



Thursday, Sept. 17, 2020



To My Victory Baptist Church Family,

I hope you're having a great week and that you are enjoying the beautiful, cooler weather that we have been experiencing over the last several days. This coming Sunday morning in our ongoing study through the New Testament book of First Peter, we will be looking at Part 2 of a message that I began last week called "How to Love the Life You Have." Our text is 1 Peter 3:8-12.

This afternoon, as I sit down to write this blog, I am reminded that each of us has a life. Your life is entirely different than mine, and mine is entirely different than yours. All of us have challenges, problems, successes and failures. The primary thought behind the passage of Scripture that we are looking at on Sunday is making the most of what has given us in this thing called life. Each of us has an opportunity, and a responsibility, to make the most of what we have been given. I am reminded of the following story that is told by Max Ellerbusch about George and Grace Williams.

It happened on a Friday six days before Christmas. George Williams was working feverishly in his instrument repair shop so that he could have all of the Christmas holidays at home with his family. Suddenly, the phone rang. The voice on the other end of the phone said that George and Grace Williams' 5-year-old son, Craig, had been fatally struck by a car. The boy had been standing at the curb waiting for the crossing guard to give the signal that it was safe to cross the street. When the signal came, Craig stepped out onto the street and suddenly a car blazed seemingly out of nowhere. He was going so fast that no one had seen it. The crossing guard shouted, waved, and had to jump for his own life, but the car never stopped.

George and Grace drove home from the hospital, through the Christmas decorations and lights, not believing what had happened to them. Upon entering the house and passing by Craig's empty bed, it suddenly hit George and he burst into tears. In that moment, life seemed so empty and senseless. That night he lay in bed thinking, "If such a child can die, if such a life can be snuffed out in a minute, the life is meaningless and life is a delusion."

By morning, George's hatred had shifted to the driver of the car that had hit Craig. He learned that the driver was a 15-year-old who had come from a broken home. His mother worked the nightshift and slept during the day. He had ditched school that day, took the car keys, and went joyriding. His name was George Williams. Max phoned his lawyer and demanded that George Williams be prosecuted to the limit. He told his lawyer, "Try him as an adult! Juvenile court is not enough!"

Later that night, George was pacing the hall in the middle of the night asking God to show him why. At that very moment, the presence of Christ fell upon this father. His breath went out of him with a great sigh, and with it went all the anger and hatred. In its place was a feeling of utter love. It was so sudden that it dazed him, like a lightning strike that turned out to be a dawn. He went back into the bedroom where his wife was numbly sitting up and staring straight ahead. Then he said, "Tonight, Craig is beyond needing us. Someone needs us instead. George Williams needs us. It's almost Christmas. If we don't send George a Christmas gift at the juvenile home, he may not get one."

George turned out to be an intelligent, confused, desperately lonely boy, needing a father as much as George needed a son. He received his Christmas gift on Christmas Day; his mother received a gift as well. George tells the story: "He asked for and got his release a few days later, and our home became his second home. He works with me in the shop after school, joins us for meals around the kitchen table, and became a big brother for my three younger kids."

And then he writes, "In that moment when I met Christ, more was changed than just my feelings about George. That meeting affected every area of my life: my approach to business, to friends, and to strangers...I now know for certainty that no matter what life does to us in the future, I will never again touch the rock bottom of despair. No matter how profound the blow seems, the joy (and grace) I glimpsed in that blinding moment...is even more profound."

Isn't that a great story! That's what the Apostle Peter is trying to help us understand through the pages of the Scriptures in 1 Peter 3:8-12. We CAN and we MUST learn to love the life that we have. We CAN take whatever situation and whatever circumstance God has allowed us to experience and make the most out of it.

Someone has expressed it this way in the form of a poem.

Every second brings a fresh beginning.
Every hour holds a new promise.
Every night in our dreams brings hope.
And every day is what you choose to make it.

You CAN make lemonade out of lemons. You can do it, and the Lord Jesus Christ will help you.

I sure hope to see you this weekend, if not before. God Bless You.

Pastor Larry