

## **What Do I Want Out Of Life?**

Sermon for September 20, 2009

What would you do if you could live your life all over again?

### **"If I Had My Life to Live Over"**

(If I had my life to live over, I'd dare to make more mistakes next time. I'd relax, I'd limber up. I would be sillier than I've been this trip. I would take fewer things seriously, take more chances, take more trips. I'd climb more mountains, and swim more rivers. I would eat more ice cream and less beans. I would perhaps have more actual troubles, but I'd have fewer imaginary ones. You see, I'm one of those people who lived seriously, sanely, hour after hour, day after day. Oh, I've had my moments, and if I had it to do over again, I'd have more of them. I've been one of those persons who never goes anywhere without a thermometer, a hot-water bottle, a raincoat, and a parachute. If I had to do it again, I would travel lighter than this trip. If I had my life to live over, I would start going barefoot earlier in the spring, and stay that way later in the fall. I would go to more dances, I would ride more merry-go-rounds. I would pick more daisies.)

When we look back on our life, we may do things differently than we did. So, that begs the question, What Do You Want Out of Life?

In a September 2006 issue of Time Magazine ran articles concerning the question, "Does God Want You to be Rich? The articles address a gospel of Prosperity, and many televangelists promote. They speak of having fulfillment in life through the means of prosperity.

How fulfilled do you find yourself these days? Do you even think about living life in a way that is fulfilling, or is it enough to just get by? Does it even matter?

Some people live a life of aspiration, some settle for goals, and still others are doing what they can to "just get by."

**What does God want? What is God's will for my life? How am I to be using God's gifts in my life, the gift of my life, the gift that I am from God to life, here and now in this time and place? What does God want?**

We read in Matthew 6:19-20, *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

Scripture says you are a creature - mortal is how Micah names us - from whom God has unique expectations because of our unique identity. We have been made in God's image. We alone are God's stewards, God's co-creators, those fashioned for intimate, interpersonal relationship with God. That defines who we are and whose we are. That defines what we are for and what we can be when we live out of that relationship. Each of us is unique - not another in the world like us, even if we have a so-called identical twin - each of us is God's gift to the world in which we live. You are a gift to the time you are given, a gift to make a difference in the world for God's sake.

Jesus said, "whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it" (Matthew 16:25).

In the Gospel for today, Jesus tells his disciples that the Son of Man must suffer and die. The disciples did not understand what He was saying because their hearts were not in tune with Jesus. They had their own ideas of what Jesus and they wanted out of life. It certainly was not suffering and dying.

Jesus told them a parable that went like this: *"The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' Then he said, 'I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and all my goods. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink, and be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God"* (Luke 12:16-21).

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, *"...do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?"* (Matthew 6:25).

Jesus was addressing a major issue that is still prevalent to day. It is worry? We worry over everything. But Jesus said, *"Who of you, by worrying, can add a single hour to his life?"* (Matthew 6:27).

He goes on to say, *"If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow it is thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"* (Matthew 6:28-30).

We keep searching and searching for answers and solutions to our anxious moments. The answer lies in what Jesus says, *"Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well"* (Matthew 6:33).

So, do not worry. It gets you no where. Anxiety only causes pain and suffering. God has the answer and the solution to life's problems. Therefore, **SEEK THE COUNSEL OF THE LORD.**

Solomon, when told he would be king, went before God and asked not for wealth or material things of the world. He requested wisdom from God. God granted wisdom and also gave Solomon wealth and an abundance of material things.

There's a popular TV show called Deal or No Deal. Back in the 60's there was a TV show called Let's Make a Deal. The two are similar. The show is all about a contestant taking the deal that is made or giving it all up to try and make a better deal.

The goal for Deal or No Deal is a million dollars. After several selections of cases, depending on the dollar amounts remaining, the banker offers a deal to take. The contestant decides whether he or she take the deal or continue to play on for more money. On one of the Deal or no deal shows, a man continued to turn down the banker's deals. The last deal was over \$600,000. He refused. IN his case was \$1.

The world, actually Satan, keeps putting offers before you to tempt you to keep going for something that will not be there. We deal and deal in order to attain more and more because we want more out of life.

In reality, life is not fair but God remains good. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4:16, *"Therefore we do not lose heart, though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day."*

When we focus our eyes on Jesus, our life gets focused on what is important. Seeking the pleasures of this world only leads us into nothingness. Like St. Paul said, *"though our outer natures is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day."*

Our soul is touched by the grace, mercy, and love of God through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Without nurture and care for our soul, it dies, thus losing the gifts of God.

What do you want out of life? Lots of money? Climb the ladder of success? Education and a great job? A good church where you feel comfortable? Is what you want out of life what God has given you through the cross of Jesus?

Our Savior said, *"If anyone come after Me, he must deny himself and take up His cross daily and follow Me"* (Luke 9:23).

You are a gift to the time you are given, a gift to make a difference in the world for God's sake. You are to be a light that shines before others so they may know God's grace, mercy, and love and come to Him through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

This gift was given you at your Baptism and is the light that is to shine every day of your life. It is a light that sees what God wants for you life and it leads you to pursue it.

Building on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ, your life can begin to be built as you know the plans God has in store for you. Listen to what God's plan is:

*"I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. <sup>12</sup> Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup> You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. <sup>14</sup> I will be found by you," declares the LORD"* (Jeremiah 29:11-14).

Amen.