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[*Introductory video*: Puffy clouds in the sky are the backdrop for the written message ushered in by a streaking star with a shimmering comet-like tail accompanied by gently paced music with a boom-chicka-boom beat:]

WE ALL WANT *to make changes*
SO WE MAKE NEW *year resolutions*
BECAUSE WE THINK WE *will find happiness*
IN ACCOMPLISHING *them*
BUT WHAT IF WE *got this all wrong*
AND YOUR SUCCESS DIDN'T *bring you happiness*
BUT INSTEAD YOUR HAPPINESS *brought you great success?*
HOW WOULD THAT CHANGE *the way you approach life?*
HAPPINESS MATTERS
Find joy even when life hides it

[*When the lights come back up at the video's end, Lead Pastor Sal Sberna begins.*]

Well, good morning, everybody, here at *Jones Road* and those that are at our *Cypress* location and everybody that is joining us via the web. We're in the second of a series of messages out of the book of *Philippians* entitled: *Happiness Matters*. Today we're going to talk about happiness mattering *In Your Relationships*. So if you have a Bible, you can open them to *Philippians, chapter 2*.

This last week I had the privilege of—well, I have the privilege of being on an advisory board for *NavPress*, which is the publishing arm for *The Navigators*. At this board meeting that we are in, we had a devotion one day, and a guy asked a very, very strong question. He asked this: *How would I have to live differently to have two times the joy in the Lord than I have right now?*

HOW WOULD I HAVE TO LIVE DIFFERENTLY TO HAVE 2X THE JOY I HAVE NOW?

There was silence in the room. (Right?) There were some pretty high-powered folks there that love Jesus and are very successful at business and then there was me. We're just (kind of) thinking: *Okay, what's the answer to this?*

I said: *Well, (you know) it'd be an easier question if you were to ask: What can I do differently now so I can **do** two times more than what I'm doing now for the Lord?* But (really) that's not a question that I contemplate often. How much happier can I be if I did something differently in my relationship with God today than I did yesterday? That's a pretty good question. It's disruptive, isn't it? So I [wondered]: How often do you wake up in the morning and say (you know) how can I have more joy and happiness in Christ today than I had yesterday? What would I have to do differently?

Well, thankfully, he let us all off the hook. He said: *Let me give you a little formula*. So he said: *First of all, every day seek the Lord*.

- *Why?—because God is involved in every circumstance and every situation of our life—*
- *There is nothing that He is not concerned about.*
- *There's nothing that He is not using to orchestrate (to bring around) this beautiful change in our life...*

- *that makes us more like Him*
 - *that makes us a whole lot happier*
- ...no matter what's going on with us and no matter where we are.

He said: *If it's our intent to please God—and because...*

- *It's His intent to make us beautiful*
- *It's His intent to give us a great amount of joy*
- *It's His intent to use us*

—then we seek Him every day.

So when we are in life and those circumstances, those people, those situations come in our lives that threaten to rob our joy—like:

- When you get on [U.S.] 290 tomorrow morning
- When you have to listen to the dissing and dismissing of the *Houston Texans* by the national media until the end of the game this afternoon

[In response to a few cheers in the congregation:] Thank you.

How many of y'all normally go to the 11:00 service? Put your hand down. Don't tell me. Me and 150 people will be here at *Jones*, and me and 6 will be at *Cypress Campus* today. (Right?)

By the way, if you're at our *Cypress Campus*, before you leave this 9:30 worship service, you go to Pastor Bryan [Rose, *Cypress Campus Pastor*] and say: *Pastor Bryan, what can I break down and put away in that box so you guys don't have to be there for an hour and a half tearing down?* Because they want to see the game too. How many of y'all would say that? Let me see your hands. Higher! Higher! Bryan, are you getting names? Higher! Turn the camera on them so I can see them. Higher! Very good—we need both of you. Okay? So make sure...because Bryan's already had a rough day.

- They had (you know) flat tires on those trailers that they pull.
- Several of his key people called in sick—ha-ha! *Texans* are on today—called in sick and couldn't help him out this morning.

So, guys, (really) let's pull together, be united and let's knock that stuff out. In fact, bring the kids into service now. Tear down all the pre-school—no! Just kidding on that part. (All right?)

So, what happens when that goes on? You know Bryan had to make a choice this morning, Pastor Bryan did.

- Was he going to let his circumstances dictate his joy? (or)
- Was his joy going to overcome his circumstances?

So here's what you do: When you're seeking God and those things come in your life that threaten to steal your joy, if you want double what you would normally have then you give a surrender question. You ask a surrender question to God.

SURRENDER

Do you remember last week?—we said: *When circumstances start to rob your joy, we say: What now?* So the surrender question is: *What now would You have me do, Lord?*

Traffic's backed up. *Do You just want me to get angry or what would You have me do?* Just stop wherever you are. (If you're on the road, please do not bow your head or close your eyes.) But you say: *God, what do You want me to do in this situation?* And the Spirit of God will speak to you and He'll change your attitude.

Then when that happens, say what happened to somebody else. Because here's what I've found: When believers gather together, and we tell stories of...

- How God has changed our life
- How He intersected with us in a bad circumstance or in a bad relationship
- [How] He did something

...we start proclaiming the goodness of God [so that] those times never end.

So—

1. You seek God.
2. You surrender by asking: *What now would You have me do, Lord?*
3. Then you say what God did to somebody—either in your office or at your house or wherever it might be.

If you do that once a day for the next week, I guarantee you two times the joy that you're experiencing right now. (Now that has nothing to do with the message, but it's a good little deal I wanted to share with you.)

So let's get into the message—*Philippians, chapter 2, verses 1 and 2*. The first thing that we're going to do, if we're going to have happiness that really matters in our relationships, is that we have to live united.

LIVE UNITED

We have to live united.

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ...

Philippians 2:1-2 (NIV, 1984 edition)

In other words, we're rightly related with God, then God wants us rightly related with His people. [If] we're rightly related with the Person of God through Jesus Christ, then we have got to be rightly related with God's people.

¹ If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, {—in other words, if you're enjoying these things—} if {there's} any fellowship with the Spirit, {What's going to be the evidence?} if {there's} any tenderness and compassion, {What's going to be the evidence of that?} ² then make my joy complete {Let's say these next words togetherr—ready?} by being like-minded, {by being like-minded [means:] by having the same mind about certain things} having the same love, being one in spirit and {one in} purpose.

Philippians 2:1-2 (NIV, 1984 edition)

The apostle Paul said: *If we're going to have happiness that matters in our relationships, we have to live united.* We have to change our mindset about how we relate to one another—especially how we relate to each other as fellow followers (disciples) of Jesus Christ. You cannot enjoy the relationships that God wants you to enjoy without changing your mind and engaging your mind about how you're going to relate to people.

In fact, your mind's very important. All through scripture the apostle Paul (and Jesus) talks about your mind and how to engage your mind in the Christian life.

- In fact, you cannot *love* God without using your mind—*Matthew 22:37*

Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind,"

Matthew 22:37 (NIV, 1984 edition)

You have to engage your mind. You have to understand and know God in order to love. You have to change your mind about love.

- You can only *know* God with your mind—*1 John 5:20*

We know also that the Son of God has come and [has] given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true.

1 John 5:20a (NIV)

- You can only *know the Word of God* with your mind. *Luke 24:27*—When they were going on the road to Emmaus, Jesus was walking with them, talking with them. They were telling Jesus how [bad] they felt that Jesus had died—only they didn't know this was Jesus. Finally, the scriptures say God opens their minds and explains the scriptures to them—starting with Moses all the way through the *Old Testament*—testifying of Himself in those scriptures [*Luke 24:13-27* (paraphrased)].
- In fact, you cannot *walk in the Spirit* without using your mind—*Romans, chapter 8, verse 5*:

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

Romans 8:5 (NIV, 1984 edition)

So what we're asking is: *God...*

- *Take Your Word*
- *Take Your Person Who lives inside of us*
- *Take Your Spirit Who's dwelling inside of us*

...help us change our minds about the relationships that we have.

So in your relationships right now, what are you thinking about?

- What are you thinking about in your relationships?
- How are you thinking about that person?
- What are you intending for that person in your mind?

Because wherever your mind goes, your attitude and your actions are going to follow. Therefore, we must be renewed in our mind, so that we can properly relate to one another.

So (with that said) the apostle Paul calls out a couple women in the congregation that were having a conflict with one another. Now imagine that this letter wasn't written to the church at Philippi, but it was written to the church at Houston—specifically to The MET church. All of a sudden, you and somebody that you are having a conflict with are written down in scripture forever. Forever. (All right?) So with that in mind, here's what he says—*Philippians, chapter 4, verses 2 [through] 4*:

² I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to {get new names. That might be the hardest two *New Testament* names. (Why can't you be Matt or Mark, or Mary and Sue had a disagreement? Right?) So I plead with them to} agree with each other in the Lord. ³ Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers...

Philippians 4:2-3 (NIV, 1984 edition)

So these two women were highly involved in the propagation of the gospel. They were assisting Paul in the ministry. They were workers in the church. And now they're at odds with one another. Guess what?—everybody knew.

Don't you know when your friend's in conflict with another friend? You know why?—because they talk about that:

- *You can't believe what she said to me!*
- *You can't believe she bought the same dress that I did and wore it at the same thing [function] that I did!*
- *You can't believe how her children treat my children!*

I mean [pantomimes rapid-fire gossiping]

Then people start taking sides. And those sides side against each other. That's how you get a division in a church. (Right?) So Paul's trying to nip this in the bud. He's saying: Our names are written in the book of life [*Philippians 4:3* (paraphrased)]

...{our} names are written in the Book of Life.

Philippians 4:3 (NLT)

Rejoice in the Lord [always]. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Philippians 4: (NIV)

Happiness matters in your relationships. The only way to make it through the difficulties of life—and there will be many of those difficulties—the only way to ensure that what God has purposed in your life comes about is that you have to hold on tightly to the people around you and never let them go. They are God's instruments of...

- His will
- His Word
- His purpose

...in your life. These two now, once united together, are now separating.

In fact, there's some good research that backs up the strength of relationships directly related to the strength of success in any person's life. In 2009, the magazine *The Atlantic Monthly* [June 2009 issue] published the findings of George Vaillant, who was the professor that directed the Harvard men's study where 260 men were tracked from the entrance of college till now. (From the 1930s till [2009].)

They began to try to figure out what [were] the key factors in determining the happiest and fullest lives that were lived of all of these people. So when they looked at that...

The magazine asked him: *What are these factors that contributed to those who live the happiest and the fullest lives?*

This is what he says (and I quote): "Love—full stop."

That's it. The love that they experienced in the relationships with the people that mattered most to them—more than anything else in the world—determined their happiness and their success.

Who's loving you, and who are you loving? Because those are fulfilling relationships. If not, they are draining relationships and it is conflict and turmoil in your soul and in the souls of the people that are around you.

There's a book that was published called *Loneliness* [by John T. Cacioppo and William Patrick, in 2008] It's a 30-year study. What this person's study was: the top 10 percent of people who are the happiest and most successful in America. He said that the dearth of social connections is just as deadly as certain diseases.

Researchers have verified and they found that social support—relationships—has [as] much effect on the expectancy of life as does:

- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- Regular physical activity

In other words, you don't have to go to the gym. You could stay home and eat cake all day, as long as you're loving people and they're loving you. (And I find that to be very good news.) So today when you're watching the [*Houston Texans*' playoff] game, eat those wings. Have those Ding-Dongs®. But love the people you're with or you're going to die.

When you boil it down, it's like: **Strong relationships** (to use a football metaphor since I know what all of you are going to be doing today) **is like having a strong offensive line behind a good quarterback.** I don't care how good the quarterback is—no matter what—if the line isn't protecting him, then all of the people who are against him [keeping him] from achieving his objective for that team (and that's to score a touchdown), he will be flat on his back before he can ever throw a pass.

We know that the Lord will strengthen those who are the linemen of the *Houston Texans* today, so that T.J. [Yates, quarterback for the *Houston Texans*] will be able to throw those passes. If

not, we don't stand a chance. It's not: *How good is T.J.?* It's: *How good is the offensive line?* Because if the offensive line is good, the quarterback can be great.

If you want success in life and if you want relationships that really matter—that carry you through the difficult times of life—then you are like the quarterback that needs a strong line. Whomever you surround yourself with, you have to live united with those people.

So what could Christians fight about? We don't have time enough to list them all, but let me give you a couple:

- Christians love to fight about music. (Don't they?) They love to fight about:
 - What's the right music.
 - What's the wrong music.
 - How it makes you feel.

But it can be even more simple than that. What were these two women fighting about? Well—

- Maybe one tried out for the praise team; one made it. The other tried out, and she didn't make it. Now they're mad.
- Maybe one had a party and forgot to invite her friend. (or)
- Maybe she got invited to the party but she forgot about it and didn't go to the party. Now one's mad at the other. (or)
- Maybe they sent...
 - A text message; it was never responded to.
 - An email that was never responded to.
 - Friend me on Facebook and never responded to.

Now they're mad at one another because of a perceived grievance.

So they just shut down and they start telling everybody else how mad they are at that particular person.

So he says to his yokefellow, which literally is a proper name of *Suzugos* [Greek transliteration pronounced: sood'-zoo-gos]. Now what does *Suzugos* mean? (How was it translated up there [on the screens]? Uh...let me see. It said—I just love being able to scroll through this [iPad]; it makes me look like I really know what I'm doing.) It says: "loyal yokefellow." [*Philippians 4:3 (NIV, 1984 edition)*] It's a proper name—*Suzugos*—which means it's somebody who can easily work with other people; a person built well in a harness built for two.

Now he says to this person: *Look, you know how to relationally relate to people and work well with them. I want you to go to these women and help them work on their relationship, because—we're all—our names are written in the Book of Life. We are in this thing together.*

Now some things can't ever be reconciled. I mean even the Bible shows us that. If there's an immoral brother or sister in your midst and they're not stopping being immoral—guess what?—you can't have a relationship with them anymore. The Bible says: *Throw them out of your midst—"a little leaven leavens the whole lump."* [*1 Corinthians 5:6 (NKJV)*]

Titus, chapter 3, verse 10, says: "...after a first and second warning." "Reject a factious man,..." [*Titus 3:10 (NASB) phrase order reversed*]

- Somebody who is always starting rumors.
- Somebody who is always casting aspersions on somebody's character.
- Somebody who is always talking about somebody else, but never talking to them, causing a stir to happen.

He said: *Reject that person. You can't have a relationship with that person.*

But just because...

- Somebody didn't return your email: Huh-uh, you've got to work on that one.
- You didn't get invited to the party: You have to work on that one.

So what does he ask them to do? Let me give you three questions to ask when you have a relational conflict with someone.

THREE QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN YOU HAVE A RELATIONAL CONFLICT

Are you ready? If it's not a matter of eternal importance...

1. IF NOT A MATTER OF ETERNAL IMPORTANCE, LET IT GO.

Do you remember last week? A hundred years from now, will that unanswered call make a difference? If not, let it go. (Let it go. If not, let it go.) If it's a matter of biblical conviction...

2. IF NOT A MATTER OF BIBLICAL CONVICTION, LET IT GO.

In other words, here's a black-and-white thing. It's an argument about the sinless nature of Jesus Christ and your friend doesn't believe He was sinless. That's something you can part fellowship over (you know). But if it isn't in any of the majors like...

- The virgin birth
- His virtuous life, which He never sinned
 - He never broke a law or a rule
 - He was sinless
- Whether it's His vicarious atonement
 - The fact that He died on the cross and shed His blood for all mankind
- Whether it was His visible resurrection where everybody saw Him just exactly like He said
- Whether or not it is going to be His visible return again one day

...if it's not one of those things, then anything else—that's okay.

It doesn't matter if you're pre-trib or mid-trib or post-trib. Some of you are going: *Well what's that?* It's something for you to argue about with somebody; that's what that is.

- Pre-trib means we are raptured and caught up to be with Jesus before the tribulation happens.
- Some people believe that we are raptured in the middle of the tribulation and we just get half of the bad stuff.
- Some people believe we're so bad that we get raptured after the tribulation.

I'm pre-trib. I'm totally, totally, totally okay with you being wrong in your position if you don't agree with me. Because I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that's the way it's going to go.

Now some things you just don't know. Some things you make an inference over. So if it's not a biblical conviction—if not—let it go.

If it's not a matter about which we must agree—we have to agree on these things—if not, let it go. (Let it go.)

3. IF NOT A MATTER ABOUT WHICH WE MUST AGREE, LET IT GO.

So in your relationship with each other—especially in a church where everybody's supposed to get along or at least try to get along—you forgo, you forbear and you forgive.

- You forgo: That means you don't act on something. You let that thing go. It's a minor, little/tiny thing.
- You forbear: You patiently restrain an impulse to do something.
- You forgive: You cancel a debt that's owed to you.

(You know) I had a—on the plane back to Houston on Saturday—I got on the plane. This one was on time. It was even new (you know). It had a leather seat in it. I said: *Sweet!* I was all by myself in this two-seat row, which is even sweeter. Then I had the privilege of sitting in front of me a young couple with their (about) 10- or 11-month-old baby. From the moment that we took off, that child was in full-emergency-yell the whole time. The only time it got any louder was when it peeked between the seats and looked at me. It saw me and went: *Waaaaaaah!* I put on my sunglasses. I put a book up. Anything I could do. But do you know what? I had to make a choice.

- Am I going to keep hitting the flight attendant button demanding my rights that this child be thrown out of the airplane?—no!
- I had to forgive those parents for not giving that child Benadryl® before it got on the airplane.

If I would have been doing all of that and causing a ruckus, who's the immature one in that picture?—the parents! You're right; they are.

Look, on the majors we have conviction about those things. On the minors we have tolerance. But in all things, we have love for one another. That means you can come to this church and...

- You can be a Democrat.
- You can be a Republican.
- You can be an Independent.
- You could think the president is the greatest thing since sliced bread.
- You could think the president is the most foolish thing that's ever happened.
- You could think this.
- You could think that.

But when it comes to the majors upon which we must agree, we agree on those. Everything else we will [agree] to disagree but not disagreeably.

How can God take so many different people with so many different perspectives and meld them together and say: *Live united*? It is by the Spirit of God and by us changing our minds and how we treat one another and what we get out of our relationship for one another. Some things are important; some things aren't.

Years ago we had a young man that we were disciplining, and he was staying with us for awhile. It happened to be one of those nights (several years ago) where it actually may have been getting ready to get cold and you had to wrap the pipes. Well, this particular night I knew—

- in my mind
- in my heart
- by the weather forecast

—that it wasn't going to get cold, that cold to freeze the pipes. But when I got home my wife said: *Hey, why don't you wrap the pipes. It's going to get cold tonight.* So I thought for a moment: Hmm...

- Is this a major biblical conviction?
- Is this of eternal importance?—maybe not, but it will be for two weeks if something right and correct is not done here.
- Is this something about which we must agree?

Do you know what I said? Even though the forecast didn't say it was going to go down to 32 degrees—

I grabbed this guy and said: *Hey, come help me wrap the pipes.*

As we're wrapping the pipes, he goes: *Why are you doing this?*

I said: *So the pipes don't freeze.*

He said: *No, you know it's not going to freeze.*

I said: *Does it really matter? If by doing this, I can show my wife that I love her and I'm listening to her and what her concerns are are my concerns. Does it matter that it takes me 15 minutes to come out here and wrap these pipes?*

He goes: *Man! That's pretty wise.*

I said: *Not only that—How many times has the weather man really been right and if I don't wrap them, do you know what I'm going to go through tomorrow?*

Some things aren't worth it—

- Some things you forgo.
- Some things you forbear.
- Some things you forgive.

Verse 5:

Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.
Philippians 4:5 (NIV)

I love that word *gentleness*. Do you know what it means?—*where not the legal right is in view*.

GENTLENESS (EPIEIKÊS): WHERE NOT THE LEGAL RIGHT IS IN VIEW

Listen, every time—every time!—that we demand our rights, our joy goes down. When I demand my rights and conflict settles in and it's a no-big issue deal:

- My joy goes down.
- People I'm in relationship [with], their joy goes down.
- Conflict rises up.

Any time I demand my rights: up with my rights, down with my joy.

UP WITH MY RIGHTS, DOWN WITH MY JOY

Jesus wasn't like that. He said: *I have not come to be served (demand My rights), but I've come to serve. And—literally—just to give My life away as a ransom for people that I love.* [Matthew 20:28 (paraphrased)]

Why? Why can we be gentle? He says because: "The Lord is near." Now, what does that mean? Here's what I think it means: Jesus is coming back. Now He may come back today. He may come back next week. Who knows when He comes back? But when He comes back, anything that's wrong—guess what?—He sets it right.

Sometimes when you give up your rights to be in a relationship and you're loving people the way Jesus loves people, sometimes it's scary to give up your rights and think: *Okay, what's going to happen to my needs? What's going to happen to my rights?* The Lord, who's in control over all of that, sets those things right. But He can't if you are demanding your rights.

"The Lord is near." He is the one that controls all of these things. He's just trying to do something beautiful and you. Don't worry about the other person. He'll take care of that person too. But if you're not obeying Him—I'm not obeying Him—how do you expect someone else to obey Him? How do you expect the Lord to take care of you if you will not listen to how He wants to take care of you?

Number two:

LIVE SELFLESSLY

Selflessly—

- ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:3-5 (NIV, 1984 edition)

Now honestly, when I look at (a lot of times) why I do what I do, I do it because there's something in it for me. Really what I need to do is change the something-that's-in-it-for-me. Even when I lead people to do something, I always think: *Okay, what's in it for them?* Because I know they're going to ask that question. *What's in it for me? What do I get by doing this?* So that's a legitimate question. But in a worldly sense, it could be a very illegitimate question: *Now I'm not going to do it unless I get something out of it.*

So what I've been trying to train myself to do is: *Lord, what do You have in this for me?* I'll just say: *I'm going to do this thing. But in the midst of doing this thing, I want to discover what it is that You have for me here.* Not what's in it for me but: *What can I discover that You are doing when I do this thing?*

But that's normally not the way that we live. *How am I going to benefit from it?*

- *Am I going to get extra points for this?*
- *Am I going to get a little bit more money?*
- *Am I going to get some [accolades] and approval?*
- *Am I going to get my needs met when I do this?*

Well, in God's plan greatness is never a measure of self-promotion but self-abandonment. (I mean) read most...

- Facebook
- Twitters
- All that other stuff
- Individual web pages

...and here's what you will find: *Welcome to the greatest page about me. I am great. It is your blessing for my shadow to be cast upon you. If you do these things, it'll be beneficial for me.* But that's not how Jesus wants us to live. That is an attitude that's out there in this world that says that, but we have to live selflessly not selfishly.

So what philosophy of life do you accept? For example, when Paul wrote this...

- In Greece, people were taught: *Be wise. Know yourself.* That's what's in it for you.
- In Rome they said: *Be strong. Discipline yourself.* That's what's in it for you.
- In education it says: *Be resourceful. Get an education. Expand yourself.*
- Psychology says: *Be confident. Assert yourself.*
- Materialism says: *Be possessive. Please yourself.*
- Pride says: *Be superior. Promote yourself.*
- Religion says: *Be good. Conform yourself.*

But God's Son—our Lord Jesus Christ—says: *Be unselfish. Humble yourself.*

Now let me ask you a question: *Are you serving or are you being served?* (Are you serving or are you being served?) Here's what I've found:

- The more I serve, the more I get served.
- The more I demand to be served, the less I am served.

Some of you have never served anybody. You've never involved yourself outside of yourself. Let me challenge you. Find somewhere in this church to plug in and give yourself away. And

you will find yourself coming back to yourself on every crashing wave. That if you'll give away the very thing that you need, what you need will come back to you. Live selflessly.

Then finally, live devoted.

LIVE DEVOTED

Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ. That word *servant* is the word *doos' los*—a slave, somebody permanently devoted to do the will of another.

DOULOS (DOO' LOS): A SLAVE, SERVANT. PERMANENTLY DEVOTED TO DO THE WILL OF ANOTHER

I am, as a follower of Jesus Christ—you are, as a follower of Jesus Christ—a slave. You have been bought (and I have been bought) with a price. We were on the auction block of sin; slaves to sin. Jesus came, shed His blood, paid the price to take us out of that auction of sin and place us now in His Kingdom for His service.

So, you're going to serve somebody. You're going to be devoted to somebody. If we're going to live united and live selflessly, then we must live devoted to Jesus Christ, because He paid the price for us. We now ought to be serving one another the way that He serves us: permanently devoted to do the will of another. But if you don't know Christ, you can't serve. You're going to be predominantly—100 percent: *What's in it for me?*

I'm so glad that Jesus Christ did not say: *(You know) what's in it for Me, Lord? Father, what's in it for Me?* But—

- He died
- He humbled Himself
- Became a servant
- Died a death on a cross

—because He did that, now at the end time, guess what? Because He did—He humbled Himself and served people and died on the cross—every knee's going to bow and every tongue's going to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father [*Philippians 2:10-11* (paraphrased)]

One day your united, selfless devotion to Christ and to one another will be rewarded, because you will be like Jesus. You will be a beautiful thing in His eyes.

- He changed you.
- He is changing you.
- He will change you.

But it starts with giving your life to Christ and then serving and loving one another.

Let's pray together out on our *Cypress Campus* and here at our *Jones Road Campus*. Pastor Bryan will come at the end of this prayer and close us out, and Pastor Matt [Roberson, *Praise & Worship Pastor, Jones Road Campus*] will be here to close us out at the end of my prayer here at *Jones*.

If you're here and you never have thought about giving your life to Christ but this morning God spoke to you. (He spoke to you.) Listen to His voice. Remember I said: *Seek God and then whatever He tells you [to] do, do it.* This is one of those "What would You have me do, Lord?" moments. If you would just say it in your heart: *What would You have me do?* Here's what He will say: *Give your life to Jesus.* This is what you're going to hear Him say. If you've heard that, I'm going to ask you to pray this prayer as I do and it goes like this:

Dear Lord Jesus, I want to be a Christian. I want You to save me from my sin. I want You to give me a brand-new life. Please forgive me and give me a brand-new start.

For those of us that are already believers, our prayer is this:

In all the relationships, Lord, that we have, please help us...

- To serve, to love and to care for one another
- To live united, to live selflessly and to live devoted to one another

...as we do life together here at this church. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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The hopes of the godly result in happiness, but the expectations of the wicked come to nothing.

Proverbs 10:28 (New Living Translation)

Legend:

(words in parentheses) = spoken by the preacher *but unnecessary* to the core sentence idea

[words in square brackets] = additional explanation for clarity *not spoken* by the preacher

{words in curly brackets within indented quote} = spoken explanation *not part of the quote*