

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Lesson 3-February 22, 2026

**Welcome To
BARAH MINISTRIES
An Online Christian Church Teaching the Word of God
RORY CLARK
Pastor-Teacher**

Good Morning!

Welcome to Barah Ministries, an online Christian Church teaching the Word of God verse-by-verse to the hearers the Lord provides. My name is Pastor Rory Clark. No matter where you are in the world, thanks for listening to this Bible lesson!

**TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON
What are Some of the Things that Steal Your Joy?**

LESSON INTRODUCTION

In Philippians, Chapter 4, Verse 4 the apostle Paul exhorts believers in Christ to...

PHILIPPIANS 4:4
Rejoice in the Lord always! Again I (Paul) say...rejoice!

What does it mean to rejoice? It means...

REJOICE
To have a feeling of great joy or delight

For believers in Christ, Philippians, Chapter 4, Verse 4 says our great joy and our delight comes from the source of our relationship in union with the Lord. God has an enemy, Satan, who is also the enemy of Christians. Satan's great delight is stealing joy from Christians.

In today's lesson, the final of our introductory lessons before we study Paul's letter to the Philippians verse-by-verse, we'll think about the things that steal our joy.

OPENING SONG INTRODUCTION

Let's hear some music! In Philippians, Chapter 4, Verse 11 the apostle Paul

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articulates the essence of JOY. He says....

PHILIPPIANS 4:11b

I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

CeCe Winans communicates the same sentiment in her song I'VE GOT JOY.

MUSIC - OPENING SONG

Let's Hear the Singing of the Lord's Praises

I'VE GOT JOY

CeCe Winans

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray...

We're grateful to You Heavenly Father for providing us with the absolute truth of the Word of God...

Father, thank you for giving us guidance on how to live lives filled with JOY regardless of the individual specific challenges we face...thank you for giving us the confidence that you ALWAYS deliver us from apparent loss to obvious victory...

...we ask these things through the power of God the Holy Spirit...in Christ's name...Amen.

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON

What are Some of the Things that Steal Your Joy?

LESSON PART ONE

In our last two lessons we began the study of Paul's letter to the believers in Christ at Philippi, an ancient city in northeastern Greece. It's a letter to the apostle Paul's first church that he planted in Europe. As we bring the introduction of this letter to a close, what are we to make of what we have learned so far?

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We're to think that we study the Bible to learn the Lord's EXACT THINKING. The Lord thinks Bible study is a smart thing to do according to Isaiah, Chapter 55, Verse 9...because...

ISAIAH 55:9

"...just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts higher than your thoughts (says the Lord)."

The Lord is always looking to elevate our experience of life.

The Lord had Paul write this letter to the Philippians to communicate a simple and singular message to the human race, a message from God about the importance of living lives filled with JOY despite circumstances.

Are you living a life filled with JOY?

Are you even paying attention to how you live your life so you can assess whether your life is filled with JOY?

God is telling you in John, Chapter 15, Verse 11 in the Pastor Rory translation of the Bible...

JOHN 15:11 (Rory Translation)

These things I (the Lord Jesus Christ) am speaking to all of you...I'm telling you I have placed My joy inside of all of you...and I want all of you to be full of joy.

It has always been the Lord's desire that all of His creatures would live joyful lives. But what IS a joyful life when life includes both happiness and tribulation?

What God wants for you is that you listen to Him and that you do what He suggests. It's called obedience. He wants obedience because it works for you, not because He is some kind of egocentric dictator who needs your compliance. When we follow God's instructions, our lives are filled with JOY.

Example? A friend betrays you. You never saw it coming. You can't believe it. You're in shock. It hurts. Then you listen to a Bible lesson and God communicates His "higher" thoughts about the situation, as in Matthew, Chapter 5, Verses 43 and 44...

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MATTHEW 5:43

“All of you have heard it said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’”

MATTHEW 5:44

“But I (the Lord Jesus Christ) say to all of you, love your enemies unconditionally and pray for those who keep on persecuting you...”

Wait what? Lord, you want me to love this person unconditionally who just ripped my heart out of my chest? The Lord would say, “Only if you want to live a life filled with JOY!” In John, Chapter 16, Verse 33 the Lord says...

JOHN 16:33

These things I (the Lord Jesus Christ) have spoken to you, so that in union with Me you believers in Christ may have peace. In the world (Satan's kingdom) you have tribulation...but take courage...I have overcome the world.”

What are some of the forms of tribulation life holds for believers in Christ?

There's...

TIME TRIBULATION

Reflect on these questions...

God gifts you with twenty-four hours a day...seven days in a week...one hundred and sixty-eight hours...and one hundred and twelve of those are waking hours. Are you using the gift of time effectively? Is your use of time joyful and productive, or are you wasting your time? Do you ever assess whether you are using your time on what's important to you or wasting time on things that are not important to you? Do you schedule time to work ON your life?

There's...

SELF TRIBULATION

Reflect on these questions...

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Are you happy with yourself? Do you esteem yourself regardless of circumstances? Are you battling with feelings of inadequacy or low self-worth? Are you educating yourself so you know how to be effective at the things you choose to do? Do you have friends? Do you have a support group? Are you grieving? Are you dealing with feelings of loss because of the death of a loved one?

There's...

CAREER TRIBULATION

Reflect on these questions...

Are you employed? If not, do you want to be? Are you satisfied with your job? Is your job building expertises in you that you value? Are you making enough money?

There's...

COMPANION TRIBULATION

Reflect on these questions...

Are you in a meaningful, romantic, intimate relationship? Is the relationship satisfying? Are you lonely? If you are not in a relationship, do want to be? Have you resigned yourself to being alone? Are you going through a divorce or confronting the end of a significant romantic relationship?

There's...

SPIRITUAL TRIBULATION

Reflect on these questions...

Do you have a relationship with the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? If you are an unbeliever, do you consider learning about the Lord a priority? Do you understand the significance of rejecting a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you looking for a spiritual teacher who can communicate the Word of God to you in a way you can understand it?

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There's...

FAMILY TRIBULATION

Reflect on these questions...

Are you having difficulties in your relationships with family members? Are you struggling with the challenge of raising children? Are you at a loss for how to navigate family conflicts? Do you know how to fix strained family relationships?

There's...

HEALTH TRIBULATION

Reflect on these questions...

Are you dealing with physical issues? Are you coping with mental health issues? Do you have feelings of sadness or hopelessness that are unaddressed? Are you handling either past or current traumas effectively? Do you have addiction issues? Are you abusing substances like alcohol, drugs, and tobacco? Are you effective at coping with stress? Do you consider regular medical check-ups a priority? Are you coping with health disorders like anorexia or bulimia or high blood pressure or diabetes? Are you addressing these disorders with professionals?

There's...

RESOURCE TRIBULATION

Reflect on these questions...

When you have problems, do you have a set of vetted resources to help you solve them? For example, do you have a contractor with a crew to help you with home care issues? Do you have a plumber you trust? Do you have a mechanic you trust? Do you have a banking relationship you trust? Do you have travel partners for air travel and hotels and ground transportation?

There's...

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FINANCIAL TRIBULATION

Are you educated in the use of money? Is there too much month at the end of the money? Are you saving part of what you earn to build financial freedom? Are you in debt? Do you have a plan to get out of debt? Are you a savvy investor? Have you learned how to be a good steward of your financial blessings?

These things are part of your lives. And this is only a partial list of the things you have to deal with in this life. Yes! It's only a partial list. There's more!

Here are some of the things the apostle Paul dealt with as he disseminated the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentile world. In Second Corinthians, Chapter 11, Verses 23 to 27 Paul talks about his life challenges...

SECOND CORINTHIANS 11:23b

...I have had far more labors...far more imprisonments...I've been beaten times without number, and I've often been in danger of death.

SECOND CORINTHIANS 11:24

Five times I received thirty-nine lashes from the Jews (and I'm a Jew!)

SECOND CORINTHIANS 11:25

Three times I was beaten with rods...once I was stoned...three times I was shipwrecked...I spent a night and a day in the depth of the ocean.

SECOND CORINTHIANS 11:26

I have been on frequent journeys...in dangers from rivers, from robbers, from my countrymen, and from the Gentiles...dangers in the city, in the wilderness, on the sea, and among false brethren.

SECOND CORINTHIANS 11:27

I have been in labor and in hardship...through many sleepless nights...hungry and thirsty...often without food and exposed to cold.

What would make a man endure all of these things just to get the gospel message across to people, most of whom don't want to hear it?

JOY.

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Paul thinks of this life as “the joy the Lord set before him” because that’s the way the Lord Jesus Christ described His crucifixion experience. It was joyful for the Lord Jesus Christ to go to a Cross to die for us to take care of our sin problem. Paul considered it joyful to suffer for Christ’s sake on our behalf in the dissemination and explanation of the Lord’s plan for the human race.

In Philippians, Chapter 2, Verse 5 the Lord calls for all of us, in the face of life’s challenges, to...

PHILIPPIANS 2:5

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus...

What is that attitude?

JOY!

Or as Paul put it in Philippians, Chapter 4, Verse 11...

PHILIPPIANS 4:11b

I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

JOY is contentment regardless of tribulation.

Does this describe your life? Are you content in every circumstance? Are you content as you go through a divorce, knowing that you are about to lose half of what you own? Does the experience of a lost relationship fill you with JOY? Are you content when a loved one dies? Are you content when your health takes an unexpected turn for the worse? Are you filled with joy when unexpected bills surface that you are not in a position to pay? Are you joyful when your children turn on you after you give of yourselves to raise them?

As human beings we tend to think of our lives as joyful when things are going well, and we tend to think of our lives as miserable when things aren’t going well. We wrongfully judge life based on what we think is good and what we think is bad.

The Lord wants us to know there is a life beyond good and bad. It’s a life called JOY. And in Paul’s letter to the Philippians, He used Paul as a human example of a man who in the midst of tribulation considered his lousy circumstance to be JOY.

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God has an enemy...Satan...who is the ruler of this world. He is the enemy of Christians as well. Satan is always looking for ways to steal joy from Christians. He can't seduce Christians to be on his team because we are in union with Christ. Satan already lost us. So he finds ways to make our lives miserable. It's always fun for him to use other Christians and family members to hurt us.

Misery is the opposite of JOY.

Satan wants Christians to have miserable lives. What are some of the things Satan uses to steal our joy?

When we return from the break, we'll request an offering and then we'll look at a few of the ways Satan seeks to steal our joy.

FIVE-MINUTE BREAK

FEAR IS A LIAR

Zach Williams

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What are Some of the Things that Steal Your Joy?

OFFERING INTRODUCTION

Christians are to follow the Lord's example in everything, especially in giving. John, Chapter 3, Verse 16 says...

JOHN 3:16

"God the Father loved the world unconditionally...and He loved the world so much...that He GAVE His uniquely born Son..."

What are you willing to give to the God who gave His Son's life for you?

Giving is a form of worship. Giving expresses your faith in God. Giving communicates your gratitude to God for all He does for you.

What's the best time for Christians to give? There must never be a time when we don't give. Everything we have comes from God. When we give, we are simply redirecting the resources God has given us to His purposes. Don't worry about the

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amount you give. God will return it to you abundantly. Let your giving rival God's giving and watch what flows to your life. Give something...give anything...give now...and keep on giving.

Let's listen to Deacon Denny Goodall present one of his always inspiring, always insightful offering messages.

THE OFFERING

Deacon Denny Goodall

OFFERING VERSE

FIRST THESSALONIANS 5:18

...in everything give thanks...for this is God the Father's will for you who are in union with Christ Jesus.

OFFERING SONG

THERE IS NONE LIKE YOU

Instrumental Version

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON

What are Some of the Things that Steal Your Joy?

LESSON PART TWO

Welcome back!

What are the joy stealers Satan uses to disrupt the mental serenity of believers in Christ?

Joy Stealer #1

CIRCUMSTANCES

What are circumstances?

CIRCUMSTANCE

A state of affairs...a situation

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There are two categories of circumstances...adversity and prosperity.

Adversity is difficulty.

It was always the Lord's plan to put us in difficult situations. In the first part of the lesson, we called adversity "tribulation." Here's what the Lord says about tribulation in Romans, Chapter 5, Verses 3 to 5...

ROMANS 5:3

...we believers in Christ EXULT (with great JOY) in our tribulations...knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance...

ROMANS 5:4

...and perseverance brings about proven character...and proven character brings about hope...

ROMANS 5:5a

...a divine hope (an absolute confidence) that does not no way...not no how...not never disappoint...

ROMANS 5:5b

...because the unconditional love of God the Father has been poured out within our hearts through God the Holy Spirit...who was given to us believers in Christ as a pledge of our divine inheritance.

The Lord allows difficulty in our lives to help us grow. Contrast that with the way children are being raised today. Parents are making every effort to remove difficulty from the lives of children, and with few exceptions, it has turned them into a group of soft, not empathic, non-critical thinkers. Fortunately, the Lord doesn't parent that way.

Prosperity is the condition of being successful and thriving.

As a parent, the Lord offers us the perfect balance of circumstance...a lot of adversity and a little prosperity.

Satan, on the other hand, wants us to resist adversity and crave prosperity. Such an approach to life robs us of JOY.

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Joy Stealer #2

PEOPLE

We care about who they are...what they think...what they say...and what they do. Why does it matter to us what others think when we can't control it, especially strangers?

The Lord provides us with people who edify us.

Satan brings people into our lives to introduce what we call "drama" that distracts us and robs us of JOY.

The Lord considers it normal for us to encounter people challenges. We're not sure what Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was, but if I were a betting man, I'd bet it was people...Second Corinthians, Chapter 12, Verse 7...

SECOND CORINTHIANS 12:7b

...to keep me from exalting myself, there was given to me (Paul) by God a thorn in the flesh...a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!

Just when we think we're "all that" ... when our prosperity flourishes ... a thorn in the flesh appears to give us an accurate perception of our real self. Thanks to the Lord for the blessing of people challenges. The Lord reminds us in Second Corinthians, Chapter 4, Verse 17...

SECOND CORINTHIANS 4:17

...momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison...

Joy Stealer #3

THINGS

You may remember a song by a most successful American singer, songwriter, record producer, and actress...Madonna...who said in song...

*We are living in a material world
And I am a material girl...*

Things.

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They're not safe...they can easily be stolen. They don't last...do you still have the possessions you valued in childhood? They don't satisfy...once we get the things we crave, it's on to the next thing. Mark, Chapter 8, Verse 36 reminds us...

MARK 8:36

...what does it profit a man to gain the whole world (of material possessions... things) and forfeit his soul?

The Lord doesn't want us to get attached to things. Rather, to treat things as utility.

Satan wants us to crave more and more and more. He advocates the "chase your tail" lifestyle. All of us need to decide how much is enough.

Joy Stealer #4

WORRY

Satan uses emotions to rob us of JOY, emotions like worry.

Fortunately, most of the things we worry about never come to fruition. They are simply manufactured thoughts that rob us of JOY. Most of these emotions come from the source of *the flesh* in us, Satan's insidious inside agent that is always encouraging us to self-sabotage. The Lord says, in Philippians, Chapter 4, Verse 6...

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

Stop worrying about anything...but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God the Father...

The Lord provides. The Lord answers your prayers. So ask.

Joy Stealer #5

FEAR

As Zach Williams sings, "Fear is a liar!" There's a difference between real fear and psychic fear. Real fear is a benefactor when you're in a situation from which you should remove yourself. If you're at an ATM and someone has a gun in your back, fear is real. If you're in a hurricane, fear is real.

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Psychic fear is manufactured fear. Fear of flying (one of the safest things we do) ... fear of spiders (we're bigger than them) ... fear of getting dental work (your smile is important to you). Psychic fear is easily conquered if you want to do it.

Understand that when we fear it did not come from God...Second Timothy, Chapter 1, Verse 7...

SECOND TIMOTHY 1:7

God the Father has not given us believers in Christ a spirit of fear...He has given us a spirit of power and unconditional love and discipline.

As we close this lesson, one thing may be of benefit to you. Sit yourself down and write out answers to this question...

QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

What happened in 2025 that brought me JOY?

Feel free to share it with me if you like.

Paul's letter to the Philippians, like all the letters of the Bible, challenges us to think differently. The result of having the right mindset? JOY!

There are so many things we allow to rob us of JOY. Isn't it time to make an assessment of those things so we can change them? The Lord thinks so and He asks Paul to write a letter about JOY so you can be clear that the Lord's JOY is in you!

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THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

The Good News of Jesus Christ's Salvation Offer to the Human Race

The next ten minutes could be the ten most important minutes of your life. You'll be introduced to the good news concerning how you can spend all eternity in heaven when you close your eyes in this life. We want you to know that...

GOD WANTS YOU!

He Wants You Make the Most Important Decision of Your Life

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...and what He wants for you is that you make the most important decision of your life.

If you want to travel to a country where you are not a citizen, you require a passport. By using this official document issued by the government of your country certifying your identity and your citizenship, you are entitled to travel under its protection to countries where you are not a citizen.

All of us are born citizens of the world.

Unfortunately, this citizenship was given to us by the federal head of the human race, Adam, as a result of his sin. Romans, Chapter 5, Verse 12...

ROMANS 5:12

...through one man...Adam...sin entered into the world...and spiritual death entered the world through his sin...so spiritual death spread to all men...because all men were considered by God to have sinned when Adam sinned.

If you die a citizen of the world your eternal future will not be pleasant. Lucky for you, the God who created you does not want you to be a citizen of the world. If you are a citizen of the world when you close your eyes in this life, your destiny is an eternity in the Lake of Fire. Yet Second Peter, Chapter 3, Verse 9 makes God's will for you clear...

SECOND PETER 3:9

The Lord is not slow about His promise of salvation, as some accuse Him of.. instead, He is patient toward unbelievers...NOT WISHING FOR ANY TO PERISH IN THE LAKE OF FIRE...but wishing for all unbelievers to come to repentance (a voluntary change of mind about having a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ).

Through His work on the Cross, the Lord Jesus Christ made it possible for you to renounce your citizenship in the world, instead becoming a citizen of heaven. It's the equivalent of becoming a naturalized citizen of a new country, much like people who are not born in America can become naturalized citizens of the United States.

God's plan for all His creatures is to save you from an eternity in the Lake of Fire by offering you a new possibility called salvation. When you are saved, your

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citizenship is in heaven. When you close your eyes in this life, you'll be absent from the body and face-to-face with the Lord.

Yes! You can be saved! Acts, Chapter 16, Verse 31 invites you to...

ACTS 16:31

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved by God...you and everyone in your household who also believes."

Why?

Because expressing your faith in Jesus Christ's Person and His work at the Cross on your behalf changes your citizenship. John, Chapter 14, Verse 6...

JOHN 14:6

Jesus said to the doubting apostle Thomas, "I am the way (to salvation) ... and I am the truth (through the gospel message in the Word of God) ... and I am the resurrection life (eternal life) ... and no one comes to God the Father in heaven but through believing in Me."

You can't do a thing to change your citizenship from the world to heaven on your own. God has to do it for you. The apostle Paul describes this God, the Lord Jesus Christ, in First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verses 3 and 4...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:3

For I (the apostle Paul) delivered to you as of primary importance the gospel message I also received from God...that it was Jesus Christ who died for your sins according to the Old Testament Scriptures...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:4

...and that He was buried...and that He was raised from the dead on the third day...according to the Old Testament Scriptures...

If you don't have a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ...RIGHT NOW...RIGHT WHERE YOU SIT...RIGHT THIS MOMENT...you have a choice. You can remain a spiritually dead citizen of the world, or you can choose to be a spiritually alive citizen of heaven. First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verse 22...

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FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:22

For all those in union with Adam (the citizens of the world) are spiritually dead...for all those in union with Christ (the citizens of heaven) are made spiritually alive by God.

What's your choice? John, Chapter 3, Verse 36, God offers the ONLY two choices...

JOHN 3:36

"He who believes in the Son has the resurrection life right at that moment (they are made citizens of heaven by God) ... but he who does not obey the command to believe in the Son will not see the resurrection life...instead the wrath of God (the Lake of Fire) abides on him (they remain citizens of the world for all eternity)."

Believers in Christ have made their choice according to Philippians, Chapter 3, Verse 20...

PHILIPPIANS 3:20

(As believers in Christ)...our citizenship is in heaven...from which heaven also we eagerly wait for a Savior...the Lord Jesus Christ...

God's enemy, Satan, is the ruler of this world. He welcomes you to remain a citizen of the world because he'd be pleased to have you live with him in the Lake of Fire for all eternity. If you choose to remain a citizen of the world by rejecting the relationship offer of the Lord Jesus Christ, Matthew, Chapter 8, Verse 12 explains your eternal destiny...

MATTHEW 8:12

"...the sons of Satan's kingdom (unbelievers...the citizens of the world) will be cast out into the outer darkness...in that place (the Lake of Fire) there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

That is not God's will for you. If you end up in the Lake of Fire for all eternity it will be your choice, and God will honor it.

Do yourself a favor...BELIEVE in the Lord Jesus Christ. Take His word for what it takes to be saved. It's the easiest, smartest decision you will ever make. Place your faith in the Person and work of Jesus Christ on your behalf and He will be more than happy to welcome you as a citizen of heaven, inviting you into His

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kingdom. A relationship with Jesus is much better than a passport. You can reside in His kingdom forever and ever with one simple choice.

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

The Good News of Jesus Christ's Salvation Offer to the Human Race

CLOSING SONG INTRODUCTION

Let's close with music! As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we rejoice even though we have yet to see His glory with our own eyes. Romans, Chapter 8, Verse 25 tells us why...

ROMANS 8:25

But if we believers in Christ hope for what we do not yet see, and we do, with perseverance we wait eagerly for the things which are to come.

A day is coming when the Lord will display His unmistakable greatness for ALL to see. We rejoice in Him now, but we will rejoice even more when He shows His glory to everyone. Why? Chris Tomlin tells us in song...for on that day... everyone will know as we do...HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD.

MUSIC - CLOSING SONG

Let's Hear the Singing of the Lord's Praises

HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD

Chris Tomlin

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray...

Almighty God and Father...

Thank you for helping us assess our lives during the study of Your Word... encourage us to do the work required to rid ourselves of harmful distractions while simultaneously gravitating to things that bring us JOY...

...we ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit...in Christ's name...Amen.

GOT BIBLICAL QUESTIONS OR WANT US TO PRAY FOR SOMEONE?

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Ask the Pastor
pastor@barahministries.com

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Thanks for listening!

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