

Life that is truly Life (1 Ti 6:19)

Mars Hill Church | West Seattle

Preached from the West Seattle Campus Pulpit

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May 25th, 2008



WEST SEATTLE CAMPUS

Introduction

During my sophomore year in college at the University of Washington I had a bike accident in which I broke my neck (C2 vertebrae), dislocated my jaw, and fractured my face in four locations. I like to say that I've only broken one bone in my life – my neck! Though initially there was thought that I may need to have plastic surgery on my face and perhaps learn to walk again, neither were required. However, I was resigned to over three months of wearing a halo while my neck healed, which meant no showers and learning to sleep in a recliner. There is something incredibly clarifying about almost dying. It sharpens the senses and brings the brevity, frailty and worth of life into crystal clear focus. Every day, every breath, every shower (which I wasn't able to take), every turn of the neck (which I wasn't able to do) was a gift. Sitting in that recliner for three months, I had plenty of time to think, particularly about how we can live our lives in such a way so as not to waste them. A phrase that struck me during that season of life is found in 1 Tim 6:19, "so that they may take hold of that which is **truly life**." (NASB – *life indeed*; NLT – *real life*) Paul was saying that there was something that is "truly life", and the inference is that there is life that is not truly life. Even more, "taking hold" of this was something they could do now, in the present. What is life that is truly life? How are we to live life that is truly life in junior high, high school, college, as newly married, amidst midlife, during retirement – and not waste it? Don't wait for a traumatic event to seriously consider this question. What is it? How do we get it? How do we know if we're living it? That's where we're going this morning.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO US HERE IN WEST SEATTLE?

We have not been placed here by God to merely give one another hi-fives every Sunday, but to actually do something. We are here to live our lives in such a way that they count for something larger than ourselves.

WE GET ONE LIFE

- The truth of the matter is, we all get one life.
- We all have **one life to live**, as the daytime soap opera so aptly puts it.
- 100% of us die. We are finite, our days are numbered.
 - World average = 67 y.o.
 - Life expectancy (longer life in richer, more affluent nations)
 - US: M – 76, F – 81 (Washington average = 78.2, ranks 13th out of all the states)
 - Worst: Swaziland – M/F: 32 y.o.
- # of Sundays you have left for different ages
 - 20 – 3,000 Sunday's left
 - 30 – 2,500
 - 40 – 2,000
 - 50 – 1,500
 - 60 – 1,000
 - 70 – 500

James 4:14 What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

Given all of this, you'd think that we would be careful to live deliberate and intentional lives, yet the opposite is most commonly true – we often give very little thought to our life and our days...

William Wilberforce, *A Practical View of Christianity*, 1797

*"Life rolls away with too many of us in a course of **shapeless idleness**. Its **recreations** constitute its chief business...**amusements** are multiplied, and combined, and varied, to fill up the void of a listless and languid life; and by the judicious use of these different resources, there is often a kind of sober settled plan of **domestic dissipation**, in which with all imaginable decency year after year wears away in **unprofitable vacancy**. Even old age often finds us pacing in the same round of amusements which our early youth had tracked out."* (99)

Note: this is before television and video games – and professional baseball!

QUESTION: GIVEN THIS, HOW ARE WE TO LIVE OUR LIVES, SO AS NOT TO WASTE THEM?

To answer that, we must first ask a different question.

QUESTION: WHY AND FOR WHAT END WERE WE CREATED? WHY ARE WE HERE?

To answer that, I'll begin with an illustration. This is the season to work out in the yard, which requires a handful of various tools and machines to keep your yard looking good (i.e. lawn mower, weed eater, shovel, rake, etc) These are all designed to do something specific: shovels to dig, mowers to cut grass, rakes to clean up. **By using these tools for what they were created, designed and manufactured for, they fulfill their purpose for being.**

But, what happens when these things are NOT used for what they were created for?

I don't have to look much further for examples than to my 14 month old son, Carter, who uses the television remote as a telephone, his plastic rake as a hammer, and his food as hair gel. By using these things in this way, these **once useful tools become effectively useless and any efforts to use them as such are ultimately wasted.**

QUESTION: WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ANYTHING?

A: It has to do with everything. Similarly, because **we have been created in the image of God**, Imago Dei, we were created to live in relationship with God, to glorify him (i.e. make him look as great as He is; 1 Cor 10:31; Isa 43:6-7) **and by so doing** find our greatest joy, satisfaction and fulfillment therein – **because we are doing what we were created to do. On the other hand, we live unintended wasted lives (e.g. like trying to make a phone call on a television remote control) when we live outside of relationship with Jesus Christ.** If you're not a Christian, this is true of you, and if you are a Christian this is still a significant threat – every day.

Glory

Isa 43:7 ⁷everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

1 Cor 10:31 ³¹So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

1 Cor 6:19-20 You are not your own, ²⁰for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Joy

John 15:11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your **joy may be full.** (he had just told them that apart from Him, they could do nothing)

John 16:24 Ask, and you will receive, that your **joy may be full.**

John 17:13 I am coming to you (God the Father), and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q: What is the chief end of man? A: To glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

QUESTION: WHAT DOES THIS ALL THIS MEAN?

True life begins when we enter into relationship with Jesus Christ by faith

John 15:5 – Fruitfulness of life depends on us being deeply and vitally connected to Jesus Christ.

We are created by God, the Author of life (Acts 3:15), to be in relationship with Him (Gen 1:26-28; 2:4-25). Yet, due to sin, that relationship is broken (Gen 3; Isa 53:6; Rom 3:9-20, 23; 6:23). Jesus came to reconcile, redeem and restore our relationship with God by dealing with our sin once and for all (2 Cor 5:21; John 3:16; Rom 8:3, 4:25; Gal 3:13; Heb 9:26), putting us back into the relationship with God that we were created to have – and, therefore, to live as we were created to live. Therefore, we see the following to be true:

1. Thus, Scripture describes **“true life”** (1 Tim 6:19) as that which is **lived in relationship with Jesus Christ by faith, for the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God** (John 17:3; 20:31; 2 Cor 5:18).
2. This **true life begins** when faith is placed in Jesus Christ and **continues throughout eternity.**
3. Far from distinct, **our life on earth and life into eternity are inseparably connected, making for one reality, namely “true life”.**
4. Scripture often uses **“eternal life” and “life” interchangeably.**
5. For this reason, **Jesus is described as the possessor of “life”** (John 1:4; 5:40), our very **“life”** (Col 3:4), the **“bread of life”** (John 6:35), the bringer of **“life”** (John 10:10), and the **“resurrection and the life”** (John 11:25).
6. True life, **life as it was created and intended for, is found in Jesus alone.** This is why the **gospel**, the good news of Jesus Christ, is also called the **‘word of life’**. (Php 2:16)

John 1:4 In him was *life*, and the *life* was the light of men.

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal *life*; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see *life*, but the wrath of God remains on him.

John 5:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal *life*. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to *life*.

John 5:40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have *life*.

John 6:35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of *life*..."

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have *life* and have it abundantly.

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the *life*. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he *live*,

John 17:3 And this is eternal *life*, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

John 20:31 These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have *life* in his name.

Acts 3:15 You killed the Author of *life*, whom God raised from the dead...

Acts 5:20 "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this *Life*." (angel to Peter)

Acts 11:18 Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to *life*.

2 Tim 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of *life* that is in J.C.

IMPORTANT: We will receive life that is truly life in *full perfection when we meet Jesus*, but we are able to *experience it in increasing measure in this life until then*. So **OUR TASK** in this lifetime is to continually fight against everything that threatens to prevent us from living life as it was intended to be lived – true life – and fly to Jesus.

It is possible to live a life that looks real but is not, i.e. counterfeit life

1. Therefore, we can infer that all **life lived outside of Jesus Christ is not life as it was created or intended**. Just like using a spoon to comb our hair, or tv remote to make a phone call, it is just as ridiculous to live outside of relationship with God only made available through Jesus Christ.
2. What is the result to this kind of life? **Living life outside of Jesus Christ will always result in dissatisfaction, incompleteness, and emptiness to various degrees - because** we're not living as we were created by God.

To put all of this another way, life outside of relationship with Jesus Christ is a **counterfeit life**. A counterfeit life may seem very much like "living", but isn't because it is lived outside of relationship with Jesus Christ – **and in so doing, we waste it and our efforts**.

That said, I have put together a brief list of evidences of a life that is truly life (which is not comprehensive, but a good starting point).

Evidences that you are living life that is truly life...

#1 Your most valuable "possession" is Jesus Christ

Question: What is the single, burning passion of your life?

I'll read some passages from the Apostle Paul and you tell me what the single, burning passion of his life was...

Php 3:7-8 ⁷ But whatever gain I had, ***I counted as loss for the sake of Christ***. ⁸ Indeed, ***I count everything as loss*** because of the ***surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord***. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as ***rubbish***, in order that I may gain Christ

Rom 8:18 ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time ***are not worth comparing with the glory*** that is to be revealed to us.

1 Cor 2:2 ² For I decided to know nothing among you ***except Jesus Christ*** and him crucified.

Acts 20:24 ²⁴ But ***I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself***, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Gal 6:14 ¹⁴ But far be it from me to boast ***except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ***, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Evidences that you are living life that is truly life...(cont'd)

Jesus himself said,

Luke 14:26, 33 ²⁶“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, **he cannot be my disciple**... ³³ So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

This is the language of someone who treasures Jesus above all things. If the single, burning passion of your life is anything other than Jesus Christ, it's a counterfeit. It won't last and you're wasting your time and energy on it. Is it reputation, performance, awards, promotion, a cause, next job, next house, next car, next kid, how others perceive you? These things will come and go. You'll either get it and it won't satisfy (and think you need something else), or you won't get it and you'll fall into depression, despair and disappointment (and think it's because you don't have it). It's a vicious cycle. You'll get the reputation, award, promotion, job, home, family, or wife that you always wanted and then – you'll be asking for more. Kick these things to the curb and fly to Jesus.

Application: So, again, the question at hand is: What is the single, burning passion of your life? The point is to live in such a way that it will be plain that _____ (insert your answer here) is not the most valuable thing to you, Jesus is. (Examples: success, popularity, kids, wife, husband, career, ministry, personal goals & aspirations, green lawn, etc.)

#2 You read the Bible as the Word of God, unlike any other book

Heb 4:12-13 ¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

2 Tim 3:16 ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

Rom 10:17 ¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the **word of Christ**.

2 Peter 1:20-21 ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

1. If you're living a counterfeit life you treat the Bible like any other book. Doing so will prevent you from living life that is truly life.
2. **What is the most important thing about someone?** The most important thing about anyone is what they worship (what they pour themselves out to, organize their lives around, etc) because what we worship ultimately determines how we live our lives, our purpose, our relationships, and ourselves. As Christians, we worship Jesus. We learn about Jesus in the Bible, so we are all about the Bible.
3. But, we are careful not to approach it for **mere information, but transformation**.
4. We approach it **relationally not merely academically**. We study, ask the hard questions, etc, but we do so to grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ.
5. This means that all Bible **study begins and ends with repentance**. We maintain a repentant heart as we approach scripture so that the soil of our heart is fertile, ready to receive His Word.

Application: Study it, read it, love it, ask questions about it, talk to others about it, hide it in your heart (memorize)

#3 You make it your daily business to be killing sin

If there is **anything that will hinder you from living life that is truly life it is sin** - secret sin, hidden sin, unconfessed sin, or any sin that is not actively killed and put to death.

Puritan John Owen puts it this way, “Be killing sin or it will be killing you.” (Mortification of Sin in Believers)

“The choicest believers, who are assuredly freed from the condemning power of sin, ought yet to make it their business all their days to mortify the indwelling power of sin.” Owen, p47

Evidences that you are living life that is truly life...(cont'd)

"The mortification of indwelling sin remaining our mortal bodies, that it may not have life and power to bring forth the works or deeds of the flesh, is the constant duty of believers." Owen, p49

Our indwelling sin (aka our flesh) is described as our "old self" (Rom 6:6; Eph 4:22; Col 3:9), literally a person that is our enemy that must be killed. All of the deeds of the flesh come from within, from the "old self". Thus, the power, strength and blood supply of the "old self" must continually and consistently be cut off, strangled and put to death. In so doing sin is habitually weakened through constant fighting and frequent success. This is something that we are to be about every day and continue to do until we see Jesus face to face. In killing sin "by the Spirit" we *live*, affecting not only our eternal destiny but the fruitfulness of our life here.

We are to be violent against our indwelling sin.

Matt 18:8 And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire.

We kill indwelling sin by the Spirit

Romans 8:13¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

To live by the Spirit is to set your mind on things of the Spirit

Romans 8:5 Those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit

The things of the Spirit are the Words of God – namely the Bible

1 Cor 2:14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him... (the context is speaking about the inspired writings of Paul, specifically, and the Bible, generally)

We kill sin by the Spirit by hearing with faith

Gal 3:2-6⁵ Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—⁶ just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?

This means that we kill sin in our lives by hearing the Word of God and believing it in faith (i.e. hearing with faith). This is not merely hearing the Word of God and accumulating Biblical knowledge. Nor is this merely having a general faith about a good, loving and just God. This is hearing **with** faith, believing the Word of God to be the absolute reality of things. We find evidences for this conclusion in several places. **First**, the Word of God is referred to as the sword of the Spirit in Eph 6, the Christian's only offensive weapon. **Second**, we see Jesus using the Word of God to combat the lies and temptations of Satan in the wilderness. **Third**, we see this is exactly what Adam and Eve did not do in the Garden, choosing instead to hear and believe the words of Satan over those of God.

Summary: We kill sin, by the Spirit, by hearing and trusting the Word of God.

Question: How do I actually put this into action? When you're feeling tempted to..

Despair: Ps 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble

Sin 1 Cor 10:13¹³ No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Be anxious – Php 4:5f The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Feel unforgiven – 1 John 1:9⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

#4 You don't fear difficulty, trial, suffering or death

The fourth evidence that you are living life that is truly life is that you don't fear difficulty, trial, suffering or death. This doesn't mean that you enjoy it, or that you ask for it, or aren't affected by it; rather this means that such things **don't define your reality**.

James 1:2-4² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the **testing of your faith produces steadfastness**. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Php 1:21²¹ **For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.** ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³ I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

Evidences that you are living life that is truly life...(cont'd)

Rom 5:3-5 ³ More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Rom 8:18 ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

From these we see the following...

1. You can see through and beyond difficulty and suffering, knowing that God will both use it to shape and mold you, ultimately turning it for good.
2. Because Jesus is your greatest joy and treasure it is your greatest hope to be with Him, this is why Paul says, "my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better". In speaking this way to the Philippians, Paul is not saying he doesn't love them, but that he loves Jesus 1,000 times more!
3. This means that you expect things to not go your way, you expect difficulty and hardship, knowing that God is sovereign and he is pruning you for future growth.
4. ***Having this attitude frees us up to take radical steps of faith and not live lives paralyzed by fear, thus live life that is truly life.*** A counterfeit life lives a life paralyzed by fear.

#5 You understand that you have a fit and purpose within the Church

1 Cor 12:12 ¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

Rom 12:4-5 ⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another

1 Pet 4:10-11 ¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

Eph 4:15-16 ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

We are created to serve and function together as the people of God (just as God himself exists in trinity) and in so doing we participate in life that is truly life, by not doing so you are living a counterfeit life. A counterfeit life says that you'll be fine on your own, but true life is to be lived in relationship with other brothers and sisters in Christ. This means that if you are not actively engaged in community with fellow Christians, you are not experiencing life as it was intended to be lived. This is a call for everyone here to get plugged into some form of community if you are not, and seriously consider becoming a member of MHC (i.e. part of the family) – if not here, somewhere.

#6 You live a life of mission

Mission means "sent". To be a missionary is to be one who is sent. True life consists in being actively involved in bringing the Word of Life, the Gospel, to those around us that have yet to come into relationship with Jesus Christ so that they too may experience life that is truly life. The second greatest commandment is to love others as we love ourselves. This means that we are commanded to point others to the all-satisfying God as the supreme expression of our love for them and in so doing, experience life that is truly life ourselves. How do you apply this to your life? You consider who, in your life, Jesus is calling you to pursue for Him. Who are three to five people that you are going to pursue and pour yourself out for this year? This means that you visit the same barista, same bank teller, same check-out clerk when you are running errands, in order to intentionally develop relationships with them. You live, as a missionary, in Seattle, looking and praying for opportunities to share the Word of Life with anyone brought across your path.

John 17:18 ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

Evidences that you are living life that is truly life...(cont'd)

Mt 28:19-20 ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Acts 1:8 ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

#7 You daily bring your counterfeit treasures and life to Jesus

As previously mentioned, perfect life as it was intended will not be had until we meet Jesus face-to-face. Yet, until then it is possible to experience it in increasing measure. Along the way we will discover there are many counterfeit joys and ways of living, which we must kill, repent of, and continue pursuing Jesus. The bottom line: There's grace! Yet, this is not only grace to forgive our counterfeit ways of living, but grace to change us so that we may experience life as it is intended and created for – in relationship with Jesus Christ.

1. We will ***not achieve perfection*** until we meet Jesus.
2. In this life there will be ***many things that compete for the place of chief treasure of our life***. Until we see Jesus we need to be quick to repent and be diligent about taking the pulse of our heart to determine whether we are seeking after ***counterfeit joys or living a counterfeit life***.
3. When we discover hidden loves or desires that do not align with life that is truly life, we repent, give it to Jesus and press on.

1 John 1:9 ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Php 3:12-14 ¹² Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Conclusion

Life that is truly life is a radically Jesus-centered, Jesus-loving lifestyle. What does this mean for us, Mars Hill?

1. This means that you take your life, your days and actions seriously.
2. Life that is truly life ***values Jesus*** above all things, ***loves the Word*** because it tells us about Jesus, makes ***killing sin*** a part of daily business, is ***not paralyzed*** by trial/difficulty but can see through it and beyond it, is lived out in ***community*** with others brothers and sisters (join a community group and become a part of the family here), is a life ***lived on mission*** calling and inviting others to meet the living God in and through Jesus Christ (ask Jesus – where do you want me to go, what do you want me to do?), and ***daily brings competing desires and counterfeit joys*** to Jesus for forgiveness and further transformation ***so that we can live as we were created, in relationship with Jesus Christ – life that is truly life***.