

Sermon 8/12/18 What the Lord has in store for you! Ephesians 4:17-24

Dear Saints whose hearts and minds are on things above:

There was once a man who had all the...

- money he needed
- power he needed
- time he needed
- popularity he needed

To really enjoy life... Nothing held him back.

But he found that “Living life under the sun” (without God) even though he had money, power, time and was famous... he found that life was

- meaningless
- empty
- did not satisfy
- lacked substance
- did not lead to anything lasting
- was boring and monotonous

Who was this man? King Solomon of Israel who lived 900 BC.

Solomon came to the conclusion that life without God is meaningless – zero.

In the end Solomon came back to a living relationship with the Lord.

But, today, people are trying to find meaning and purpose in life apart from the Lord.

The ism's

People try...

- Materialism - Provide for Yourself – possessions satisfy – He who dies with the most toys wins!
- Epicureanism – Enjoy Yourself – Life is a ball – Eat, drink and be merry...for tomorrow we die.”
- Humanism – Exalt Yourself – humanity is glorious – no such thing as sin – we are masters of our own fate and captains of our souls.
- Fatalism – Resign Yourself – the game is fixed – kick back and accept whatever comes down the road. “Aw, what’s the use” – life becomes depressing.

If we would live life on the horizontal plane – living only for this world – we will never find real happiness, meaning or purpose.

Apart from the Lord - life could be summarized by the graffiti slogan: Apathy Rules!

The manager of a baseball team that won the World Series a few years ago was asked what it meant for his life to win the World Series. He said: “It doesn’t change your life that much.”

Unless God is in the middle of your life - Vertical relationship – real enjoyment of life is impossible. If the Lord is removed from life you will never really find enjoyment, purpose, direction or meaning in life.

Without the Lord how could we cope with...

- sickness
- broken hearts and relationships
- discouragement and disappointment

What the Lord has in store for you...

I. It is not found in the ways of the world vv17-19

A. The world’s ways are futile v17

Futility of their thinking

The Apostle Paul says to us: “no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.”

- Gentiles were the unbelievers
- Futility of their thinking = living with no purpose or goal
- Is the goal of our life summarized in the song “Everybody’s working for the weekend”?
- Do we sometimes get caught up in the “ways of the world”?
- Prime Time TV shows the world’s ways
 - comedians using obscene language and laughing at the Bible
 - TV shows promoting sex outside the institution of marriage
 - Funeral setting where the main character ridicules the words of a minister from the Bible
 - Jokes about people who oppose activity that is sinful

B. The world’s ways are ignorant v18

Ignorance

The Apostle Paul says: “They are darkened in their understanding...ignorant....and have hardening of their hearts.”

I Peter 4:3-5 says “They (unbelievers) think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you.”

Those living without God in their lives are in the dark and their hearts are numb.

Their beliefs...

- God is not the creator - there is no God for many
- Jesus was just a man
- There is no absolute truth – right or wrong

- Live for the here and now because this is it!

Romans 1 says about unbelievers “...they neither glorified....God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.”

II Cor 4 “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers.”

C. The world’s ways never satisfy v19

Never satisfied

The Apostle Paul says: “...lost all sensitivity (to sin)...given themselves over to sensuality...with a continual lust for more.”

- sensitivity = cease to feel pain or sorrow over sin = hands after raking- callous
- sensuality = unrestrained living – no holding back – no conscience
- indulge = thinking and doing anything and everything sinful
- lust for more = never satisfied

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Paul’s focus is on two particular sins: sexual excess and greed for more \$\$\$

Marks of paganism – sexual excess which requires \$\$\$

- man never earns enough
- clothes are never fashionable enough
- cars are never nice enough
- gadgets are never modern enough
- houses are never furnished enough
- life is never full enough

The snowball effect...

- danger of living with lose morals
- conscience feels less and less
- one loses feeling for what is right and wrong
- surrender to sin

God’s life for you is a Vertical relationship not merely Horizontal

I hated life – King Solomon

“I hated life! I looked at all the labor, all the projects, all the little hobbies, all the plans, all the hours, all the years of education, all the investment of time and energy, and I saw it accomplishing little more than stirring up the dust of tomorrow and finally being forgotten. I hated it.” - words from Ecclesiastes - King Solomon

- Work, work, work
- Think. Compete. Plan. Sacrifice.

- Travel. Worry. Invest. Save.
- What is the use?

LIFE WAS MEANT TO BE ENJOYED RATHER THAN SIMPLY ENDURED!

- Do you want meaning?
- Are you looking for purpose?
- Are you looking for something to give you satisfaction?

What the Lord has in store for you...

II. Is found in the way of Christ vv20-24

A different way of life

A. Which is the only true way vv20-21

The Apostle Paul says to us “You did not come to know Christ that way”

- You are a believer – you know a different way to live not like that way of the unbeliever.
- You don’t live for yourself
- You don’t live to fulfill your desires
- You know Christ and have heard of Him and have been taught in Him.

True life....Real life is found only in Christ. V21

You were elected to live for Christ.

“For God chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.”
Ephesians 1:4

- We were not elected to live a life apart from God
- We live within the sphere of Christ – in the realm of His teaching

Paul wrote in Romans: “What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 6:1-2

Never lose sight of who you are or what you have been taught.

- We sit at Jesus’ feet and learn from Him
- Whatever is true is found in Jesus
- His life and His message sweeps ignorance and darkness away

Now is the time of God’s favor...Now is the time to live with the Lord.
What are you waiting for....What do you think you need to really enjoy life?

I will be happy if...

People may say...

- I am waiting for the right things to be happy
- I am waiting for the right person to come into my life to be happy
- I am waiting until I have reached my goals to be happy

Real life is found right now in Christ.

- We don't need things, people or goals to be the nucleus of our lives
 - True joy is linked to the Living Lord and the life He gives
- B. Christ's way of life defeats sin vv22-24

The Apostle Paul said "Put off your old self."

- your old way of life - way of sin
- the old way of life is depraved in thought, ambition and desire
- the old way of life was crucified when you became a believer

Paul says in Romans 6 "For we know that our old self was crucified with Jesus so that the body of sin might be done away with...we were...buried with Jesus through baptism into death...that...we...may live a new life."

God put to death our old sinful nature when He brought us to faith. The old nature no longer controls our lifestyle.

- But the old sinful nature still clings to us on earth
- Therefore, we must do daily battle with it
- It no longer is in control, but still causes trouble
- The old nature "Promises us good fortune, joy and pleasure but if given free reign it ruins us in body and soul."
- Our old nature is filled with deceit - "Deceit offers the cup that tastes sweet but has death in it."

We must DAILY put on the new self v24

Romans 7:6 "By dying to what once bound us, we have been released....we serve in the new way of the Spirit."

- God has changed our heart and mind
- God has given us a new attitude
- Our new person wants to do God's will
- Our new person hates what is wrong

Titus 2:11 "For the grace of God....teaches us to say NO to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age."

The Old nature vs. the New nature

May we do battle with the old nature inside of us:

The Old Nature

Skips worship

Uses God's Name in vain

Gossips

Lives for self

Follows sin

The New Nature

Desires to come to worship

Praises God's Name

Builds up others

Serves and sacrifices for others

Puts God first

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

II Corinthians 5:17

- We still sin, but sin doesn't control or defeat us
- We are covered with the righteousness of Christ who lived a perfect life for us

Help me find life in You – O Lord...

I am working all day and I am working all night

To be good-looking, healthy and wise,

And adored and contented and brave and well-read and a marvelous hostess and athletic and.....and....

Won't someone please slow me down..

God says: Find Your Life in Me – I have much in store for you!