**“The Real Me” – Week 3 (Real Joy)**

**May 28-29, 2022**

**Welcome/Intro**

We’re going to start today off by looking at two famous men of the 20th century. You might have heard of them before; you may not. These two men were considered to be one of the best at what they did…they were the best of the best.

Arturo Toscanini (Ar-TU-ro Tos-ca-NEE-nee) was a very famous orchestra conductor. He is considered to be one of the best conductors of the 19th and 20th century. He conducted some of the biggest and most famous orchestras in Europe and the United States. He loved music. He loved what he did. He was also a person who would give the credit to someone else. One time, during a rehearsal of one of Beethoven’s songs, the orchestra finished, and they felt he did such a great job, they stood up and clapped for him at the end. He waved his hands and told everyone to stop and he said, “You shouldn’t be clapping for me! I didn’t do anything; it wasn’t me…it was Beethoven!”

This is a short clip of him conducting his favorite piece of music, Beethoven’s 5th…

**(Teacher’s Note: Show “Toscanini Beethoven” message clip)**

I’m sure most if not all of you recognized that song almost immediately…even though it’s hundreds of years old! Crazy! One of the members of his orchestra was interviewed after Toscanini died and check out this really cool story: *“I played for him for six years…After a while I became, from those in the orchestra, possibly closer than anyone else to Toscanini. Away from the podium, he was like a little child. He loved music. One day I was visiting him, and he asked me to stay for lunch. I could tell he was very tired, and we had finished our business, so I told him that I didn't have to stay. I said, "Maestro, you look tired. Why don't you take a nap?" He said, "I've been up since 5:00 this morning studying this symphony." The symphony that week was Beethoven's Fifth. I said, "Maestro, how many times have you conducted that?" He answered, "Oh, hundreds." I said, "And you're still studying it?" I loved his answer. He said, "Well, I'm always afraid I may have missed something." This is how he really felt about music.*”

Now, our second example; a man named John D. Rockefeller **(Leaders Note: Show picture of Rockefeller)**. In 1870, he founded the Standard Oil company and over the next 40 years, it became the biggest and richest company in the world. He became the United States’ very first BILLIONAIRE. Which is CRAZY!! The best example I can think to tell you is that a million seconds was a week and a half ago. A BILLION seconds was the year 1990. First person to a billion! While he did some good things to give money to others, there are some who say he loved money more than ANYTHING. Near the end of his life, a man interviewed him and asked, “How much money is enough money?” Rockefeller replied, “A little bit more; just a little bit more.”

These examples show us two men; one who was thankful for the smallest of things and one who always felt like he needed more. One seemed to be happy with whatever he had and the other thought he needed MORE to be truly happy. That’s where our THP comes in!

Here’s our **THP (Take Home Point)** for today **– Real joy is being thankful to God for everything.**

In our world today, I think there are plenty of people who are like each of these men. In fact, I bet you can think of someone like Toscanini; someone who loves life, who is content, who is thankful. I would also bet that you know someone who is like Rockefeller; someone who always wishes they had more, something bigger, something nicer, etc. The question I have for you to think about today is this: which one are you?

There’s a story in the book of Acts about a man who was looking for “more” of something. He was a crippled man and had been that way since he was born! He begged at the gates of the temple EVERY DAY. He just wanted someone to notice him and give him some money so he could buy (at least we assume) his basic needs like food and water. Check out what happens when Peter and John, two of Jesus’ apostles (this is after Jesus was resurrected), pass by him one day…

Acts 3:1-10 – *“One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.”*

The beggar thought money could give him real joy and real happiness. Peter and John knew the truth: he needed God’s love and God’s awesome power in his life! He didn’t need God’s stuff; He needed God Himself! He was healed and we can only imagine how he walked away that day (for the first time) a completely changed person!

I know it is hard to not want more of something: more money for your allowance, nicer clothes, a phone (or a better phone!), a nicer video game system. In fact, I bet some of you already have all that and much more. If those things made us have true joy, then why are we always wanting more like Rockefeller said? Are we the type of people who are thankful for everything God gives us; even the small things like we learned about Toscanini?

As our **Take Home** Point says, “**Real joy is being thankful to God for everything.”** The best example we can set for others is to have true joy and that can only come from God; not stuff. He is all we need! He is more amazing and more awesome than anything we could ever buy or want. You can start living that kind of life today and be thankful to God for everything. That is REAL joy! Let’s pray.