

February 2, 2014 by Steve Brandon



Joy In the Ministry

Philippians 2:16-18

1. See Spiritual Fruit (verse 16)
2. Sacrifice for Others (verse 17)
3. Share the Joy (verse 18)

This week I saw an article posted on Facebook that interested me. It was entitled, "Why do so many pastors leave the ministry?" It was posted on expastors.com. Here's the crux of the article:

It's true that some pastors fall into temptation and yet others simply feel it's their time to call it quits. But often it goes much deeper than that. And the stats reveal much.

Most pastors are overworked. 90% of pastors report working between 55 to 75 hours per week and 50% feel unable to meet the demands of the job. And 70% of pastors feel grossly underpaid.

Most pastors feel unprepared. 90% feel they are inadequately trained to cope with the ministry demands and 90% of pastors said the ministry was completely different than what they thought it would be like before they entered the ministry.

Many pastors struggle with depression and discouragement. 70% of pastors constantly fight depression and 50% of pastors feel so discouraged that they would leave the ministry if they could, but have no other way of making a living.

Wait, this is huge. Let's pause here for a moment. This means that half of the 1,700 or so pastors who leave the ministry each month have no other way of making a living. Their education and experience is wrapped up solely in the work of the ministry. So, not only do pastors struggle with their choice to leave ministry, they have to worry about how they are going to feed their families.

Speaking of families, most pastors' families are negatively impacted. 80% believe pastoral ministry has negatively affected their families. 80% of spouses feel the pastor is overworked and feel left out and under-appreciated by church members.

Many pastors are lonely. 70% do not have someone they consider a close friend and 40% report serious conflict with a parishioner at least once a month.

And then there is this: 50% of the ministers starting out will not last 5 years. 1 out of every 10 ministers will actually retire as a minister in some form. And 4,000 new churches begin each year while 7,000 churches close.

The statistics speak for themselves. Working in ministry – whether you're a full-time pastor or a lay minister balancing a job and a church – can be challenging. Families suffer, discouragement and depression – amongst a gamut of other things – runs like a river in the lives of those who sacrifice their own life to the cause of the church. In my experience, very few of my fellow seminary students are working in ministry. [\[1\]](#)

I can't verify all of these statistics. Yet, I know in my experience that there are only a few of my fellow seminary students who are actually in the ministry today. I have a friend who is currently looking for a new job, having been in several churches already.

Now, I need to tell you that, in general, this is not my experience.

It is true that the hours are long. And yet, for me, those hours aren't drudgery. They are a delight. It is true that ministry can be discouraging. You pour yourself out for people. Sometimes people respond. Other times they don't. Rarely do you really know if your efforts made any difference.

It is true that pastors are lonely. I have spoken with other pastors, and they have very few friends in their churches. That's not our experience. We feel as if you all are our closest friends. And your friendship has been a great blessing to us and to our children. We feel appreciated by all of you. And through your generosity, God has met our every need.

And we know that our experience is different than the experiences of many pastors and their families. Know that I feel blessed to be one of your shepherds. Know that I am a happy pastor. You have filled my life with great joy.

The title of my message this morning is, "Joy in the Ministry", because that's what Paul is talking about in verses 16-18. He is talking about his joy. He is talking about the joy of the ministry. In fact, in verses 17 and 18, the word, "Joy" or "Rejoice" appears four times, in just two

verses.

Philippians 2:17-18

But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

And although verse 16 doesn't use the word, "joy," it contains a synonym, like "glory." The ESV says, "that I may be proud." The NIV says, "that I may boast." The KJV and the NKJV says, "that I may rejoice." These verses are filled with Paul's joy in the ministry. Now, it's not that everything is all wonderful in the ministry. That's why pastors do quit. They quit because it's difficult and painful.

And in our text this morning, even Paul talks about some of his hardship. In verse 17, Paul speaks about being, "poured out as a drink offering." As we shall see later, this isn't good. And yet, Paul has joy in the ministry. It comes bounding through this text.

Ministry is a little bit like a rose. There are things about a rose that are very nice. A rose is pretty to the eye. A rose spreads a pretty scent. So also does ministry have the sweet moments. When things are going well; when people are united; when people are growing in Christ, ministry is sweet.

But, roses have thorns as well. If one grabs you just right, it can draw blood. So also does ministry have its thorns as well. Those inside the church can poke you. Those outside the church can snag you. Your flesh is always a tug.

But, there is joy in the ministry only when you, "Rejoice in the Gospel," this being the theme of Philippians. And that's what Paul was doing.

Lest you think that my message this morning isn't applicable to you and lest you say to yourself, "But, I'm not in the ministry, I don't need to listen to this," keep listening. It may be true that you are not in the ministry, but you have an effect upon those who minister to you. Hebrews 13:17 says, "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."

In other words, there is a symbiotic relationship between a pastor and his congregation. They rub off on each other. If a pastor is joyful, the congregation will reap rewards. If a pastor is filled with sorrow, the congregation will be negatively affected. The congregation can help the joy of the pastor, either positively or negatively. If they submit to and obey his leadership, they can fill the pastor with joy. But, if they refuse and always resist his leadership, they can fill the pastor with discouragement and sadness. That's why many pastors leave the ministry to the detriment of the congregation.

And so, this morning, as we look at Paul's joy, know that you can have the blessing of a joyful pastor as well. You can see it there in my first point. Joy in the ministry comes when you ...

1. See Spiritual Fruit (verse 16)

In verse 16, Paul says, ...

Philippians 2:16

holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

Verse 16 picks up in the middle of the sentence. And in order to see my point, we really need to go back a few verses. If you remember, verses 12 and 13 tell us "work out our salvation with fear and trembling" Notice that verse 12 doesn't tell us to "work for our salvation" -- that was accomplished at the cross of Christ. Paul tells us to "work out" our salvation." That is, take great effort and make great pains in your walk with Christ. You should work at your sanctification. This is the heart of chapter 1 and verse 27, ...

Philippians 1:27

Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

A life that lives worthy of the gospel lives in unity with others (2:1-2). It lives in humility in the body (2:3-4). It lives in light of the humiliation and exaltation of Christ (2:5-11). And there is no other cause so worthy of our dedication than living a life worthy of the gospel!

So let us "work out our salvation with fear and trembling," because, ultimately, it's all up to God. Verse 13 says, "for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

Now, last week, we saw that the first way that Paul gives to instruct those in Philippi to work out their salvation. He says (in verse 14), "Do all things without grumbling or disputing." It is a surprising statement. Of all the practical counsel that Paul could give regarding working out our salvation, he talks about whining.

We went over verse 14 last week. If you missed it, I would encourage you to listen to the recording. I've heard from several of you that my message last week really struck a chord.

The world in which we live is a complaining world. And as we refuse to complain, we will stand out. And others will take notice! That was

Paul's point in verse 15, "Don't whine; but shine, ..."

Philippians 2:15

so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. ... Let your light shine before men!" (Matt 5:14,16). And one of the ways that we let it shine is by not whining. You say, how do we do this? I mean, with so much complaining all around us, how can we possibly not complain? That comes in verse 16, "holding fast the word of life," (Phil 2:16).

This is the only way that you will free yourself of complaint. When you look to the word of God and let it shape you and mold you and give you your attitudes and perspective. If you watch television and let it shape you, you will be a complainer. If you surf your secular internet sites and let them shape you, you will be a complainer. If you read the newspaper (in print or online) and let the media shape you, you will be a complainer. If you let your non-Christian co-workers or your non Christian neighbors or your non Christian family members shape you, you will be a complainer. The only way to overcome your grumbling, complaining spirit is to let God's word have its effect upon your life.

My wife is reading a book with some ladies of the church entitled, "Choosing Gratitude," by Nancy Leigh DeMoss. She shared a portion of it with me yesterday. It would be helpful to read it. In the book, Nancy Leigh DeMoss tells the story of when Paul Tripp visited India.

Passing through New Delhi, in one of the most horrible slums in the world, he stood transfixed before a three-year-old boy leaning against the cot of his ailing, perhaps dying mother. The boy's eyes were hollow, his stomach distended, his face fly-infested--the very picture of massive, helpless, noxious poverty.

The tears that streamed down Paul's cheeks in observing this tragedy were indeed the heartfelt evidence of his compassion. He longed to sweep this boy and his mother into his arms, away from these dreaded depths of sorrow and endless need.

But it was more than mere compassion he felt. It was an awareness that neither he nor this little boy had chosen their circumstances in life. The blessings of being raised among plenty, nurtured by godly parents, educated in quality schools, and given over to Christ at a young age began to roll over him in waves, even as he did his best to comfort and console the needy pair before him.

"You cannot explain the difference between that little boy and me by anything other than the Lord," he wrote. "Standing there in that slum, I felt all the complaints I had ever spoken as if they were a weight on my shoulders. I was filled with deeper gratitude than I think I have ever felt in my life."

Not long after he arrived back home, Paul was visiting with a church leader from India who had come to the States to study. In the midst of their conversation, he asked the man what he thought of Americans, to which his guest responded -- in polite, Asian style -- "Do you want me to be honest?"

"Yes, I do," Paul answered.

But who could really be ready for this: "You have no idea how much you have," the man said, "and yet you always complain." [\[2\]](#)

What is the only thing that will rid us of this complaining spirit? It's the word of life. It's the gospel that reminds us of what we have and where we would be without Christ. We would be on our way to hell, paying the just penalty for our sin. And yet, by His grace, he has rescued us from our sin and from what we deserve! He has given us Christ's righteousness (Philippians 3:9), so that we can stand blameless before the Lord!

We are so prone to forget the glories of what we have in Jesus that we need to remind ourselves of it every day! We need to hold fast to it. It's the only way to get rid of that grumbling, complaining spirit! Saturate your mind with the truth of God. Remind yourself that, "Our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases" (Psalm 115:3). Remind yourself that, "by the works of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight" (Romans 3:20). Remind yourself that, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13).

Get these things in your mind, and continually remind yourself of them. Again, I want to read from the book that I'm putting on my final touches. You will get a copy soon. It's entitled, "Passing by the Field." I was working hard on it this week. I read the lesson on page 81. It's called, "Flash Cards."

When my children were young, we used flash cards to help them memorize math facts. If our children are slow and struggle with math facts, all of their math will be difficult. But if our children know their math facts well, math will be much easier for them.

The Christian life is much the same. There are facts, or truths, that we need to know very well and believe with confidence to live a healthy Christian life. If we are slow, unsure, and doubtful in our beliefs of these truths, we will struggle significantly in our walk with Christ.

Here are only a few of the facts we need to know:

- God is our creator.
- God is good.
- We all are sinful.
- We are under God's wrath because of our sin.
- Jesus died to absorb God's wrath for those who believe.
- He rose from the dead to show His victory over sin and death.
- There is no condemnation for those who believe.

How well do you know these facts? [\[3\]](#)

The better you know these things, and the tighter that you hold on to them, the more help you will have to live a blameless, complaint-free life. And when you hold fast to the word, look at the result. Paul says this to those in Philippi, ...

Philippians 2:16

holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

In other words, Paul says, "As you hold fast the word of life, I will rejoice in the day of Christ, when Christ returns, and when this world is finished, and we who have been faithful until the end receive our reward. I will rejoice in that day, because my labor among you was not in vain, because you held fast to God's word, and you fully worked out your salvation."

These verses are totally set in the future. They are looking forward to the day when he would join with the Philippians in heaven. And Paul would see that his ministry to them made an impact. He was trusting that his time among them was "not in vain."

Jonathan Edwards, the greatest American theologian that has ever lived, was a pastor of the Congregational Church in Northampton, Massachusetts, beginning 1727. He faithfully served that congregation for 23 years, a good portion of them being alongside his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard. But he was forcefully removed from service in 1750 by a vote of 200 to 23 against him.

Now this isn't the time to get into all of the details of the situation, which are always messy. On the surface, there was a doctrinal dispute concerning those who were able to partake of the Lord's Supper. But, underneath the surface, there were many who were unconverted in his congregation, who distained Edwards and his beliefs.

And in his farewell sermon, Edwards called them to account for their behavior towards him. He described the day when a pastor would meet his congregation at the judgment seat of Christ, first "to give an account, before the great Judge, of their behavior one to another, in the relation they bore to each other in this world. Second, to deal with "any controversies which have subsisted between them in this world." And third, "to receive an eternal sentence and retribution from the Judge, in the presence of each other, according to their behavior in the relation they stood in one to another in the present state."

And to those who were apart from Christ, Edwards gave the following words, ...

My parting with you is, in some respects, in a peculiar manner a melancholy parting, inasmuch as I leave you in most melancholy circumstances, because I leave you in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, having the wrath of God abiding on you, and remaining under condemnation to everlasting misery and destruction. Seeing I must leave you, it would have been a comfortable and happy circumstance of our parting, if I had left you in Christ, safe and blessed in that sure refuge and glorious rest of the saints. But it is otherwise. I leave you far off, aliens and strangers, wretched subjects and captives of sin and Satan, and prisoners of vindictive justice: without Christ, and without God in the world. [\[4\]](#)

And with those words, in effect, Jonathan Edwards was saying that he had labored in vain among many of the people of the church in Northampton. And it was surely hard and difficult. And I am sure that there was much sorrow in the heart of Jonathan Edwards as he left them.

But, had he left them under different circumstances--had he left them a thriving, and growing congregation--I'm sure that his heart would be filled with joy, the only sadness and sorrow coming in the fact that he was leaving them. But this is my point: Joy in the ministry comes for me when you see spiritual fruit (verse 16).

And though these verses are focused primarily upon that future day when we all stand before Christ and receive our reward, this verse isn't all about awaiting for that day. Paul has his hope on that day, because he sees what is happening on this day. The Philippians church was bearing fruit!

Do you remember chapter 1? Paul shares his joy with those in Philippi.

Philippians 1:3-5

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.

Paul brings them back to the first time that he was among them in Philippi. They embraced the gospel and were committed to living it out and spreading its message in their homes, their city, and even in Paul's ministry as well.

In chapter 4 of Philippians, Paul speaks of the gifts that they sent to help him in the ministry. And because of their sharing back and forth, they had this relationship with each other. And Paul was longing for them. He says in verse 7, "I have you in my heart." He says in verse 8, "I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus."

These things are the joy of the ministry. And by the grace of God, I see these same things in you. I know the joy of the ministry. I know the joy of seeing spiritual fruit. In fact, nothing stirs my heart to greater joy than to see and hear of how you all are ministering to one another, totally apart from my organization or help.

I love it when the young people take it upon themselves to search for missions opportunities. I love it when I hear of people going to someone's home to snow-blow their driveway, because it's a hardship for them. I love it when I hear of people travelling to be with others during times of sorrow. I love it when I hear of people hanging gospel literature on homes in their neighborhood and beyond. I love it when I hear of men or women gathering in small groups to study the Bible. I love it when I hear of people helping missionaries with their struggles. I love it when I hear of people calling one another and praying with one another over the heartaches of life. I love it when I hear of families gathering for family worship, reading the Bible and praying together. I love it when I hear of those who read through the entire Bible last year. I love it when others take it upon themselves to memorize portions of Scripture. I love it when I hear of the impact that Christian books are making in the lives of people.

This is my joy when I hear of these things. I long for all of this to abound at Rock Valley Bible Church. My heart resonates with Paul's prayer of chapter 1, verses 9, 10, and 11.

Philippians 1:9-11

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Paul prays that the fruit of their lives would continue to grow. And though these verses are talking about this day, they are focused upon that day. "In order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ." And Paul is seeking His joy for that day.

Well, let's move on to my second point. Joy in the ministry comes when you ...

2. Sacrifice for Others (verse 17)

Paul writes, ...

Philippians 2:17

But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.

Remember when Paul wrote this, he was under house arrest in Rome, awaiting trial before Caesar. And that trial could go either way. Either Paul would be set free. Or Paul would lose his head. He didn't know what awaited him (Acts 21:13). But, he was ready to die for the sake of the gospel. I know this because this is what he said shortly before arriving in Jerusalem, where he was arrested, only later to be deported to Rome for trial. He said, "I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13).

The Greek word translated, "being poured out as a drink offering" is the verb, *spendomai* (*spendomai*). We get the word, "spend" from this word. It describes the process of totally giving over to something. Horatius Bonar described this process in his hymn, "Go Labor On!"

Go, labor on: spend, and be spent,
Thy joy to do the Father's will:
It is the way the Master went;
Should not the servant tread it still?

And this is what Paul was doing. He was following in the footsteps of his Master. He was following in the footsteps of Jesus, who said, "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. ... If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." (John 15:18, 20).

They persecuted Jesus to the death. They hung Him on a cross, whereby, He bore our sins. They persecuted Paul as well. He was imprisoned on a number of occasions (2 Cor. 11:23). He was beaten on a bunch of occasions (2 Cor. 11:23). Five times he received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes (2 Cor. 11:24). Three times he was beaten with rods (2 Cor. 11:24). In fact, once he was stoned and left for dead (2 Cor. 11:25; Acts 14:19).

And here, in Rome, his life may very well end. And so, Paul pulls into the imagery of the Old Testament sacrifice terminology to describe his own situation. He said the he was "being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith" (verse 17).

The drink offering was the wine that was prepared and poured out upon the bull or goat that was burned upon the altar (Numbers 15:1-10). The picture is perfect regarding the sufferings of Paul. It wasn't the wine that was important in the Old Testament sacrifice, it was the animal that was slain and offered up by fire. The wine merely went alongside the sacrifice. And that's what Paul is saying. Paul wasn't the sacrifice

for our sins. Jesus was. But, the death of Paul was sacrificial, nonetheless. He was a martyr, being poured out for the faith of those he served and loved.

This wasn't the only time that Paul used such language. In 2 Timothy 4:6, he writes, "I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come." From the best we can put together from his letters, 2 Timothy was written during his second Roman imprisonment, where indeed, he lost his head. But, this was some years after he wrote Philippians. What was sure in 2 Timothy -- that he was being poured out -- was only a possibility in the Philippians, "even if I am being poured out as a drink offering."

Chapter 1 speaks about his being poured out. In verse 13, he speaks about his imprisonment in the cause of Christ. In verses 20 and 21, he talks about living and dying. Verse 21, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." In verse 23, he begins to describe his struggle, ...

Philippians 1:23-25

But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; Yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith.

If you remember when we went through those verses, it was a surprising (and encouraging) thing to realize that Paul chose the joy of others over his own comfort. His preference was to die and to be with Christ. But, for the Philippians, he willingly remained to serve them.

That's exactly what we see in verse 17 of our text this morning. Paul is willingly giving Himself for others. And in this way, Paul is practicing what he preaches.

Philippians 2:3-4

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

And the intriguing thing here is that Paul was finding a level of satisfaction in completely giving himself for the cause of Christ. He says, "I rejoice and share my joy with you all." Here's the principle. Joy in the ministry comes when you make sacrifice for others (verse 17)

Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). On the one hand, this makes no sense. I mean, it is much better to be on the receiving end, isn't it? The receiver is gaining the benefits of what is given. The giver is losing those same benefits! But, on the other hand, you all know that the giver receives as well. Oh, it may not be physical. It may not be financial. It may not be apparent in any way. But, Jesus says that what the giver receives is more than what the giver gives. You receive it all in blessing.

And that's Paul's perspective. He's not giving a financial gift here. He's not giving a physical gift to anyone. Rather, he's giving his life, and finding great blessing in the giving. He says, "I rejoice and share my joy with you all."

Now, I do think that it's significant here that Paul isn't complaining of his circumstances. He had reason to complain. Remember in Philippi when he found himself in prison because of an injustice done to him? The same thing was happening to him here in Rome. Paul had returned to Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost (Acts 20:16). When he was spotted in the temple, there were those who said, "Men of Israel, come to our aid! This is the man who preaches to all men everywhere against our people and the Law and this place; and besides he has even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place" (Acts 21:28).

None of this was true. It was all slander. Soon, he found himself bound in prison and shipped off to Caesarea for his own safety, where he spent several years in prison, awaiting trial (Acts 24:27). Here, we find him in Rome, again awaiting trial from these trumped up charges. And in Rome, Paul was facing the possibility of death! On wrongful charges! In the very last verses of Acts, we find out that he spent several years in this state.

Paul had every reason to complain, but he didn't. Paul is merely following his own counsel of verse 14, "Do all things without grumbling or disputing" (verse 14). He is practicing what he preaches. He has become an example for us! How can you rejoice when things are going badly for you? Look to Paul as an example!

In fact, I would go further than this. I would say that Paul is doing the very opposite of grumbling and complaining. He is finding joy in his circumstances. He is rejoicing!

Philippians 2:17

I rejoice and share my joy with you all.

Perhaps here is the reason why Paul so quickly comes after this issue of grumbling and complaining, because it is the antithesis of rejoicing. And the theme of this epistle is this: "Rejoice in the Gospel." And you can't be rejoicing when you are complaining.

Let's move on to my third point. Joy in the ministry comes when you ...

3. Share the Joy (verse 18)

Philippians 2:18

You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

Do you see what Paul is saying here? It's a call for us to rejoice, yes. But, it's a call for us to "rejoice in the same way." In other words, this whole text, though it speaks a bunch about Paul; though it comes from a perspective of ministry, this text is a call for all of us to seek our joy in these same things.

You don't have to be in full-time ministry to experience see spiritual fruit (verse 16). You don't have to be in full-time ministry to experience the joy of sacrificing for others (verse 17).

Do you know about seeing spiritual fruit in others? Perhaps you have had the opportunity to share the gospel with someone who believes. My experience is that there is nothing else in this world that will give you more joy than leading someone to Christ. As they believe the message you speak to them, their lives are forever changed! It's great joy.

Perhaps you have had the opportunity to give some counsel to another that really helped their lives. Now, there are many who refuse counsel. But, there are the few who will receive it. And when they receive it and find it helpful, you can have great joy.

Maybe it's as simple as teaching your child and seeing him (or her) develop and appetite for spiritual things. Isn't there great joy found here? 3 John 4 says, "I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth." And as you have labored for that fruit and have seen it in the lives of your children, there is joy!

Do you know about the joy of sacrificing for others? Do you ever stretch yourself in this area? Do you ever do things for others which are inconvenient for you? I have found that whenever I do this, I always have received the blessing of giving. I so want this to be my life. I so want this to be your life. I so want this to be the life of the church, that we would be sacrificing and serving others to our joy!

I long for our church to be a happy church that finds its joy in seeing spiritual fruit in the lives of others. I pray that we would find our joy in sacrificing for others and sharing this joy all around.

No pastor in his right mind would ever quit the ministry and leave such a church!

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on February 2, 2014 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] <http://www.expastors.com/why-do-so-many-pastors-leave-the-ministry-the-facts-will-shock-you/>

[2] Nancy Leigh DeMoss, "Choosing Gratitude," pp. 57-58.

[3] Steve Brandon, "Passing By the Field", p.81.

[4] Here's one of many places where you can read Jonathan Edwards' farewell sermon: <http://www.biblebb.com/files/edwards/farewell.htm>.