



WHFC Summer

Part 2 – Fighting a Negative Mindset

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Hey, Woodland Hills, how's everybody doing? You guys feeling good? So fun to get to be with you. This has come to be a highlight of the summer for me for sure. My wife and I arrived in Branson yesterday with our van packed full of stuff and also children. We've got five little kids, ranging from 11 to 2. I don't necessarily love road trips. I feel trapped inside of that van. And nobody likes feeling trapped, right? You know the feeling when you're in a place where you just can't move, you can't do what you need to do, you don't have that freedom that we've come to know and love as Americans. Being trapped is a pretty awful place to be.

Nothing traps us though, in life, quite like our minds do. Do you have anybody in your family that is trapped by a mindset. Are you with anybody today that's trapped by a mindset? I see people elbowing, pointing fingers, cutting their eyes. I'm sure if you're watching online, the same thing is true where you are. It's wild how we all know of people...

My wife and I have a family member who honestly, she just has a hard time making great decisions. Part of it, I've come to learn, is the mindset that she wakes up in, the mindset that she lives in. It has this thing that it does to us; it traps us. And our thoughts, which is what I want to talk about today a little bit... In fact, it's probably the thing that I've learned most, the thing that I've become most aware of myself over the last few months and that's how important our thoughts are because our thoughts really can trap us. They can cause us to think things that aren't necessarily true. They can cause us to read situations that weren't necessarily meant to be the way we are reading them.

Our thoughts really are the operating system that run our mainframe. How many of you are computer people in the room or even online or over in the Chapel? Any computer people? Not many computer people, huh? Well, me either, so I guess we're in good company. I graduated from college with a degree in engineering, so around my house, and especially when I go back to my parent's house, anything that breaks, they always ask me to fix it. The answer is always, "I can't, I don't have the tools, and even if I had the tools I can't." The answer is just, "I can't." I got an engineering degree by this arrangement that the school gave me. I went to Georgia Tech in Atlanta and they said, "Hey, if you promise to never use it, we'll give it to you." And I said, "Okay, done. I'm not going to use it, okay."

Here's all I know about computers. There are two integral parts, crucial parts to a computer or even to your phone. There's the software, the system that runs it, and then there's the hardware. The hardware is really no good, the hardware is really worthless if you don't have a great system that's running the hardware.

All I want to do is make that simple comparison to the way our bodies are. Our bodies are the hardware and our minds – the thoughts that we have – are like the software. It's the thing that runs our life. It's the thing that moves us, that causes us to make decisions to click purchase or to say yes to things or no to things. Our minds are the software that runs this mainframe, this body.

What I want to offer today is what if there's an upgrade available? What if your software has the potential to be upgraded? All you have to do is download it and install it. Seriously, what if God, a loving, perfect father, what if he comes to us today and says, "Hey, I just want to offer you an upgrade. I want to give you the potential, I want to give you the opportunity to upgrade the system that's running your life.

It's wild to me, but this is one of the realities of being in the business that I'm in, doing what I do for a living – standing in front of people and talking about God's truth and God's Word – it's always wild to me the way God works. There's so much potential in every moment because just from this morning, everything about your life could change. Your life could change because of what God might want to do today. I don't mean the circumstances around you. No, the circumstances around you might stay the same, but sitting in the seat that you're sitting in, you could make a decision today to upgrade your mindset that could just be the thing that God wants to change about your life.

So, how do you know. How do you know when you're holding onto a mindset that is holding you back? Psychologists or counselors, they call these cognitive distortions, that our brain has the potential to be cognitively distorted. That's another way to say a lot of other local things that we say, right? You know, like, "Oh, that person's just crazy." "Oh, that person's not in their right mind." But the truth is that a person is living with a cognitive distortion, maybe multiple of them.

What I've found is that all of, at different points in life, our brains become distorted. We don't see the world the way the world really is. We see the world the way we see the world, but we might not see the world the way the world really is. Today, I want to talk about one specific one. There are numerous ones, but on the top ten list of the most common distortions that we all have is the one I want to talk about today.

But before we get into it, I'm going to give you just some examples in life, some situations in life. Hopefully, this will be a simple way for us all to play along and maybe it might even help identify or highlight whether or not this is one that we need to pay attention to. I think this is going to be, as they call it at the skating rink, an all skate though, if I had to guess.

Here's the first example. At your yearly physical... That's assuming you get a yearly physical. At your yearly physical, the doctor walks in, looks at you, and he or she says one of two things, right? "Wow, you are in tip top shape. You are the epitome of health. Holy cow, when I looked at your results, I was amazed. Rarely do we see someone this wonderful in our office." Do you expect to hear that, or do you expect to hear the second one? "Now, I'm not sure how to say this, but it's bad."

How many of you would go with number one? You'd say, "That's what I expect to here." Look at that. That's amazing. How many of you would say, "No, for me, it's number two.; I'm just thinking the doctor is going to tell me something's wrong."? So, we're about half and half on that one.

This one's going to be a runaway, though. It's 1:00 am and the phone rings. Now this is assuming that you keep your ringer on, or you have a home phone. I don't know, one of the two might be true. I have noticed that people that do keep the ringer on usually do have a home phone as well. That's pretty amazing how that works out. I don't keep my ringer on at night.

I don't sleep with it on, so if you try to get hold of me at 1:00 am, you just would not be able to do that. But, just assume, for the sake of the illustration, that someone could get hold of you. The phone rings at 1:00 am, you have a couple of options. "Oh, someone is just calling to talk," or, number two, "There's been an accident." Which one do you think? Anybody number one, someone's just calling to talk? These are the late nighters. These are like, "Oh, this is great. This is when you can get hold of me. This is when you get my best at 1:00 am." And then how many of you would go, "Nope, there's been an accident." Yeah, most people. I would imagine this is not the 1:00 am crowd. I think we've identified that.

Alright, last one right here. This one is my least favorite one. The boss text you and says, "Can you drop by my office?" What does your mind go to? Is it this one: You're getting a promotion? Would anyone say, "That's me?" The boss text you and says, "Drop by my office," and you're like, "Oh, my goodness; are you going to try to pay me more money again?" This is amazing. There were a few of you that were in that category, but the rest I would imagine are right here. You're thinking, *Oh, here we go; I'm getting fired.* That's me. It is amazing. I am 40 years old and I feel a pretty good sense of job security, but whenever my boss text me to give him a call, my mind immediately goes... And I'm a relatively positive person, but my mind immediately goes to *what did I do now?* I don't know if it's from my childhood; I probably should dig into that, but I just naturally veer toward negativity.

That's what I want to talk about for the next few minutes. I want to talk about the trap of negativity. Anyone feel like your mind has just been trapped by negativity over the last three or four months? I feel like have been more prone to negative thoughts over the past three or four months than maybe I ever have in my entire life. You see, this message is not just a message that's for you; this message is for me. I'm telling you, I'm on the other end of this going I need to figure out how I get my mind upgraded? How do I get to another place, a better place? And I don't mean disconnected from reality. There are a lot of negative things, stuff happening in our world. I'm not saying withdrawn, aloof, completely separated from what's happening in the world. No, I just mean how do we get our minds to a place where we're not filtering everything or reading everything through a negative grid?

Do you know any negative thinkers? Anybody married to a negative thinker? Oh, I saw some hands. That's going to cost you something. Here's the way I've noticed life works out. There are two kinds of people in this world, right? There are positive thinkers and there are negative thinkers. God usually matches them up together. Sometimes in a marriage, sometimes in a friendship, sometimes their roommates. I see some people shaking their head, elbowing each other. It's amazing how this works out.

Those of you who would be categorized as a negative thinker, you've been accused of being a negative thinker. What is your natural response to that? "I'm not negative, I'm just... realistic" There aren't really any negative thinkers, there are just realistic thinkers.

This is my wife. I am relatively a positive person and any time I have accused my wife... Which never goes well. Accusation in marriage is the key to ending up on the couch. You never ever, ever accuse in marriage. In fact, one of my mentors or tormentors, as I like to call him, one of his common marriage advices is never use the word "You" to start out a sentence in a marriage. Great advice. So, whenever I have made that dumb mistake of saying, "Well, you're just being negative," my wife always responds, "I'm not being negative, I'm just telling you what's going to happen."

Here's an example. We're on a road trip somewhere. In fact, this happened this weekend. We were driving somewhere, we got these kids that we've got to feed, and they start getting restless in the asylum. We realize we've got to get them some food. We're driving down the interstate and I'll see that glorious sign that says, Cracker Barrell. I'll say, "Hey, why don't we just mix it up. Instead of going to Chick-fil-A, which is where we typically go, why don't we go to Cracker Barrell, and sit down for a nice meal. I could sure use some chicken and dumplings right now.

And my wife always says, "You're welcome to do that; I'll just stay in the car."

You see, what I'm picturing is this Norman Rockwell picture. We're in Cracker Barrell and it's looking like this. Everybody is getting along, having a good time, eating the food that they ordered, which with little kids is like as miraculous as Jesus feeding the 5,000. Just eat what you ordered, that's all I'm asking you to do.

She's like, "No, that's not going to happen. What's going to happen is there are going to be kids under the table, there are going to be kids standing on the table, there are going to be people – five star waiters and waitresses – coming by saying, 'We're going to need to have this table, we need y'all to leave,' because there are kids throwing food, that little thing with the gold tees in it? It's going to become an object of war at this point. There are going to be eyes pokes out. That little triangle thing is going across the restaurant. And then, to make matters worse, we're going to be leaving, walking through the gift shop, and, naturally, that little two year old, who is so cute, but so destructive, is going to pick something up, knock something over, and break something that I'm going to end up buying that I didn't actually want. That's what's going to happen."

So, she's like, "Look, I'm just telling you if you want to go, go for it. I'm going to stay in the car while you're doing that."

But that's the way we work; that's just what happens in our life.

Here's what I want to do. I want to talk about not just the power of positive thinking. This is not just about thinking more positively. It's about something way better than that. It's actually about something more godly than that. Positive thinking is not just self-help. For those of you that maybe you've pushed that aside years ago and you say, "That's at the self-help category at the Barnes and Noble. I'm not

interested in self-help.” Positive thinking is not just self-help; it’s not just focusing on good vibes; it’s not just trying to get away from all those negative thoughts that hold you down. No, positive thinking is actually deeply connected to our faith.

Positive thinking is evidence of faith. Positive thinking is connected to godly thinking. Not removed from the world, not thinking outside of the realm of possibility, not ignoring research, not ignoring data, not ignoring hard true facts. No, positive thinking is something different than that.

In fact, I believe if we actually think that the tomb of Jesus is empty... And I’m not silly enough to believe that every person in here believes in the death and resurrection of Jesus. I would image a lot of you do, but maybe some of you were invited by somebody and you’re not sure what you believe yet. Let me just tell you this. If we believe, as followers of Jesus, that the tomb is empty, that the grave is empty, that Jesus’ death did not actually get the final word, but three days later that he was found to be resurrected from the dead, which is the anchor of our faith, the roots that all of our faith grows up from... If we actually believe that the tomb is empty, I believe, as followers of Jesus, we should be the most hope-filled, optimistic, forward thinking, “anything can happen” people on the planet. I thought more of you would say, “Yeah! Right on to that?”

Is that not true? I mean if we believe that God really raised Jesus from the dead, that we have life in him, that we too have been joined with him in his resurrection, that our sin does not get the final word, that we have been forgiven, that we have been given grace, that we’ve been given mercy, that the God of creation knows our name and loves us still... If we really believe that, shouldn’t we be the most hope-filled, optimistic, forward thinking, “anything can happen” people on the planet. I think we should. I think we should, and I think the Apostle Paul is going to lead us there today.

We’re going to look at this little letter called the letter of Philippians, rooted in the resurrection, where he gives keys, where he gives us the upgrade that he’s offering us to download on how we get our minds right so that we don’t become trapped by negativity. Here’s what he’s going to say... This is shocking; it was shocking to me. He’s not going to say the key to negative thinking is to be more positive. That’s good news. For some of you, that’s as great of news as like when you tell somebody you have sleeping problems and they’re like, “Well just close your eyes and try to go to sleep.” “Oh, that’s a great idea; I haven’t tried that.”

The answer to negative thinking is not just think more positively. The answer is to replace it with joy because **nothing replaces negativity quite like joy**. Our minds have the capacity to focus on one thing at a time. And if we’ll follow Paul’s advice... Some of you are still holding onto that and you’re like, *No, wait a second, not mine. I can think about eight different things at the same time.* I’m telling you our minds, even if you can understand multi-tasking, our minds are designed to think on or focus on or dwell on one thing. And when you focus on that thing, all the other things move in a peripheral. Nothing replaces negative thinking like joy.

Joy is a word that is used in this letter of Philippians 16 times. This is Paul’s most joyful letter. He talks about joy over and over and over again. It’s not because he’s sitting at the Big Cedar Lodge, it’s not

because he sitting in this beautiful place, looking over Table Rock Lake, going, "I'm in the middle of God's creation and this is glorious, let me tell you about joy."

Do you know where Paul was when he wrote this letter? He was in jail. He was locked up and it was not Mayberry. He was locked up in a prison, a Roman prison. You might know a lot about Roman history, you might know a lot about the first century. We learned a lot from the Romans in the first century. One thing though we do not take from them is the kind and ethical treatment of prisoners in the first century. We do not find that in Roman history. They did not treat prisoners very well. They do not have great environments in their prison. And Paul is locked up in jail, chained to a wall, chained to a stake, chained to a Roman prison guard. It was dingy, it was in the bottom of a dungeon. The climate was awful. He was dehydrated, he was malnourished. And he's writing a letter to his brothers and sisters in Philippi. He says to them, "If you want to get your mind right, if you want to get your mind on another level, you have to find joy."

This letter that was written in AD 61 or 62, written from this Roman prison cell. And if we apply it, it has the potential to change our minds and then to change our lives.

Before we read anything from Philippians, what I want to encourage you to do... This isn't a challenge. If I may... I don't know you well enough to challenge you. I hate when people get on the stage and say, "I'm challenging you!" I'm like *who are you? I'm about to get up and walk out and keep my distance from you so I'm not taking any challenge from you.* But I'm just telling you I would encourage you. If you like challenges, if you're like one of the cross-fit kind of people, then I would challenge you. Read the letter of Philippians this week. Travis preached on it last week. Today, we're just going to pick up on a couple different sections of Philippians, but just read it. It'll take you 15 minutes. If you read it one time through, God will use it. If you will then remind yourself that the one who is writing this was in a Roman prison, it'll start taking on a whole new meaning.

Here's what the Apostle Paul says... He's going to try to convince us to have joy. Not joy in spite of our circumstances. He's not saying, "Hey, even though you're in prison, even though it's hard, even though your financial future is bleak, even though that relational dynamic is tricky, even though your health is poor, you can still have joy." No, he's not going to say that. Not joy in spite of our circumstances. This is where we start getting into the blackbelt kind of level of following Jesus. He's going to say, "I want to help you find joy... because of your circumstance. That's very different. Even in the middle of the hard time, God can use the hard time to spawn, to spur on, to birth, to create joy. When you find joy, you find something that your mind can fixate on, can rally around, can focus on, that pushes all the negativity out of your mind.

Here's what he says in Philippians 1... I want to show you just a couple of verses and then we're going to go to Philippians 4 and look at another passage. ***12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me...*** What has happened to you, Paul? What's happened to me is that I have been falsely imprisoned, my life has been threatened, and my future is really hazy. I don't exactly know what's going to be happening. I think I might die from this. I think I might get killed because of this. things are bad enough now: I'm not getting enough food, I'm not getting enough water. I'm in a bad spot, but I'm telling you what has happened to me ***...has actually served to advance the gospel.*** What's

the gospel? The gospel is the good news that Jesus was crucified on a cross for the forgiveness of your sins, but he didn't stay dead. The good news is that he was resurrected from the dead to show off God's power over your sin, so that you don't have to be defeated by the things that have held you down for long. That your eternity is secure because of the resurrection of Jesus. That's the good news.

And he says, I'm telling you what has happened to me is going to advance the good news. And when the good news is advanced, I get joy. And when I get joy, the negativity goes away. What has been happening to me, God is going to use. Could it be true that God wants to use what you are in the middle of to help you and to help someone else. Could it be true that God wants to use what's happening to you to build something up in you and to build something up in someone else as well.

Does anybody in here like the weight room? I don't. I don't really enjoy it. I know you're probably looking at me like *Hmm, could have fooled us*. I don't really like the weight room. Do you now why? Because the weights are heavy. That's why I don't like the weight room. Simple as that. If they weren't so heavy, I might be more interested in them. I like lifting other things that aren't quite so heavy. But the weights are no fun to me because they're heavy. Let me ask you a simple question. Why are the weights heavy? Because the resistance of the weight builds strength in us. That's the way it works. When you lift heavy things, it builds strength. Resistance builds strength; that's what it does. It's why when you go through hard things, God wants to grow something. He does grow something in you and in me. It's what he does. He develops us, he builds us up in the middle of hard things, but he does the same thing to other people as well.

Have you ever watched somebody go through something hard and you see the way they handle it and you think *wow, that is inspiring me? That's motivating me. That's moving me*. Have you seen somebody get a cancer diagnosis and respond with confidence in God even still? Have you seen somebody's business just be completely crushed and they handle it with resilience, strength? Have you seen somebody go through a child that had a rebellious season or a divorce that was not necessarily their fault and you watched them do it and you thought *wow, that is motivating me?*

Paul is saying that's what can happen and all of that can birth joy. He continues and he says this. ***13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.*** It's become clear to everyone else that I'm in chains for Jesus. God's using what's happening in me to help someone else. ***14 And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.*** God's using the confidence that I have to give them confidence. He's using the courage I have to give them courage. He's using the resilience that I have to give them resilience. But it all starts in the mind. It starts in the way you see it. It starts in the perspective that you have. It starts in the way that your mind activates and lives and motivates you and moves you. I'm telling you; you want to find joy? You want to know where joy is really most used? It's in our minds. When we think about, focus on the things that bring us real joy, like what God is doing in us and what God is doing around us, it has the potential to change things.

I just want to use Philippians 4 as an application for what we just talked about in Philippians 1. So, in Philippians 4, Paul's going to say, "Well, let me help you with your thoughts then. Let me give you a

filter. I want you to filter your thoughts.” A lot of you had coffee this morning so you know how a filter works, right? The filter takes these grinds or beans it holds them up, pushes water through them to be able to get to the good stuff, right? That’s the way a filter works. And our minds have the potential to use filters.

In Philippians 4: 8, Paul gives a filter. Now, this filter is really challenging, this filter is difficult, this filter is not easy, but this is a powerful filter. Here’s what he says... If you want to change your minds, you want to change what’s happening inside of you, ***8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*** This isn’t just to think about though, this is deeper than that; it’s heavier than that. It actually means to dwell on, to focus on, to spend time marinating on it. I want you to think about these things. Now how many of you would say that your thoughts are characterized by these? How many would you say your thoughts are characterized by what is true and noble and right and pure and lovely and admirable and excellent and praiseworthy?

What if we ran our thoughts through that grid of is this actually true? Is it noble? Is it admirable? Is it excellent? Is it praiseworthy? Once you put that filter in place, you can start catching the thoughts that don’t fit through the filter. The other way Paul uses this is he says I want you to take your thoughts captive. You see, too often we let our thoughts in like we are the maître d’ at a restaurant. “Come on in; I didn’t realize you were going to be here, anger. I have a place for you. Well, actually, I need to move some things around, but I’m going to make sure that you have a spot.” That’s the way the most of us handle our minds. He’s saying you don’t have to do that. You can take your thoughts captive. You can hold that thought up and say, “Who sent you here? What are you trying to accomplish?”

And you can run your thoughts through the same kind of grid instead of true, admirable, noble, excellent, praiseworthy, here’s the opposite of those things. This is Philippians 4: 8 CSV, Clay Scroggins Version. This is my own version. I just inverted all the words, just for the sake of illustration. Some of you are going to be like, *where is that in the Bible*. It’s not actually in the Bible; I made this up. Don’t dwell on anything... This is the opposite of what he just said. He said, “Think about things that are true, noble, admirable, and all that. What if we decided we’re not going to dwell on anything that is false, unimpressive, wrong, dirty, ugly, disreputable, inferior, or evil? I’m going to take any thought that I find that’s that and I’m going to take it captive.

Some of you are like, “Well then, how would I watch the news?” Exactly. Maybe that’s the point. Honestly, have any of you gotten to a point in life where you’re like, *I think I need to limit my news intake*, or is it just me? Honestly. I mean I realize that I am consuming so much news in this season as if someone is going to test me on it. That’s how I feel. Somebody’s going to stop me at some point and be like, Top 2 news stories of the day... Go! And if I don’t have an answer, I’m not going to be able to respond.

But I’ve learned if we want to change the way we think, we’ve got to change some of the things we’re doing. This is not an indictment on the news and the wonderful people that are in the news. We’ve got some terrific people in our church that are part of the media and they do such a great job helping our country and providing a checks and balances for our country.

I'm just saying you've got to decide for yourself how much is enough. How many inputs of negative thoughts should I have at any point in time? And should I start taking some of these thoughts captive so that they're not leading me down the wrong road?

He gets to the end of all this and he says... Here's the promise if you'll do this. **9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace...** Can we all just say that word peace. One more time because you might need to hear yourself say it. **And the God of peace will be with you.** The promise is if you begin to focus on joy, to find joy, to let the filter of your thoughts move you to joy, then you'll be able to do what he's asking us to do. He gives this really simple commandment and I saved it for the very end. You've read this before, those of you that grew up in church, and maybe you had to memorize this. I guarantee you if we were all to take a trip together to Hobby Lobby, we could find like a Joanna Gaines shiplap board with this verse written on it. But what he's asking us to do is... The command is this: Rejoice in the Lord. I'm tell you, this is the key to rising above negative thoughts, to replacing the negative thoughts in our minds to create practices in our life where we're rejoicing in the Lord.

In Philippians 4: 4 he says rejoice in the Lord sometimes. Rejoice in the Lord when you feel like it. Rejoice in the Lord when things are going well. No. He says, **Rejoice in the Lord always.** And then, as if he knew we were going to be a little slow on the uptick, he says...

Think about it. Paul is saying this out loud and then somebody is probably writing it down. He's probably walking around. I think best when I'm on my feet walking around. So, he's probably walking around going, "Okay write this down. Rejoice in the Lord. You know what? Rejoice in the Lord always. I say it again."

"Do you want me to write that down 'I say it again'?"

"Yes, write it down. I say it again."

"You just said it though. Why do you want me to write down 'I'll say it again'?"

"Because they are going to be slow. They're not going to get it and they need to hear it twice. It's for emphasis! Rejoice in the Lord always, and I will say it again, so write down 'I will say it again.' Yes, write it down. 'I will say it again: Rejoice.'" And so, he does. He writes it down and he says, **Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!**

What I've had to do during this season is I've had to create a new practice. And you know this is the way. Crises violently break our habits, and they create new habits. This is one of the new habits that I will take with me post-pandemic. Lord willing, we will be post-pandemic at some point. The practice is to go on joy walks, to go on frequent joy walks. In the middle of this, all the stress was building up, the emotion of all of it, trying to deal with our kids who were sad and frustrated, dealing with work stuff that was scary and unusual and we didn't know what to do with.

One night, I helped my wife put our kids to bed and I said, "Enough is enough. I've just got to take a walk." So, I had been thinking about this verse a lot and I've just decided *I'm going to put it into practice. I'm going to go on a joy walk.* I just started walking around the streets around the house where we live. And I just decided the only thing I'm going to do on this walk is I'm just going to rejoice in the Lord. I'm not going to rejoice in my circumstances, I'm going to rejoice in Him. I'm going to find all the reasons to find joy in him.

So, I literally was walking around our streets just going, "God, you are good. I mean, God, you are awesome. You're better than good. God, you provide for us. The way you've provided for our family is just amazing." I was talking out loud and when I talk, I use my hands, so I was putting my hands in the air. I looked like a crazy person walking around. I'm glad no one called the police on me, but I was just walking around going, "God, you know me! You actually know that I'm here; you know my name; you know what's going on in my life; you have not forgotten about me; you know what I need; you know what I don't need. God, you are so kind to me. The fact that you love me. You know all the stupid stuff I've done in my life and you still love me. I'm crazy. I cannot believe that you love me." I was just rejoicing in the Lord.

How do you think my mind changed from the time I left to the time I got back? Do you think it was any different? I'm telling you, this is like one of those "pay \$19.99 in three different installment and I promise you it will change your life." I promise you this, more than anything else that you could do today this would change your life if you chose to rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice in Him today. Go on a joy walk. Go on a joy drive. Go on a joy rocking chair session. I don't care what you do; I'm just telling you pick a time, pick a place, pick a moment, and make yourself rejoice in the Lord and see how God changes your mind. It's amazing we have so many negative thoughts in our mind if we're never rejoicing in Him. You can do it with music, you can do it without. You can do with the beautiful nature, you can do it without. You can do it when things are not going well, and you can do it when they are. I'm telling you if you want to get out of a trap of negativity, rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I'll say rejoice.

Father, I know that little verse is a simple little verse and, God, there are so many people here that have heard it a hundred times, but, God, I pray right now that the power of your Word would speak to our hearts. That we would be able to get out of the "Oh I've heard that before." "Yeah, yeah, I know that."

But, God, that we would choose to live it out; we would choose to put it into practice. And as we do, I pray that we would get to watch the beautiful way that our minds work that you would allow us to see the power of those negative thoughts dissipating as we choose to focus on the power or who you are.

As Jesus followers, if the tomb really is empty, we should be the most hope-filled, optimistic, forward thinking, "anything can happen" kind of people as we rejoice in you. We pray all this in Jesus' name... Amen.