His righteousness (John 17:1; 13:31- 32). Let me explain this. It's a problem the God forgives David, is it not? David is a murderer and an adulterer. He goes, "I'm sorry about that, God." And God goes, "Okay." But there has been no death of Jesus Christ, there has been no righteous life of Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, you begin to see this word "propitiation." You will not see that word anywhere else in the world except in the Scriptures. We just don't use it, specifically in our English language. Propitiation is simply God vindicating His righteousness. So Abraham, before Jesus was, had faith that God would make a way for their salvation that went beyond the law. For David, the same thing. The saints in the Old Testament before put their faith that God would solve the problem. They only saw it as a shadow; you and I see it as a fact. But Jesus died on the cross for all sins, past, present and future, and in so doing, He vindicated the righteousness of God that was extended to David, Abraham and a slew of others of the elect in the Old Testament. Because God is not righteous is He forgives David without blood and imputed righteousness. In the same way that judge here in town would not be just if a guy said, "I murdered and raped, but I'm really sorry about that," and he said, "Oh, you're sorry? That's cool. Case dismissed." Do you think we'd riot a bit? I think there would be some problems. That judge would be removed. So propitiation is Jesus saying, "I have come as a vindicator of the righteousness of God."
- God forgives our sin for His own sake (Isaiah 43:25 & Psalm 25:11).
- Jesus receives us into His fellowship for the glory of God (Romans 15:7). • The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Son of God (John 16:14).
- God instructs us to do everything for His glory (1 Corinthians 10:31). Again, if you've spent any amount of time in the Bible Belt, you've heard this verse. And it's a bit of a peculiar verse. "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Now, the interesting part about this text is he uses such normal things to push on this. He doesn't say, "In an ethical dilemma, do what's right for the glory of God. If you've got to decide between this and this, do it for the glory of God." That's not the test he lays down. "Eating a sandwich and drinking a cup of coffee, do it to the glory of God. In everything you do, do it all for the glory of God."
- God tells us to serve in a way that would glorify Him (1 Peter 4:11).
- Jesus is coming again for the glory of God (2 Thessalonians 1:9-10).
- Jesus' ultimate aim for us is to see and enjoy His glory (John 17:24).
- God's plan is to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory (Habakkuk 2:14). If you've always been confused why

people would risk their lives to go all over the world, it's because we believe with everything in us that when God says, "I shall," He means it, that God cannot fail. So if we go herald the good news to parts of the world where there is no visible presence of His glory, it's because we have the promise that, by our death or by our proclamation of His Word, His glory will be established.

- Everything that happens will redound to the glory of God (Romans 11:36). That's hard for us. If you take something like Mo or some of the other tragedies we've befallen, we're just like, "How could that possibly redound to the glory of God?" St. Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo, explained it like this. He said that if you put your face up against a stained-glass window, all you would be able to see is jagged edges and broken glass. The farther away from that window you got, the more you would see that it was spectacular. But up close, you don't even have a shot at seeing that. So how do all things redound for the glory of God? To be straight with you, I have no idea. For those of you who are skeptics, let me give you a reality of our faith. There are some things in the Bible that aren't going to be understood; they just have to be believed. If you're going, "I can't do that," then you can't do that. But that doesn't change it from being true. I would, just because I love you, call you a bit of a hypocrite. Because you don't feel that way about any other area of science or philosophy. But for whatever reason, on this you'll play that card. But we'll talk later on that over something to drink.
- In the new Jerusalem, the glory of God replaces the sun. (Revelation 21:23).

So the point of the Bible is God; it's not you. God is about God. God is for God. When God is working, He is working for God. When He's forgiving you of your sins, that is for the praise of His glorious grace. When He is shepherding you, when He is protecting you, when He is providing for you, He is doing so so He might be worshiped, enjoyed and praised. In fact, the Westminster Catechism says that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. You exist to worship, praise, love, make much of God. That's why you're here. Now that jostles us because that's not where we live. Everything in our culture goes a different way. "You're the point. It's about you. You deserve this. Why shouldn't you have that. You're entitled to this." And every marketing campaign, even churches are built around this philosophy. "It's all about you. You deserve. We should make way for you. What do you desire? What do you want? You're the point. God loves you; He's for you. You're the point." And I want to lovingly tell you that you're not the point. In fact, if we look at it biblically, you're not even in second place. So God says He's uppermost and then that you are to love others better than yourself. You're bringing home the bronze. You're down the list. You didn't even make the cover. You're a distant third.

Now let me tell you why this is the best news in the universe. If God is after the praise of His glorious grace, then He is not after my begrudging submission, but rather He is after my joy. So all the commands in Scripture are about God lining you up with how He designed things to be for your greater joy. Now, some of you want to meet with me so you can explain how your circumstance trumps that. You want to explain to me that I don't know your spouse. And I knew your spouse, there is no way I would tell you that what the Bible says in regards to how you handle your spouse is the right move for you, because they're crazy, they're hurtful and you can go on and on. Some of you want to talk to me about your orientation and how this isn't fair. I just want to lovingly press a little bit. If I grabbed you and we went up to the theater and just walked in without paying for a ticket. Let's say we pick Cowboys and Aliens. And then I take you in, let you look at the screen for a second and then pull you out and ask you to explain the movie to me. "So what's that movie about?" "It looked like a western." "Is there anybody from outer space in that?" "Probably not. . .because it's a western." "What about space ships. Are there space ships in there?" "There couldn't be. It's a western." You'd have no idea. So think of how unbelievably arrogant it is of you to say, "I'm here for a second in the scope of eternity and I know better for me what's going to lead me into joy than the One who created all things and wired all things. My ideas about sex, money and marriage are better than and beyond the One who designed those things."

Let me just paint a picture. I'm doing a wedding later this afternoon for some friends of mine. I love them. It's going to be a lot of fun. Today at the ceremony we'll be doing the vows, talking about love and the gospel and all that stuff. I'll

ask, "Caroline, do you take Luke to be your husband?" What if she goes, "I guess. I've got this dress. I've spent all this money"? Is anybody still crying in the crowd at that point? Or what if Luke's response is, "Well, all our friends are here, so we might as well do it. I doubt I could find anybody better. I'm tired of looking for somebody better, so let's just do this." How crazy would that be? It would be like if you're in the water to be baptized and they're like, "Have you come to that place that you believe and accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?" and they go, "Not really." You don't keep going; you just get out. So in that wedding, if that was their response, something is wrong. So God's commands on our lives are meant to lead us into delight and joy. "Well what about suffering, Chandler? Because God is sovereign over suffering, what do you do with those moments that are hard? How is God increasing my joy in allowing dark days to come?" By being enough on those dark days. Bad news can be some of the loneliest times of your life, even if you're walking through that lonely time with others. I've really had the great honor of walking a lot of people through tragedy, loss of their children, loss of their loved ones, and even though parents grieve that together, they also grieve it separately. And it's lonely. I've watched God show up for those men and women over and over again. So God leads us into joy in suffering by being present and sustaining through that suffering.

Second, the love of God towards me as a sinner is not God making much of me but rather Him freeing me up to make much of Him. So when God says, "I'm going to call Matt Chandler to Myself, I'm going to call [insert your name] to Myself. They're going to be My son, My daughter. They're going to be filled with the Holy Spirit and they're going to follow Me," it's not God going, "That guy is legit. He's going to be great PR for Me. He's going to represent Me well. Let's go get him." No, God is freeing you up to make much of Him. I'll tell you why this is such a good idea with an illustration that will resonate well. When the Mavericks were in the NBA Finals, a buddy of mine called and said, "Hey man, I have an extra ticket. Do you want to go?" I wrestled with that. Because ultimately I don't know that I care, and I knew that people would trade their child for that ticket. So I'm wrestling with whether or not I should go. So I talked to Lauren about it (i.e. asked her permission), and she said, "It's the Finals. You need to go. You probably won't get this chance again. Just go to the game." So I went with a couple of friends. We had great seats. There were famous people all around us. So I start feeling even more guilty. We ran into Bob Stoops in the bathroom. I was thinking, "How many Sooner fans would wet themselves right now?" "Moose" Johnson was right there and we could see Tony Romo and Jason Witten right there. It was an amazing game. Dirk put the final touches on it late in the game, and the place exploded. I had goosebumps and I was high-fiving strangers and even hugging and jumping with people didn't even know. People freaked out. It was an unbelievable evening. I've been in those places before. I've been to football games where you could just feel the energy. I've been at concerts where you could just feel the energy. It's so much fun. It's so much fun, we spend a lot of money on it. Can I tell you what's happening? We're simply tapping into this deep, base purpose of our existence, which is worship. What do you think that is? That's worship. When you go to that concert, when you get that feeling of all that energy and when you get caught up in this euphoric moment, the reason that feels so good is because it's what you were created for. The problem is what you're worshiping continues to fail you. Your team lets you down. Some of you know this better than others. Now some of you are just bandwagon hoppers and every year is a great year for you. You lack moral character and should be ashamed of yourself. But for those of you who follow a team religiously and say things like, "This is my squad," you don't play for them and they're going to let you down. Those of you who love music, after that concert, after that euphoric moment, you talk about it on the way home, and then all of that gives way to ringing ears and post-Christmas present blues. So you have to start looking for another high, another worship experience. So if you start to think about sports and music, watch how we do it. We do with those things what God has commanded us to do with Him. We look it up online, we study it, we want to figure out where they are and we get their t-shirts. It's worship. We go to their "service," we gather with other participants to worship or watch it on TV. However we can get close to it, we pursue it. It's religious idolatry, but it taps into what you were created for.

What God has enabled me to do in saving me is to spend my days making much of Him, and He never gets old, He never lets me down and He never ever runs out of areas for me to gaze upon, to wonder at and to make much of. I have

preached at least twice a week for fifteen years or longer. Most of the time with you, that got up to six times a week. And I have never run out of anything to say. Because you just keep seeing pieces of who He is, and it's just spectacular. It creates angst in me, desire in me and passion in me. This isn't an act for me. I begin to feel burdened for you as the week progresses. By Saturday morning, I am useless. I'm like preaching to my family. Lauren will go, "Just go up to the church. We'll hear it at the 7:15. Just go." And I completely resonate what the prophet meant when he says he has a fire in his bones. Because I want you to hear, and I know I'm helpless to make you hear. The Holy Spirit has to do that, so I'm pleading with the Lord to let you hear. What I've been set free to do is make much of Him, and unlike that Mavs game or like that concert, that has never betrayed me.

And here's where I'll tell you it looks really spectacular. It doesn't always look spectacular in the midst of blessing when somebody does it. In fact, I have always been a little hesitant about the guy who just won the Academy Award for being a serial rapist and gives praise to God for that role. "I'd just like to thank God for how He has blessed me to act like a serial rapist." Or there's the guy who scores three touchdowns and points to the sky. Now there are actors and athletes who genuinely love Jesus Christ and follow Him. I really do believe that. I've had the opportunity to have conversations with some of those guys. So believe that, but I think the most spectacular place where you see a man set free to glory in God is when suffering is occurring and all they have is praise for Him. Because that goes against the grain. After my diagnosis, I got introduced to this whole kind of community. Cancer is a funny community. You don't want in, but when you're in, it's pretty cool. Once you get in, you meet spectacular people. I met a young man last year named Daniel. He's was young Lebanese man who loved the Lord, was doing well in business who came down with a very rare bone sarcoma. So they sit Daniel down and are brutally honest with him. "We don't even know where to start. Anything we do for this will be for the first time we've done it for this. This is going to get really, really painful. Don't think that we can extend your life long, but we'll fight if you want to fight." So Daniel, full of life, says, "I'll fight. Let's do this." I got to Skype with him. He was down in Houston at MD Anderson, then they rolled him up to Mayo and then he went to another hospital in New York. And here's what I learned. How the doctors thought it would play out is exactly how it played out. That disease just crushed his body. It wasn't long before he couldn't walk. It wasn't long before he couldn't move his arms any more. His bones were just wasting away from the inside. And in the last Skype conversation I had with him just a few days before he died, I noticed that the more that cancer crushed on his body, the more He loved and worshiped Jesus. In fact, in our last conversation he wanted to talk about Philippians 3. He said, "I understand what Paul meant when he talked about the fellowship of sharing in His suffering. Because all I can think about is that Jesus did this and more for me and because of me. And I know I'm leaving early, Matt, but I'm grateful for what Christ has done, how He has worked in my life and how He has rescued me." Now that's spectacular. That's just unbelievable, but it's what happens when you get set free to make much of Him.

That rolls into this next piece. If God is for God, if our joy is inseparably linked to God being for God and if God's salvation of us is not ultimately about us but rather setting us free to make much of Him, then heaven is an ever-increasing experience of these glories. If we had time to get into Ephesians 2, it says that in the coming ages God will show to us the riches of His grace in Christ Jesus. A billion years from now, those of you who are believers will just be scratching the surface about how infinite the joy of God is.

Now let me bring this to a conclusion like this. Here's what has to happen. You have got to get over you. You're not the point, and the more you think you are the point, the more you will be enslaved to a thousand vices. If you'll get over you, you'll have a better marriage. Because when it's about you, then your spouse is your servant, given to you by God to make everything better for you. They cannot do that. You thinking you're the point is going to breed conflict in the relationship with your spouse. You'll be a better parent if it's not about you. How many of your kids play sports? It's not hard to spot the guy whose world is about him and his kids are about him. Because when they don't play well, that's somehow a reflection on him. And so the volume gets cranked up, and the jab at the kid gets cranked up. I've seen

fathers lay their children to open shame in front of people. And I'm for sports and being competitive in sports, but when you're 5-years-old, if nobody peed their pants, that's a win. If the game is over and everybody is dry, I'm buying pizza. So you can watch a guy who thinks he's the point, then people have to perform. When you're the point, you use others. When you're the point, you will easily be angered and bothered by others. If you're the point, when somebody cuts you off in traffic, that was on purpose. When you're not the point, they just didn't see you. When you're the point, it's ridiculous that you should have to wait in line like this, that your stuff doesn't work like this and now this poor consumer telemarketer guy who was given to you by Dell to serve you is now getting all of your venom because the world is about you. When things don't line up like you want them to line up, you're just seething and looking for someone to blame. Why? Because it's about you. But when it's not about you, you're free. When it's not about you, you get to extend grace. When it's not about you, you get to rest. When it's not about you, you get to breathe. When it's not about you, you'll sleep better. When it's not about you, you will be happier. I don't use the word "happy." Happy is a cheap substitute for joy, and it's fleeting. But when it's not about you, you'll be happier. The more it is about you, the more you'll be miserable. And some of you know exactly what I'm talking about.

Let's pray. "Father, I thank You that You are for You. I thank You that all You have done and all that You are doing is for the praise of Your glorious grace. I thank You that You've set us free from us and that You've set us free to make much of You. So I pray now that You would free up our hearts and allow us to do that. I pray that the things that we have carried in here today, the fears that we've carried in here, the doubts that we've carried in here, the anger that we've carried in here, we would be able to put down in that reality. I pray that You would help us get over us. I pray that where we've walked in the pride of thinking we're the point, You would forgive us, break our hearts over it and set us free to make much of You. It's for Your beautiful name we pray. Amen."