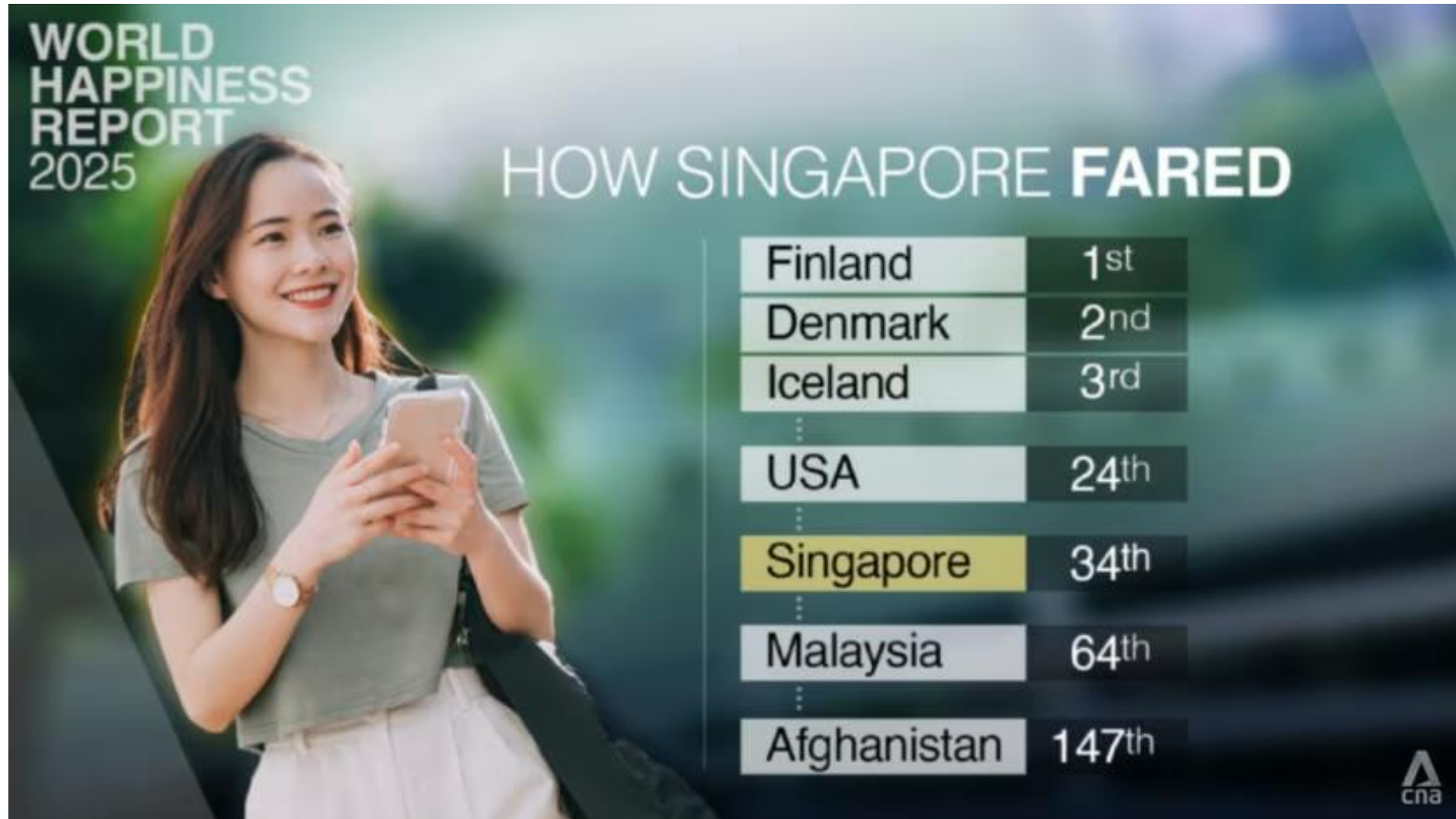


Finding Joy and Happiness in a World of Trouble

Living Out the Gospel in the World

World Happiness Report 2025



World Happiness Report 2025

- The ranking is based on several factors:
 - GDP per capita
 - Health and life expectancy
 - Social support
 - Freedom
 - Generosity
 - Perception of corruption

Challenges of Life in Singapore

- High cost of living
- Pressures of a challenging education system
- Expensive healthcare
- A fast-paced and competitive environment

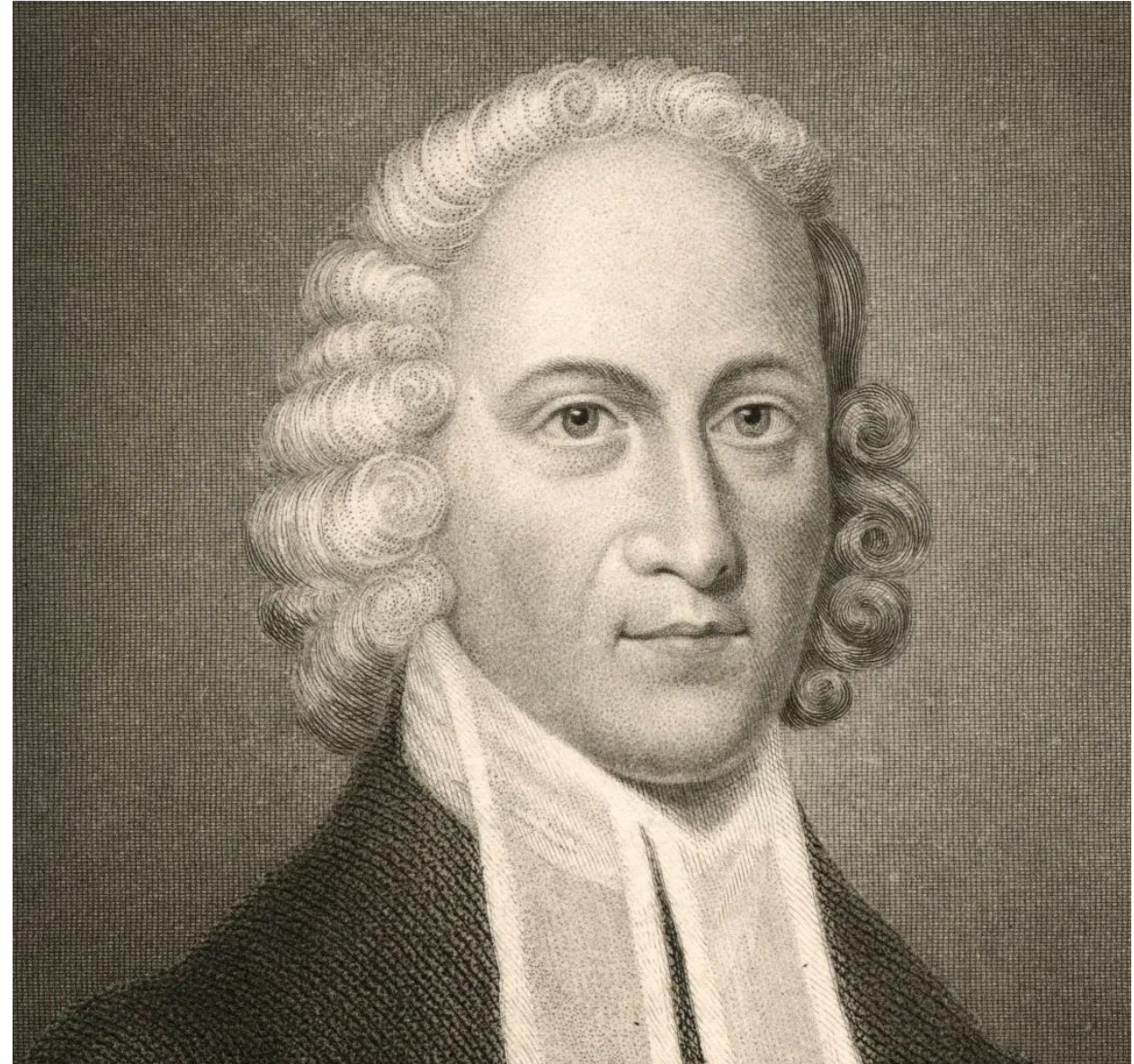
Introduction

- Christianity is about joy
- Jesus says: “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them” (Jn 17:13)
- A believer can experience joy in spite of our circumstances
- Properly nurtured, it could make us happy
- Christian joy can co-exist with grief and even overcome it

Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758, American Theologian

“Christian Happiness” is the title of his first sermon written in 1721 at the age of 18 based on Rom 8

“The enjoyment of God is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied”



Why Do Christians Lack Joy?

- Why do we lack enduring joy in a difficult world?
- The reason is because we don't understand the promises of God
- Rom 8 is about Christian living in a suffering world:
- “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope” (Rom 8:18-20)

Living with Relentless Joy

- Three principles on how to live with relentless joy, if we follow Jesus:
- “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified” (Rom 8:28-30)
- Our bad things turn out for good (v. 28)
- Our good things can never be lost (v. 29)
- Our best things are yet to come (v. 30)

Our Bad Things Turn Out for Good

- “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him...” (8:28)
- “We know now that those loving him, God works together all things for good”
- Three observations:
 - All things happen to Christians, even bad things
 - When things work together for good it’s because of God
 - Though bad things happen they work for good
- Our problem is that we are surprised when bad things happen
- God didn’t promise us a good life

Our Good Things Can Never Be Lost

- “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him...” (8:28)
- Many mistakenly think that when bad things happen, something better will come along
- That’s not the promise in v. 29:
- “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters”
- The term “for” indicates that v. 29 explains v. 28
- God didn’t promise us better life circumstances, but a better life

Our Good Things Can Never Be Lost

- In v. 29, the “good” means everything is moving us toward Jesus
- Jesus suffered not that we might not suffer
- But when we suffer, we can become like him
- The term “predestined” means the outcome is assured; we will be “conformed” (συμμόρφους) to be like Jesus
- God is transforming our inner character to be more truthful, loving, humble, wise, courageous, compassionate
- The second good thing is that we become a member of his family
- We are adopted to be the “firstborn among many brothers and sisters,” meaning to be in a place of privilege in God’s family

The Best is Yet to Come

- Why can Christians be happy? Because the best is yet to come
- “And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified” (v. 30)
- The believer in Christ is destined to glory, where our suffering will be made up for and justified for all that has happened

The Best is Yet to Come

- In Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* (1880), Ivan Karamazov knew what this meant. He says, "I believe that suffering will be healed and made up for. That in the world's finality, at the moment of eternal harmony, something so precious will come to pass that it will suffice for all hearts, for the comforting of all resentments, for the atonement of all the crimes of humanity. Of all the blood they have shed that it will not only make it possible to forgive but to justify all that has happened."

Discussion Questions

- Can you see how God is working in your life?
- How can you cultivate gospel principles to nurture your inner spiritual life?