

The Pleasure of God Pt 1

SPEAKER	Mark Proeger
DATE	Sunday, August 24, 2025
PASSAGES	Mark 1; Romans 15; Luke 15
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:37:16 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

God is very happy to be your God. Not once you have cleaned up, not because of anything you brought him — he knows the thing that just came into your mind, and he delights in you anyway. And the order matters: you do not earn his pleasure and then receive it. You receive it, and a life that pleases him grows out of that.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ “Are you living for God’s pleasure?” has two meanings — living to please him, and living to receive his pleasure. Mark said both readings are legitimate, and refused to pick one.
- ◆ What Jesus came to do, above everything else, was introduce us to God as Father. He never taught anyone to pray “Oh Jesus.” He taught us to pray *our Father*.
- ◆ Luke 15 is not three parables about being lost. It is three parties. A sheep, a coin, a son — and every time the thing is found, somebody throws a celebration.
- ◆ The reasons we assume God is not pleased with us are usually two: the one sin we cannot shake, and a life we judge too ordinary to be worth his attention.
- ◆ The person in the pew who is perfectly righteous, the one you are comparing yourself against, does not exist. You are measuring yourself against someone imaginary.
- ◆ Our instinct is backwards — go make God proud, then approach him with confidence. The kingdom runs the other way: accept the delight first, and the life follows.

- ◆ Mark said plainly that he is not sure he believes his own thesis, and prayed the father's prayer from Mark 9 over himself: "Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief."

► 1:37:16

This was not the message that had been planned for the morning, and it was not the message Mark had on paper the day before either. He rewrote the whole thing on Saturday, called Bill Ledbetter at about eleven to apologize for the slides he had already built, and then decided on the platform not to auctioneer his way through it. So what the room got was fifteen minutes — a deliberate teaser, with the rest coming next Sunday.

A dedication, and the Father behind it

► 1:39:57

He said he had never dedicated a sermon before, and then dedicated this one to his children — Asher, Noah and Cila, all three of them in the room, and his nephew Dre thrown in. The reason was not sentiment. It was the argument. "Nothing is a picture of how much God delights in us more than how we delight in our own children."

That is what Jesus came to say. Not that God is fearsome and holy and other — all of which is true — but that he is your Father. It is why the prayer Jesus taught begins "Our Father" and not "Oh Jesus," and why Paul says God has poured out the Spirit who cries "Abba! Father!" Mark lingered on how tender that word is. It is not a title. It is *daddy*.

The gospel Jesus announced — and a founding verse

► 1:40:46

He started where Jesus starts.

"Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'"

MARK 1:14-15 ↗

Then he prayed Hope Chapel's founding verse over the congregation — a verse he noted used to be printed on everything, and that he is no longer sure is printed anywhere.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

ROMANS 15:13 ↗

Why that verse, for this message? Because, Mark said, it takes a great deal of hope to believe what scripture actually says about us — that God delights in us. The founding verse turns out to be exactly the prayer this subject requires.

The question, and its two edges

► 1:42:16

“Are you living for God’s pleasure?” He acknowledged the double meaning immediately. It can mean: are you living to please God? It can also mean: are you living to receive God’s pleasure in your own life? He declined to choose. Both are legitimate, and the message is about the second one because most of us have only ever heard the first.

Then he reached for scale. The universe is something like fifteen billion light years across — travel from one edge at the speed of light and you would still be traveling fifteen billion years later. “That God who created that universe is the God who delights in you.”

The rock

► 1:43:15

Christmas of 1991 or 1992 — he could not swear which. Nineteen years old, driving to California and back with two friends under one rule: stop whenever anything looks interesting. Somewhere in Nevada they spotted a sharp little peak beside the interstate and climbed it, because that is what nineteen-year-old boys do, and started pushing rocks off the top.

Then they found the boulder. Half the size of a Volkswagen — he made a mental note of the comparison at the time, specifically so the story could not grow in the retelling — and solid rock. They brushed away the gravel underneath until they could see it was resting on about three points of contact the size of silver dollars. Someone remembered that BMWs are famous for their jacks, and there was a 7 Series at the bottom of the hill.

It moved. They fell over laughing. They waited for a gap in the traffic that never quite came on an interstate between California and Nevada, decided on the strength of “it’ll probably stop” that this was fine, and let it go. It dropped sixty feet, split in half, went straight through a three-strand barbed wire

fence without so much as a jolt, and came to rest in the bar ditch thirty or forty feet short of the highway. Mark's aside was not played for laughs: "Gosh, I could still be sitting in prison for this." They drove for two hours, and every so often one of them would start laughing again and the whole car would go.

Which is not the delight he means

► 1:49:01

"Now that is not the delight I want to talk about — except that I do want to say that in life God gives us pictures of things." He pointed to the end of *The Last Battle*, where the colors are deeper and the mountains higher and the water more beautiful, and said that whatever joy we get here is a faint whisper of the delight God has for us — and of the delight he takes in us.

► 1:49:54

And then the most honest sentence of the morning. He told the room this sermon may have been so hard to write because he is not sure he believes what he is about to teach. His answer to that was not to soften the claim but to borrow a prayer: "Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief."

Very happy to be your God

► 1:50:22

He wanted one sentence to survive the week. "He knows everything about you — that thing, all the things that just came into your brain that are disqualifying you. He knows all that. And he's still very happy to be your God." How does he know? Two ways, and he gave them in order: because that is what scripture reports, and because he is a father himself. Good decisions, bad decisions, it does not move the needle. He would still step in front of a bullet for any one of them.

Luke 15 — three lost things, three parties

► 1:50:44

The jumping-off point is the chapter of lost things found. It opens with a complaint — the Pharisees and scribes grumbling that this man receives sinners and eats with them — and Jesus answers it with three stories.

“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’”

LUKE 15:4-6 ↗

Then the woman who lights a lamp and sweeps the house for one coin, and calls the neighbors in when she finds it — and Jesus draws the same conclusion a second time:

“there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” Then the son who takes his inheritance to a far country, squanders it in reckless living, and ends up in a famine longing to be fed with the pods the pigs were eating, with no one giving him anything. “But when he came to himself” he rehearses a speech for the road home — I have sinned against heaven and before you, I am no longer worthy to be called your son, treat me as one of your hired servants — and his father never lets him reach the third line.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him... ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.”

LUKE 15:20-24 ↗

► 1:53:57

Three times in one chapter the celebration is the point —

more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance

Mark’s application was blunt and short: “We are the lost sheep. If you didn’t get it, we are the lost coin.

And we are the prodigal son. So the Lord delights in you.”

The reasons we think he isn’t pleased

► 1:54:28

Before going deeper, he asked which of two objections takes up the mind space. The first is the one sin — you will grant that God forgives most of them, but there is that one, or that addiction, and surely it

makes you less lovable than the person in the next pew who is perfectly righteous. “That person doesn’t actually exist,” Mark said, “but we think they do.”

The second is mediocrity. You look at your life and see nothing in it God could possibly be thrilled about. “My life is so mediocre. I’m not leading people to Christ by the millions, or dozens, or ones.” So why would he delight in you? “But he does.”

The order is the whole thing

► 1:55:17

The reason this matters is not so anyone walks out with their chest puffed out. It is that when we really believe it, Mark said, “we will live into the things that delight God” — and the sequence we default to does not get us there. “I have lived my life doing this,” he admitted — go and do something that makes God proud of me, and then I can enter his presence confident that he loves me and delights in me. “But that’s completely backwards from the kingdom.”

Like a great many things in the kingdom, you have to accept the thing that is hardest to accept: “that God delights in you for no other reason than he delights in you. And then when you believe that, you will start to live a life that corresponds with his delight.” The delight is the root. It was never the wage.

How he closed — and next Sunday

► 1:55:41

“So that’s it. That’s my teaser for next week.” Fifteen minutes of a message built for more. But he did not end by summarizing it — he ended by praying it, and by saying out loud from the platform the thing most preachers keep off it: “Lord, I confess in front of all these, my brothers and sisters, that I do struggle to believe this — and yet I do believe it.”

Then he asked over the room the exact thing he had spent fifteen minutes describing: “that each of us would come to understand your delight in us — how much you long to spend time with us, and how it’s not about what we did or didn’t do that you still delight in us.” That last clause is the whole message compressed into a single sentence, and it is the one to carry into the week. He handed the service to Matt, the heart ministry team came forward for anyone who wanted prayer, and the room went out under the old charge: go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Part two comes next Sunday.

FOR FURTHER STUDY**SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE**

- [Matthew 6:9](#)
- [Galatians 4:6](#)
- [Mark 1:14–15](#)
- [Romans 15:13](#)
- [Mark 9:24](#)
- [Luke 15:1–2](#)
- [Luke 15:4–6](#)
- [Luke 15:7](#)
- [Luke 15:8–10](#)
- [Luke 15:10](#)
- [Luke 15:17–19](#)
- [Luke 15:20–24](#)

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. When you hear “are you living for God’s pleasure?”, which meaning does your mind reach for first — pleasing him, or receiving his pleasure? What does that reflex tell you?
2. Mark said he is not certain he believes his own thesis. Where do you find yourself praying “Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief”?
3. Of the two objections he named — the one sin you cannot shake, or a life you judge too ordinary to interest God — which one has more of your mind space, and why that one?
4. In Luke 15 the shepherd, the woman and the father all throw a party. What would change in how you pray if you pictured God celebrating rather than tolerating you?
5. If the delight comes first and the obedient life grows out of it, what is one thing you would stop doing this week to earn something you already have?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Mark Proeger is a member of Hope Chapel who preaches from its pulpit occasionally — this was well past his first or second time, though he said it was the hardest message he has had to put together. He rewrote it entirely the day before, and dedicated it to his three children, Asher, Noah and Cila, who were in the room. He told the congregation he struggles to believe the very thing he came to teach.

Watch the full message:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrlfT_y_WJc&t=5836s

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.