

MAY IT BE SAID OF YOU

Matthew 3:13-17 Text vs. 17 *"A voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."*

Is God pleased with you? And you say, "What do you mean by that? What do you mean 'pleased'?" Well, the Dictionary says if you are pleased, you're *happy* about something. Or you're *satisfied* with something. So, the answer to "Is God pleased with you?" could be, God is pleased with you, and satisfied with you, *if* you are allowing Jesus to live His life *through you*. It's in Galatians 2:20 where the Apostle Paul said, *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."*

Last week's lesson taught you it's *impossible* to please God if you live life only by your standards, because Romans 8:8 says, *"flesh cannot please God."* But on the other hand, faith in Jesus is what makes it possible for you to please God. And to be pleased just the way the Apostle Paul said it in Galatians 2:20, *"Not I, but Christ who lives in me."* The good news is, Jesus *always* does things that please God. So, shouldn't you please God? Jesus was focused on pleasing God in all that He said and did. He said, *"I always do those things that please Him."* (John 8:29) It wasn't just the miraculous things Jesus did which pleased God. It was ordinary things, like the time Jesus stood on the shore and called out to Peter and the men in the boat to cast their nets on the other side if they wanted to catch fish. They did, and miraculously they caught lots of fish and then joined Jesus on the shore. *"Come, have breakfast."* He had cooked a breakfast of bread and fish for them. And just as He had invited them to *"come and have breakfast"* with Him, His invitation in Matthew 11:28 was, *"Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."* That's more than Jesus calling you to rest from your work. It's an invitation for you to find rest in your soul knowing that He's in control. That wherever you are, HE IS, and that He wants you to be with Him.

At the Mount of Transfiguration, (Luke 9:28-36) God said Jesus was His beloved Son *"in whom He was well pleased."* Peter, James, and John were there with Jesus when God said that they should listen to Jesus. Not because of who He was. But because of what Jesus would say and do. The blind would receive sight. The lame would walk. Lepers would be cleansed. The deaf would hear. The dead would be raised. And the Good News would be preached to the poor. (Luke 7:22) Now, you may not be able to do any those things for others. So, the best thing you can do is to see that *"the good news is preached to the poor."* (Matthew 11:2-6) But still, how do you please God? Well first, you please God by just being who you are! The Father was pleased with Jesus simply because of who He was. At Jesus' baptism, God said, *"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."* (Matthew 3:17) He said it even before Jesus had preached a sermon. Before He had done any miracles. God was pleased with Jesus just because Jesus was His Son.

And what about you? Aren't you God's child? If you have received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you are! When you received Jesus Christ as your Savior, you were born again, by God's Spirit. You were joined to the Lord in Spirit. You became a son, or a daughter of the living God. 1 John 3:1-2 says, *"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God. And what we will be, has not yet been made known."* God is pleased with you because of who you are. You're one with Jesus. It's a work of God's Grace. God freely chose you through Jesus Christ *"before the creation of the world, to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined you for adoption as His child through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will, to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given you in the One he loves."* (Ephesians 1:3-6) God made you to be *accepted*. And that should give you perfect peace! And perfect rest!

There's a restaurant in Paris, France called *Gout du Noir*. It's a small eatery. People go there, even though they can't see the food they're eating. They can't even see their hands in front of their face. They can't see their surroundings. They can't see anything! Nothing! Everything is black! Walls. Furniture. Tablecloths. Dishes. It's totally dark! *Gout du Noir* in French means *"a taste of darkness."* The meals are served in pitch blackness to give sighted people an experience of blindness. And the menu's a surprise! You don't know what you're eating until after you have eaten it. The staff are blind and act as your personal guide throughout. The first thing is, you're led into the pitch-black dining room and seated. Then, your blind server brings your food and drinks. Pours you a glass of wine or water. Then at the end of your dinner leads you back out of the dark room into the lighted lounge area and asks you to look at the floor so your eyes can gradually adjust. Then, they let you look at pictures of food on their menu to see what you have just eaten. Is it what you thought you ate? Now, in a reverse sense, your life is like those diners at *Gout du Noir*. You're blind. You've not been allowed to see your life's ending. You see only your past and your present. You *think* you can see your future. But your natural sight is but darkness when compared to the spiritual sight God has for you.

In 1984, Dr. David Hocking authored a book called *"Pleasing God"* to show how a *refocused God-centered life* can lead to a whole new life as a Christian, by witnessing! You read in the Gospels how Jesus pleased God. Hocking's book suggests you can please God by living your life in such a way that you, too, will hear a voice from heaven say to you, *"This is My son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased"* or, *"This is My daughter, whom I love; with her I am well pleased."* The requirement's clear. It's all about *change*. A change of lifestyle. It's not a quick fix! It's about

living your life so that you make clear to others what the Good News of God's Son means to you. You become living proof that a proper Christian life can let others see Jesus living in you. They can see what it means for you to be a Christian. It's as if you are living your days as the song, "*These are the days of Elijah.*" It's a song that's become a favorite in many churches. You can see it on *YouTube* being sung by a group of Marines in California gathered for a Christian service at Camp Pendleton. In unison they wave their hands. They shout, "*Oorah!*" while singing "*These are the days of Elijah.*" To see and hear those Marines come together praising the Lord and singing "*These are the Days of Elijah*" is so inspirational! It's uplifting! It's a song of hope and courage. And when you hear the words,

**And though these are days of great trial
Of famine, darkness, and sword
Still, we are the voice in the desert crying
'Prepare ye the way of the Lord!'**

they reflect the time in which we are now living. While thousands of people around the world die every day from disease, hunger, war, and despair, Christians can still celebrate the "*Days of Elijah.*" Days which prophesy about Christ and God's people. Days that have been fulfilled across hundreds of years. And still, the chorus to that song is the greatest declaration of hope and Christ's return!

**Behold he comes,
Riding on a cloud,
Shining like the sun
At the trumpet's call**

That song is paraphrased from the books of Revelation and Daniel in a vision of the coming King in the year of Jubilee. A year that has not been observed for centuries. Rabbi's interpret the *Torah* observance of Jubilee as coming *after* the Exile, and that it will only happen when the Jewish people live once again in the land of Israel, according to their tribes. According to Biblical law, the Jubilee is only observed when all the twelve tribes of the Jewish nation are living together again in Israel, as Leviticus 25:10 says, "*And you shall sanctify the fiftieth year, and proclaim freedom throughout the land for all who live on it*". That implies, Jubilee is only when "*all who live on it*" — meaning all Twelve Tribes who are meant to be living again in the Land of Israel.

So, Jubilee describes when Christ comes what will happen. Debts of sin are cancelled. Captives to sin are set free. The Church is revived. God's Kingdom grows. And the church follows the message of John the Baptist. *Repent and be baptized!* It's clear. To be a Christian you follow Christ. But if there's an unwillingness to change. If there's hesitancy be the kind of person God wants you to be. Then, you're not a Christian! No matter how many times you come to church. No matter how many prayers you pray. No matter how much money you give. Or how many times you say you're sorry. It's not about saying you're sorry. Until you change your life, and accept Jesus Christ as the Lord of your life, does that happen!

Could Jesus have waited until he was 40, 50 or 60 years of age to be baptized? Yes! But he knew his Father's timetable. NOW was His time. NOW was the time for Him to be set apart as prophet, priest, and king. NOW was the time for Him to publicly proclaim God's Word. NOW was the time for Him to be set apart as the Lamb of God as a sacrifice to take our sins away. NOW was the time for Him to defeat His enemy, the Devil. Age 30 was time for Jesus to show Himself to the world as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus knew His time had come. He wasn't going to wait any longer. His Father's acceptance happened so He could say with confidence, "*Now, I know that God, my Father, accepts Me.*"

So now, what are *you* doing that's pleasing God your heavenly Father? What are you doing that will let Him say of you, "*This is my child, whom I love; and with whom I am well pleased.*" My friend, NOW is YOUR time! Whatever it is you're doing for Him NOW, or will do, do it for God's sake. And for your sake, keep doing it so that you too, will hear "*This is my child, whom I love; and with whom I am well pleased.*" AMEN