Different - **wk 15 – Happy Happy / The Constant Craving**

**Jan 23, 1999, Australian 30 yr missionary to Indian lepers, Graham Staines and sons, Phillip (10 yrs) & Timothy (6 yrs), led Christian jungle camp, to hold VBS. While he and 2 sons were sleeping in their Jeep - a mob attacked with bats, clubs, and spears, setting fire to the vehicle - Burned alive. Murdered. When the fire cooled, they found the charred body of Graham w/ his arms around the bodies of his sons. Wife Gladys, responded publicly with peace and forgiveness to the accused (all of India listened and asked - what is this hope?) Front page of every newspaper in India, she said, “I have only one message for the people of India. I’m not bitter. Neither am I angry. But I have one great desire: that each citizen of this country would establish a personal relationship with Jesus Christ who gave his life for their sins. Let us burn hatred and spread the flame of Christ’s love.” She remained in India for years and continued their work among the lepers. (Least of these Movie – 2019)**

**This is 1 Peter - letter to Christians with lost oved ones chased from their homes into new communities - Persecution follows**

**Peter says remember we are being watched, and live a life that points to Jesus – live gracious, humble, respectful lives – Be Different!!**

**And know sometimes doing the right thing will sometimes bring pain**

**1 Peter 4:1 Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude… (Sometimes our attitude about suffering keeps us from growing.)**

**Last wk ended on v.6 - 1 Peter 4:7** **The end of all things is near.**

**Really? Was he wrong? Next wk - Living w/ the end in sight.**

**Before we go to verse 12 – We are born with a Constant Craving**

**We spend our whole life pursuing something to make us happy**

**We pursue careers, adventure, entertainment, pleasure, prominence, popularity, notoriety, family, money, knowledge, health, reputation, legacy – born hungry from day one. We seek happiness.**

**When we pursue those alone – we still end up empty, exhausted, frustrated, and unsatisfied.**

**What are you craving? Chasing, hungry for, thirsty for?**

**We look for happiness in two major places:**

* **Cultural Things**

**\* Possessions – Clothes / jewelry / gadgets / car /stuff – you’ll be happy**

**\* Places – Moving, vacations, trips, Fiji, Vegas. It’s my dream to go to…**

**\* People – If I could have them or be like… celebrity, athlete, spouse…**

* **Spiritual Things**

**\* Popular thought – Oprah, books, positive - you’re in charge - do it!**

**\* Popular religion – World religions & pop Christianity (denial of all pleasure, pursue pleasure, or positive confession and thinking)**

**But yet – the #1 drug prescription category in US – Anti-depressants / 118 mil people - 25% of all adults, 8% of young people - 48% increase**

**HERE’S THE POINT – Our current Pursuit of Happiness is not going well – it does not seem to be working…**

**1 Peter 4:12 Do not be surprised at the fiery (burning) ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.**

1. **Don’t be surprised when you’re not happy - when the trials come**

**Ever felt like everything is piling up you or falling apart – you pray and it’s still there. Maybe wonder God, how / why can you let this happen?**

**Happiness is based on what happens to you.**

**Problem is - happiness is at the mercy of what is happening in our life. We are only happy when circumstances are right.**

**When bad things happen… there goes your happiness.**

**\*\* God never promised health, wealth, always good relationships, pain free, no despair life now – in fact very few people in the bible EVER experienced these things at all – Jesus himself in this life did not…**

**Jesus told us trouble would follow his followers (Jo 15:18-27, 16:33) Peter echoes, Jesus suffered so will we, don’t be surprised! Expect it. Are you ready?**

**Reality check: Christians experience pain just like everyone else (explain - loss, etc.) PLUS, we’re attacked for being followers of JC.**

**Sitting on bench on the sidelines eating popcorn, watching... the minute you step onto the field and get your hands on that ball - opposing side is putting every effort on you – Don’t be surprised! Person signs up for the army, comes in from battlefield complaining – they’re shooting at me - real bullets and it hurts - captain says - what did you expect? Why surprised?**

**What did you expect Christian, you joined a war – you’re the target.**

* **Our surprise of suffering and trials expose erroneous expectations**

**BUT - I thought God wanted us to be loved and happy. It’s a message that feels good – it seems right. It’s in - Declaration of Independence, “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”**

**So many affirm diff lifestyle choices concluding, God loves us and just wants us to be loved & happy. False assumption…**

 **“God Wants Me Happy” is a dangerous myth and yet one of the most common in the American church today**

**Joel Osteen in Texas Monthly: attributes success to positive message “God created you to be victorious in every area...”**

**Christians sadly adopt pop cultural pursuits of happiness**

**Just a thought - just because it’s in Christian store, on Christian radio, book, or show, does not make it true.**

* **False Expectation – God just wants me to be happy**
* **False Expectation – God only has good things in store for me in life**
* **False Expectation – God promises me a happily ever after marriage**
* **False Expectation – God promises me to always be healed and healthy here**
* **False Expectation – God wants me to always enjoy life and prosper**

**The Theology of Happiness (prosperity gospel) - DANGER!**

* **It elevates us to the point where God is there to serve us**

**Rather than the truth, that we are here to serve God**

**I think of - 2 Timothy 4:3-4 - For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.**

**When you have the expectation of God always making us happy, we end up treating Him like a celestial Santa Claus or venerable vending machine. And, If He doesn’t deliver – we get disappointed, frustrated, or even angry with God.**

**Understand, God is a good God and loves to give good gifts to His kids**

**“I just want my kids happy” Really, what does that mean? How far are you willing to go for them to be “happy”? I want something more - I want them fulfilled. \*\* God our perfect Father has more for you too!**

**1 Peter 4:12 Do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.**

1. **Don’t be surprised when you’re tested**

**The tests! - 1 Peter 1:6,7 Trials test the authenticity of our faith… / Lu 22:31 Jesus to Peter, Satan asked to sift you / Job 1 Satan allowed to test Jobs faith / 1 Co 3:13 - fires and trials reveal the quality of our faith / James 1:13 testing of faith produces endurance / Matt 13, Mark 4, Luke 8 - Four soils, 2nd soil rocky and shallow dies when trials and persecution comes. / James 1:12 Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.**

**How do I know you are for real – anyone in is room is for real?**

**I think of George Insuaste – cancer, pain, anguish, tears, bleeding, in and out of hospital and he still praised God - was here faithfully as much as he could get here. He was the real deal!**

**Don’t be surprised when you’re tested – it is coming.**

**1 Peter 4:13 But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.**

**Ultimately, in this life**

**3. God does not want us to know happiness but to know joy**

**While happiness relies on what happens, joy is unmoved by our circumstances. It relies on what is inside in Christ.**

**Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit… / Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, (when?) so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

**Joy comes from connecting with the creator. Joy in knowing you’re in the center of His will. God knows what will ultimately bring you joy better than you do – anyways. Rest in it.**

**1 Peter 4:13 …so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.**

* **We were created to be satisfied by only one thing**

**God has put eternity in our hearts – we have an inconsolable longing.**

**We are made by God and for God – created to reflect His glory. (Colossians 1:16, Romans 11:36) \*\* We will never be truly satisfied until we align with the will of God and his purpose for our life.**

**Matthew 5:6 - Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, (of God) for they will be filled. (“blessed” Gk “Makarayos” - More than happy)**

**According to Jesus – if you hunger for, are seeking, and chasing happiness - you will never find lasting satisfaction.**

**We tend to turn good things: education, goals, success, fitness, family into god things. Idols - pursuits we chase and hunger far above Jesus because we want to be happy.**

**Psalm 107:8 Let them give thanks to the LORD for His lovingkindness, And for His wonders to the sons of men! 9 For He (God alone) has satisfied the thirsty soul, And the hungry soul He has filled with what is good.**

**The problem is we live in a world that is filled with things that entice our selfish ambitions and desires – using what God created and designed for our selfish purposes.**

* **Until we pursue the one thing, we will have a constant restlessness for more things**

**Ecclesiastes 1:14 - I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind. / Ecc. phrases - The pursuit of education - like chasing after the wind / I denied myself no pleasure – it left me empty / I did everything I wanted – with nothing to gain / I worked hard – it was vanity and futile – like chasing the wind / I was the best, an expert at many things – this too was meaningless / I was a good person… futile.**

**Solomon – I’ve done it all - all my pursuits were meaningless…**

**Just follow your heart, you’ll figure it out - Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?**

**The jacked-up nature of our hearts – reveals our pursuits are not always healthy and often out of alignment with God.**

**The solution is not more entertainment, experiences, trips, people, pleasures, possibilities and new appetites. But rather a whole different pursuit all together. (Matt 5:6 - Blessed (more than happy) are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.)**

**SO - Where does suffering come from?**

** Broken world – Gen 3 sin, sickness, and sorrow**

** Consequences of sin – Living outside of God’s will**

**Example of that in - 1 Peter 4:14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. (meddler – always in other people’s business – your life it filled with drama because you chase drama – These things bring suffering)**

** Dumb decisions – interest charges, poor upkeep of car, home, waking late**

** Satan – 1 Peter 5:8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. / John 10:10**

** God - WHAT? GOD? 1 Pet 4:19 those who suffer according to God’s will…**

**There are several times God doesn’t want you happy**

* **God doesn’t want you happy when it causes you to sin**

**1 Peter 1:15 - But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do… (But many times, we do things opposite of God’s Word that make us “happy” for a while – but miserable in the long run)**

**Marriage – My wife does not make me happy anymore…**

**Single Sex – God gave me these desires – He wants me happy**

**If not happy – okay to do whatever it takes to be happy = sin**

**1 Peter 4:14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.**

* **God doesn’t want you happy when the circumstances are not right**

**If going along with the crowd keeps you out of trouble… If going along with bad choices keeps the peace... God ordained sex for marriage – but when your single the circumstance are not right - God would rather you be unhappy, alone, fired, insulted, or ridiculed.**

**1 Peter 4:17 For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household; (God is working in his people as an example – starts with us) and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And, “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, (being saved - following Jesus will be hard) what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” (humility vs. pride)**

* **God doesn’t want you happy when it makes you arrogant**

**Look what I have, did, my stuff, spouse, I’m blessed more than you. I must be special. God really loves me; don’t you wish you were me?**

**God will remove things from a follower of Jesus to humble you and pull your reliance to him, not to self. It beings with you.**

**Paul in prison, not happy, awaiting a sentence – Phil 4:12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.**

**The secret is - GOD IS ENOUGH. Have you learned that yet?**

**God wants to do something for you - inside**

**You’ll miss God’s best - if the goal of your life is to be happy.**

**God wants to do something in you and something thru you. God wants you blessed - more than Happy!**

**God is more focused on what happens in you than what happens to you – SO Focus on what Happens In You**

**Why? He wants you to soar above your sin and circumstance.**

**What is God is doing in you through this?**

**God uses trouble and suffering to teach us and build character. He doesn’t necessarily create it but will often allow it as an opportunity for us to grow.**

**Romans 5:3** **…we glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope.**

**Life is not always going to be happy - What do we do with this today?**

**1 Peter 4:19 So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator (God is faithful!) and continue to do good.**

* **Press into our good faithful Father and keep doing good**

**Dig your heels in – hold on to Jesus and hang on!**

**God does not promise that we will never have trouble – but he does promise to be there with you and give you his strength to endure it!**