



Sermon Discussion Guide

July 26 & 27, 2025

"Does Faith Take All the Fun Out of Life?"

[John 15:9-12](#)

Faith Meets the Real World is a sermon series that explores how our faith in Jesus shapes the way we live in everyday situations—at home, at work, in relationships, and in the world around us. Each week, we'll tackle one big question about how to follow Jesus in real, practical ways that bring hope, healing, and light to a broken world.

PRAY & CONNECT

Open in prayer and invite the Holy Spirit into your conversation. Ask God for wisdom and discernment and trust him to guide you. Take time to recap the message or view it on hopeonline.tv. Did you have any ah-ha moments where you felt convicted, compelled, or inspired during the sermon? What's been on your mind this week? Have you been able to apply the message to your everyday life?

GROW

Read [John 10:10](#) – *"The Good Shepherd and His Sheep"*

- How might Jesus' promise of "life to the full" challenge your current understanding of what a meaningful life looks like?
- The verse talks about a thief who steals, kills, and destroys. What are some subtle "thieves" in our lives that steal joy or peace without us realizing it? How can recognizing these help us resist them and protect the abundant life Jesus offers?
- Jesus says he came to give life, and give it abundantly. How does this shape your understanding of God's intentions toward humanity?
- How can your small group support each other in living this abundant life Jesus promises?

Read [John 15:9-12](#) – *"Jesus, the True Vine"*

- How do you interpret what it means to "remain" or "abide" in God's love in everyday life?
- Jesus calls us to love one another as he has loved us, even to the point of laying down our lives. What does this kind of sacrificial love look like in your context? How do you wrestle with balancing self-care and self-sacrifice?
- Can joy exist apart from circumstances? How might this challenge common assumptions about happiness and faith?
- In what ways can your group embody the love Jesus commands, especially toward those who might be difficult to love?

Read [Philippians 4:4-7](#) – *"Words of Encouragement"*

- What might make it difficult for you to rejoice consistently? How does choosing to rejoice differ from simply feeling happy?
- The passage encourages us not to worry but instead to pray about everything. What is one area of life where worry tends to dominate your thoughts? How might prayer practically replace worry in that situation? What barriers make that shift difficult?
- What might it mean for peace to "guard your hearts and minds"?
- Paul describes a peace that "transcends understanding." When have you experienced peace that didn't match your circumstances?

Read [Nehemiah 8:10](#) – *"Ezra Reads the Law"*

- How do you typically respond when you become aware of personal shortcomings—with guilt, or with gratitude for God's grace?
- Nehemiah said, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." How do you think joy can make someone stronger?
- This verse connects joy to acts of generosity—sharing food and caring for those in need. How do you see a relationship between giving to others and experiencing joy yourself? Can you recall a time when helping someone else lifted your spirit?
- Jerusalem was still in ruins, but the people were told to rejoice. What does that teach about joy's independence from external conditions?

APPLY

Pick one of the applications below to put into practice this week ...

- **Remember God's strength.** When you encounter stress or challenges this week, take moments to pause and remind yourself that God's joy is not just a feeling but a source of strength. Reflect on how joy rooted in God can carry you through difficult situations.
- **Choose joy daily.** When you wake up or face struggles, consciously thank God for his presence and promises. This isn't about ignoring pain or hardship but about anchoring your heart in the deep, sustaining joy that comes from God's unchanging love.
- **Encourage others.** Identify someone in your life who is facing trials or discouragement and reach out to them this week. Share your own experiences of how God's joy has been a source of strength in your life. Your encouragement could help remind them that joy is possible, even in hard times, because God is with us in every circumstance.