

Life! – Jn 10:10 (Christmas 2016)

Let me add my welcome to our Christmas services, especially if you're visiting with us
We consider you our guest, and trust you'll be encouraged and edified

I'd like to start by turning in our Bibles to John 10; (Intro)

It's one of *several* passages we're going to look at in the book of John, but this is going to be our base

- There's been much said over the years about Christmas
And while we all agree that it's the designated day to celebrate Christ's birth, that's usually where it stops; At least culturally
It's the manger and little else; The story and little more; If that

And the *essence* of Christmas, the *core* of Christmas – is never known, overlooked, or soon forgotten; Referring of course, to life!
The essence of Christmas, the reason for Christmas, is life

- Starting, with Jesus himself
For as the Father has life in himself [the Bible says], so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. (Jn 5:26)
Not only that, but the Bible says he *is* life; Jesus *has* life, and *is* life (1 Jn 1:2)

And when Jesus became flesh, he brought that life to bear, on *our* lives; Our *world*
Saying in Jn 10:10 – *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*
The thief, referring to everyone from false prophets and deceptive leaders, to Satan himself; Including well-meaning leaders who perpetuate false *religions*
They're thieves; Robbing people of life, leading them astray, and deceiving them to death; Literally

Meanwhile, Jesus said – *I came that they* [those who follow him] *may have life and have it abundantly.* And therein lies the essence of Christmas; The purpose

Jesus came to give us life (Jn 10:10)

That's what it says – *I came that they may have life*
Not physical life, but spiritual life; Real life; Ultimate life
We already *have* physical life; He gave that at creation

What we don't have, is *spiritual* life; B/c apart from him we're dead the Bible says
Dead in our trespasses and sins; Following the course of this world, and living according to the passions of our flesh, our desires (Eph 2:1-3)
Apart from Jesus, apart from the life he *is*, and *has*, and *gives* – we're dead

- Not that we're comatose; Or living a dream; Or can't enjoy at least *some* of God's creation and blessing
But in comparison to the life *he* offers, it's a pittance; Mud-pies instead of sand castles; Temporal instead of eternal
Jesus came to give us life, b/c apart from him we got nothin'

And what we *do* have – including our bodies, our bank accounts, our reputations . . .

Our legacy, everything – will fade away with our death; It's all going to fade
I don't care *how* big your trust is; *How* tall your statue; *How* large your family; *How* known your name
When you die, it's all for naught

- Becky and I were in Washington DC recently, and took the opportunity to walk around the National Mall and see some of the government buildings
And in the course of that afternoon, we walked through Lafayette Park, right across the street from the White House

And I couldn't help but notice how *un-*noticed the statues were; Even the bigger ones
Like this one of **Andrew Jackson**; Probably 15-20' tall, and 20' across
And yet, watching the people, you would've thought it was invisible
In fact, the most attention it received, was as an obstacle that people had to walk around
And the guy was a President of the United States

And the statue of **Lafayette**, after whom the park was *named*, was *totally* ignored;
Nobody even glanced at it
And yet he was one of more significant military leaders in the entire Revolutionary War; Without whom, as he represented France, we probably wouldn't have won
We'd still be speaking with a British accent and calling each other mates

- The point is this – we're all going to die*****
And your name, your money, your memory, and everything else will soon follow; It's all going to fade

The only exception, is the life that Jesus gives
And the only question, is "Do you have it?"
That's the *first* purpose of Christmas – Jesus came that *you may have life*

2nd, is that . . .

Jesus came to save our life (Jn 11:25-26)

The most famous verse in all the Bible, says that . . .

God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. (Jn 3:16) IOW Jesus came to *save* our life

- From what? From the consequences of sin
Which is not only *physical* death the Bible says, but *spiritual* death; As in suffering in hell, apart from God, for all eternity
The wages of sin is death the Bible says (Rom 6:23)
And Jesus himself said, that on judgment day the wicked *will go away into eternal punishment* (Mt 25:46) (**Jn 15:6**)
And *if anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.*
That's what Jesus came to save us from; Eternal separation from God, in the throes of hell*****
And the key, is belief; Jn 11:25-26

- Lazarus, a *friend* of Jesus', had just died; And Jesus had just told his sister Martha, that he would rise

And she basically says in v24 – “Ya, I know he will; On the last *day*; When God makes all things *new*; I know that he will rise again in the resurrection”

But in v25 – *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, [26] and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.”*

IOW if you believe in Jesus, though you die physically, you’ll live eternally
In fact, spiritually speaking, you’ll *never* die; You’ll *never* have to suffer in hell; You’ll *never* be separated from him
He’ll save you from that; It’s why he came; It’s why he was born

- And then he asks the all-important question, v26b – *Do you believe this?*
Do you believe, that if you believe in him, he will save your life? Do you?
Do you believe in who he is and what he’s done?
That he’s God in the flesh, you’re sinful in yours, you’re facing hell, and he came to save you? *Do you believe this?*
I hope so; B/c it’s literally a matter of life and death; *Your* life and death

3rd . . .

Jesus came to fill our life (Jn 10:10)

As in right now; The purpose of Christmas isn’t just for later, for life *eternal*; It’s for *now*
Flip back to Jn 10:10 – *I came* [Jesus said] *that* [my followers] *may have life, and have it abundantly*. Or have it to the full

Jesus wasn’t born to save, that we would live a life of *emptiness*
Like a forlorn wife who barely sees her *husband*; And barely *knows* him; And hardly trusts him; Experiencing only a *smidge* of his goodness; A pinch of blessing
It’s not like that

Jesus came that we might have an *abundant* life
Not necessarily financially, but holistically; Comprehensively
Filling your life with things *far* more valuable than money

- Like **love** for instance; 5 things here that Jesus came to fill our life with
Saying in Jn 13:34 – *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.*
Jesus came to fill our life with love; Love for him and love for each other

2nd, is **joy**; Jn 15:11 – *These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full*. Jesus came to fill our life with joy
Which is vital, b/c as his followers, we will have times of sadness; Times of tribulation; Times of persecution; Times of suffering (Jn 16:33)
And if it weren’t for joy, the joy of Jesus, we’d be lost

3rd, he came to fill our life with . . .

Peace; Jn 16:33 – *I have said these things to you* [these words of comfort, hope, and truth], *that in me you may have peace.*

In a relationship with me, you may have rest, tranquility, calmness, serenity
That kind of peace; Peace that surpasses all understanding; Even in the midst of storms

4th is . . .

Purpose; Jesus came to fill our lives with purpose; Jn 15:5

Whoever abides in me and I in him [whoever continues in a relationship of trust, love, and obedience], *he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*
Nothing of any *eternal* worth

Jesus *gives* us life and *saves* our lives, that we would bear *fruit* for him
That we would spread a passion for the fame of his name, advance his kingdom, mature in Christ, disciple the saints, and have something *lasting* to show for our lives
That’s *purpose*; Filling an otherwise purpose-less life

And last but not least . . .

He came to fill our lives with **himself**; Jn 14:23

If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

He will indwell us with his Spirit; The Holy Spirit (Jn 14:17)*****

- 5 blessings with which Jesus fills our lives
So that far from a sour existence of futility and misery and bitterness, we live a life of abundance; Full and forever

And best of all, he guarantees it

Jesus came to ensure our life (Jn 10:27-28)

He not only *gives* us life, *saves* our life, and *fills* our life – but safeguards it as well
Jn 10:27-28 – *My sheep hear my voice* [Jesus says; As opposed to those *don’t* believe and don’t hear], *and I know them, and they follow me. [28] I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.*

Jesus came to give us life to the full and life forever, and ensure it at the same time
Saying that we will *never perish*; Never lose it; Ever; It’s a promise

- And he doubles down, saying that *no one will snatch* us out of his hand
Meaning, no one can *revoke* your life; No one can take it *away* (**Jn 6:40**)
For this is the will of my Father [Jesus said], *that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.*
The day when he returns
Jesus will *resurrect* our bodies, glorify them, reunite our *spirit* with them, and usher us into eternity with him, forever and ever*****

It’s almost too good to be true; And it would be, apart from the death and resurrection of Jesus, that ensures it
No wonder Christmas is such a celebration – Jesus came to give us life, and Jesus came to ensure our life

But it’s also important to understand that . . .

Jesus came to change our life (Jn 10:27)

Including your hopes, desires, habits, pleasures, and even direction at times
So that your life is no longer about you, but him; True

When you make a decision to receive the life that *Jesus* gives, you make a decision to give yours up; Not grudgingly, but eagerly
B/c it's the best thing in the world; The pearl of greatest price
To be *like* him, go where he *leads*, and do what he wants; That's the idea of v27
My sheep hear my voice [v27], and I know them, and they follow me.
All of which changes you even more; **Video** (Moving Works – Follower; 5:30)

➤ Jesus came to change our life
Starting with your beliefs, your attitudes, your outlook; Your passions, desires, hopes
Your heart for the lost, your love for people, and the things you do as a result of all that
Like learning a new language, or moving around the world; Or raising your family
according to God's Word; Or reading your Bible
Helping the poor; Supporting your church; Inviting others; The sky's the limit

But the point is this – the life that Jesus came to give, is not a variation of the one you live now, but a complete change

And it starts, just like that *first* Christmas, with Jesus

No Jesus, no life

No belief, no blessing; No repentance, no redemption; No love, no nothing
You have to *believe* in him; You have to *turn* to him; You have to trust him; You have to follow him; *Him*
No Jesus, no life; He's the only way to receive it (**Summary**)

Pray – Lord, how can we ever thank you enough for entering our world to give us life?

Would you bless each and every person who just prayed to be saved? Would you protect them, and give them much joy and peace in believing? Thank you for Christmas, and the life that's ours b/c of it

We give now, b/c you gave first; Amen

We praise God for those of you who made a decision