

Finding Your Percentage of Joy

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Clifton NJ Family Church Sunday sermon

Excerpts



Millhan Stephens with his wife and daughter

I want to thank you for letting me speak today. I always feel that sermons are a way to share my heart and digest the word of God.

When this opportunity presented itself, I leapt at it. So, here I am today.

A little bit about myself: My name is Millhan [He pronounces it Millhan]. The Korea word is Mi-Il-Han, which literally means America (Miguk) Japan (Ilbon) and Korea (Hanguk). After having explained that a thousand times, it has definitely had an effect on me. I feel that part of my destiny is to bring these nations together. I am the vice-president of the church with two others, Mari Curry from Florida and Alexa Ward. Most importantly, I am a husband and a father. My wife and baby are not here today. They are in Japan; we are going to meet at the Top Gun workshop at Chung Pyung. My wife's name is Sayaka; it has the same vowel, Sa-ya-ka; she is wonderful. My baby, her name is Ayumi, so Ah You Me That's her name. Many of you are Japanese. Ah is short for ai, yu is like a connecting character and mi is beauty.

So it's like the unity of love and beauty or harmony and joy in the Divine Principle. Something you should know about me is that I love the Divine Principle. [Applause] Yeah! So much so that I named my daughter after something in chapter one. I am happy to hear that your pastor, Manoj Jacob, is doing a series on the Divine Principle. This week, he is giving me the chance to talk about the human portion of responsibility, our 5 percent and God's 95 percent.

Trust and investment

Dr. Balcomb asked us all to read at least from Book Four, chapter two, in *Cheon Seong Gyeong* before the Seonghwa memorial to understand True Parents. Section two of that chapter is titled "Our Growth and Portion of Responsibility." I know that we often talk about our 5 percent, but we do not emphasize that God always does his 95 percent. It seems we do not trust that God is going to be with us in giving his 95 percent, as if we are going out on a limb to do our 5 percent, which of course requires 100 percent of our effort. That is a realization I came to.

God will always do his 95 percent if we do ours. That is nice in theory, so the question for me has always been, What is my responsibility? I feel as if once you understand your responsibility it's somewhat easy

because you can just pursue that with all your heart.

To talk about this I want to share my experience meeting True Mother. I was appointed with Mari and Katerina Connery. Right after that, we were called back to Las Vegas to join in a witnessing effort there. We did not know what we were going to do. We were there for just for a weekend, but we joined the witnessing team. We went out and just shared love with people and brought them to our evening program. It was nice.

The next day, after our Sunday service, we were told that True Mother wanted to meet us. I did not know we were going to meet with her and was not properly dressed. I was wearing a flannel shirt. She came and the six of us -- Dr. Peter Kim, Dr. Balcomb, Dr. Jenkins and the three vice presidents, Mari Curry (FFWPU vice-president), Katarina Connery (WFWP vice-president) and I -- went in to see her. We all humbly went in, got on our knees and waited for what would happen next with True Mother.

Interestingly the first thing she asked was, "Did you witness?" It was a good thing we had. That was, after all, the reason we had gone to Las Vegas. So, we said, "Yes, Mother, we did." She then asked, "Did you bring any guests?" Again, it was good that we had. So we said, "Yes, Mother, we did."

She seemed pleased with that and went on to talk about America. She talked about what America was like during the Great Depression, and how America was down internally and externally. Obviously, it was a very hard time, but despite all of this, all that had happened, we created the Hoover Dam. She said that the Hoover Dam was more than just a beautiful, phenomenal structure, but it represented hope. That we could create something like that was a miracle in a bad economy. Many believe that that helped us move out of the Great Depression.

She told us that as new leaders we have the potential to make miracles happen. I was thinking, "Wow, that is very inspiring." But then, "Wait a second: She is asking us to make miracles."

She went on to talk about "building your following." It was interesting. Ultimately, we were just talking about witnessing, but she was saying that if you do not have anyone that can find True Parents through you, you have nothing. There is no substance for when you die. I guessed she meant we would have nothing to hold on to. I felt she was showing another way of looking at tribal messiahship.

She was telling us to witness. I never forgot about that. I never forgot about what True Mother told us. For me the biggest miracle that I could make is to become a spiritual father. Have a spiritual son or daughter.

The name

I have been working on this miracle recently. A month and a half ago, we went out witnessing with some others on the headquarters staff. The plan was to go out to Bryant Park [in New York City] to meet people.

This was during the witnessing revival, a Friday afternoon. Before going out I prayed. Father once said that before going out to witness, you need to pray for the people you are going to meet. You may even go so deep into prayer that you find the name of the person you are going to meet. So I prayed. I was sincere and then the name came to me. "Brian!" the guy's name was Brian. Later, I wondered if our going to Bryant Park had any influence.

So we're walking up to Bryant Park and I'm with Damian, and Carlos, and Koichi, and we're just having a good time. You know guys on the streets, it's great. We're walking and I tell the others that God told me I'm going to meet Brian, and it was like, yeah, cool. We get to Bryant Park, we split up and talk to people. I'm challenging myself, because Brian is going to be a white guy, right? I'm talking to more white people, which is a little more difficult. I mean, come on, they are usually less open to things, generally speaking. Umm It's true.

I met some people and had some good conversations, but I didn't meet Brian. I met one white guy, sat down, and he was just in the area, from Boston. He had a job interview or something. His name was not Brian, but we had a good conversation.

As we were walking back, Damian asks me, "Did you meet Brian?" "No, I didn't meet Brian, but I met many great people; it was really nice."

Then Damian just shouts out, Brian! in the street as we were walking back to the New Yorker. Two guys were standing right outside their office, and the four of us were walking that way. Right when Damian yells, this guy was like, "yeah?"

I am thinking, "This guy is joking, right? He's not serious," because he acted as if he had just responded

with Hello.

I am in shock. my heart is beating like crazy. I am scared. I do not know what is going to happen next. I just said, "Hi, uh, God told me I would meet you today." We were all just smiling, making light of the situation. I got his phone number. The next week, we had lunch together. It turns out this guy is the same age as I am; he is married and has a four-year-old son. I was nervous. I was scared the whole time but he was natural and we actually have a lot in common. I checked his Facebook and we both like basketball and are both kind of into technology. I was thinking, "This is amazing; nothing short of a miracle." I told Dr. Kim, who was very excited about it and told True Mother.



Miilhan Stephens with his Global Top Gun certificate

Life before Ayumi

Ever since we had a baby, actually before then. Let me rewind a little bit. I remember once after church service when I saw some people cleaning. A lady was working with her husband to clean up the building. She was with her four or five-year-old son. I saw how they interacted and somehow I just felt, I want that. I want a baby, to share that kind of love. So recently, I felt the same way about having a spiritual child. I want a spiritual child, someone who can grow through every step they take in finding True Parents and truth after truth. Learning this in the Divine Principle, finding. "Oh my God, that's the God that I have been looking for my entire life" I want to be with that person all the way. I want that. I need that in my life. How about you? Is that something that you want? I feel that that is where it starts, where it started for me, anyway.

Rev. Rendal told me something. He has spiritual children and I like to talk to people who actually have done this before. He told me that whenever you witness, you are looking for your second self. That made a lot of sense to me, because your children are almost like you. Right? So naturally, if your spiritual children were just like you, too, it would be nice. You would somehow be seeing yourself growing again in the faith.

I heard that after I met Brian, and I thought, Wow this is meant to be. But of course there is nervousness, uncertainty about what's going to happen. Maybe he is just going to forget everything and cut off our relationship. All these fears that I have. But I understand that God never forgets anyone and your investment is never lost. Whenever you invest in people, really love people, that love is never lost and even if that person leaves, the next person will inherit all of that. That was encouraging for me, because it was easy to feel that it was all going to be for nothing. Yet, I don't feel that now. I even want the pain of going through difficulties or when the person struggles in understanding the faith and goes this or that

way. I even want to experience that. That real love, where I actually care about this person enough that even when they hurt me, it really hurts. I want it to be like having a child; I want all of it.

I want to read another passage from Cheon Seong Gyeong, which I cannot forget because it is so true. This is from Book 8 "Life of Faith and Training," chapter 2, p. 864.

When your heart moves you to witness and tells you, Let's go witness, there are those who witness because they want to, those who go with the flow, and those who witness because they are scared or afraid for their lives. How should it be for us? Should we witness because we welcome it, because we go with the flow, because we know we will die if we evade it, or because we are afraid? Which one is it? All these motives fail the test.

How then should we witness? The mind and body stand in the position of the subject and object partners, and you start out with joy when the environmental conditions conform to your partner's intent. Your mind was meant to begin with happiness, not sadness.

The experience of joy, rather than of sadness, was to come first. What was the Fall? The elements of sadness took primacy before happiness could blossom. We are people in search of the path of destiny leading to redemption. Therefore, we need to begin with joy and internalize God's will in a joyful process.

What Father is saying is that witnessing is to experience joy. It is for joy and it is not complicated. That makes sense. Why do you have children in the first place? For joy. Isn't that right? You invest in them and you get something in return. That is what witnessing is for.

You know it's not for just to bring in Unificationists. I love that Dr. [Ki Hoon] Kim, our regional president, was saying how we should witness not only to people outside of our movement but also people that are a bit on the fringe, a little bit uncertain about what's going on in the movement, and have not been so involved. Reaching out to our brothers and sisters who are looking for joy is just as valuable.

I want to close in saying that our responsibility is to experience joy. Isn't that nice? To witness, to testify to the love that you received from God, is a natural thing to share with people. Don't worry if things don't go the way you planned, because that is not the purpose. The purpose is for you to experience joy. You could even think of it from an entirely selfish perspective: I want to experience joy. If I get a spiritual child out of that, great. Yesterday, I went through my tribe list and Facebooked a few of them, and I am just feeling joy! So much joy.

So continue to dream big because God is going to take care of the 95 percent. Just do your 5. Witness. Share True Parents' love. Share any happiness or inspiration with others. Enjoy. Thank you.