

2002 Bible Study Retreat

Life

2

The Fullest

*I have come that they
might have life, and that they
might have it more abundantly.*

John 10:10

*Charles Wilson, Richard Wilson
Larry Scott, Ernie Hack, Richard Sanders*

2002 Beach Retreat Schedule

Thursday Evening- First Major Session- 6:00 PM

Welcome

Worship

Theme Interpretation- "*Life To The Fullest*" Rich Wilson

Teaching Session 1, "*A Full Life Is An Empty Life*" Larry Scott

Teaching Session 2, "*A Life To The Full Is A Happy Life*" Charles Wilson

Teaching Session 3, "*The Abundant Life Is A Hungry Life*" Rich Wilson

Closing

Friday Morning- Second Major Session- 8:30 AM

Worship

Teaching Session 4, "*The Broken Life*" Ernie Hack

Teaching Session 5, "*A Full Life Is A Life In Pursuit*" Larry Scott

Teaching Session 6, "*A Life To The Full Is A Glorious Life*" Charles Wilson

Closing

Friday Afternoon Activities

Lunch On Your Own

Shopping and Recreation

Par 3 Golf Tournament, Cane Patch Par 3

5:30 PM- Supper at Bennett's Seafood (Eat as a group, Dutch Treat)

Friday Evening- Third Major Session- 7:00 PM (may be adjusted)

Worship

Teaching Session 7, "*The Abundant Life Has An Enemy*" Rich Wilson

Teaching Session 8, "*The Victorious Life*" Ernie Hack

Closing

Saturday Morning- Fourth Major Session- 8:15 AM

Worship

Teaching Session 9, "*The Abundant Life Is Connecting*" Richard Sanders

Teaching Session 10, "*A Full Life Is A Life That Belongs To Someone Else*"
Larry Scott

Teaching Session 11, "*The Abundant Life Is A Life Of Confident Assurance*"
Rich Wilson

Closing

Breaks will be offered at various time during the sessions.

Music will begin at the end of each break. When you hear the music please return to your seats, worship and get ready for the next session.

A Full Life Is An Empty Life

(focal passage : Philippians 2:5-11)

Dr. Larry Scott

Introduction:

My sessions this week-end will be somewhat different. Although they are unique studies unto themselves, they are intricately tied together with a common theme. They are woven together to show us the biblical precepts for having a "full, abundant" life. These sessions will be much like a three piece puzzle that completes a total picture of a what a full life entails. Each piece (study) is needed in order to see completely all that is wrapped up in the words of Jesus.

What did Jesus mean when he said in John 10:10 " I have Come that you may have LIFE abundantly, and have it to the FULLEST."

This verse tells us that HE is the key to this life (I HAVE COME) Since Jesus is the key, our study will focus on Him - his relationship to the Father - and his life /ministry.

Phil 2:5-8

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, {and} being made in the likeness of men.
8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

(NAS)

****Our study will be a break-down of this text in an expository (vs by vs) method.**

VS. 5

Paul exhorts the Philippians to have the same *mind* that was in Christ. It is translated here as "**Attitude**" The literal reading would be "**Keep on thinking this in you, with the same attitude, which was also in Christ Jesus.**"

Key words to this verse:

- A. **Keep on thinking:**

- B. **Attitude / mind:**

- C. **Was in Christ Jesus**
 - * single-mindedness
 - * submissive mind
 - * humility of mind (opposite of selfishness / pride wanting one's own way or will) vs.3-4

Vs. 6

Verse 6-7 act as an illustration of vs 5. Paul begins to illustrate the "mind-attitude" that was in Christ from the very beginning.

Key words of this verse:

- A. **Existed:** This word is better translated "**being**". (lit. **That which he was before - he continued to be**) This refers to Christ's pre- incarnate state -in other words what he was before he became a man. This state of "Being" **Continued after** he became a man. **John 1:1-4, 14** The form of God! Jesus was completely God prior to his manhood and completely God after his incarnation.

- B. **Form: (Gk. morphe)** This word for “form” refers to that outward expression which a person gives of his inmost nature. This expression was not imposed on Jesus by an outside force (ie the father), but proceeds from his own nature within. Jesus was in the “form” of God by essence, nature, character.
- C. **Equality with God Robbery:** This part of the verse is the result of his having the “form” of God. Because he was God in essence, character and nature, He did not regard it as an act of injustice to the Father, for him to exert his powers (raise dead, calm seas, heal blind, walk on water) which demonstrated his Deity. Christ was merely outwardly expressing the nature and essence that was within him.

Vs 7-8

Verse 7-8 is the key verses to understanding!! In these verses we see exactly what Jesus **VOLUNTARILY** did in order to redeem the lost children and creation of God. The translated text reads “**He emptied himself**”. Before we discuss the question as to what our Lord emptied himself of, we must first examine the words “**and took upon himself the form of a servant**”

*** Remember the word “**form**” is defined (vs 6) as an “**outward expression one gives of his inward being**” The words “**form of a servant**” means that our Lord gave outward expression to His inmost nature.

*** The fact that He “took upon himself” the form of a servant implies that he didn’t have that in him before (pre-incarnate state). In vs 6 He was expressing himself as Deity- in vs. 7-8 He is expressing himself in humanity. He exchanged one form of expression for another.

Opposite is seen at Mount of Transfiguration.

(Matt. 17:2) There he exchanged the form of humanity for his glory (as in pre incarnate)

***** To be true to the Greek we must understand that THE ACT OF "TAKING" PRECEDED THE ACT OF "EMPTYING". THAT IN TURN MEANS THAT THE ACT OF TAKING UPON HIMSELF THE FORM OF A SERVANT PRECEDED AND WAS THE CAUSE OF THE EMPTYING. HIS TAKING ON THE FORM OF A SERVANT CAUSED HIM TO EMPTY HIMSELF. THE TEXT SHOULD READ "EMPTIED HIMSELF, HAVING TAKEN ON THE FORM OF A BOND SLAVE."**

***Now we can deal with the question "of what did Jesus *empty* himself?"

It was His outward expression of His deity which Christ emptied Himself of during his incarnation as a man. Not His deity itself. When he chose to outwardly express Himself as a bond slave, He was setting aside his desires, privileges, and prerogatives as Deity. The basic privilege and prerogative of Deity is that of **being glorified**. When Deity sets this aside, it sets aside it's own desires. When one's desires are set aside, you are setting aside **"SELF"**. Our Lord emptied Himself of **SELF!**

*****Christ completed this "emptying" by taking the likeness of man. He became that which he had surrendered himself for. Not only was he willing to set aside his glory as deity, but now on equal ground with humanity, he was willing to humble himself further. Death ... on a cross.**

Verse eight is an illustration of the extent of his submission and "emptying".

The most important part of this verse is not in what is said, but in what is understood. He died as no other individual ever died or ever will die. He died of his own volition. He dismissed his human spirit. Ours is taken from us at our appointed time.

He chose to die- to die to self and be obedient- in short, he chose to put his **WILL** to death

Vs 9-11

These verses are the "reward" for vs 5-8.

****The word Therefore is important it means "because of this (that which is stated above)**

Because of this:

- ▶ God highly exalted him
- ▶ bestowed (grant favor) in ***THE*** name above all names which denotes rank, honor, position.
- ▶ restored unto him that which he had laid aside as deity (privileges of glorification-worship-majesty) vs 10-11
- ▶ this gave glory to God the Father.

APPLICATION TO ME: HOW DO I EMPTY MYSELF?

Vs 5 have the same mind as Christ!! Humble yourself (become servant) and put to death

- ◆ desires/wants
- ◆ thoughts
- ◆ will
- ◆ motives / resources / gifts / abilities / time

Be transformed by the infusion of His spirit (glass of water/ coke illustration.)

A Life to The Full Is a Happy Life

Matthew 4:23 – 5:12

Rev. Charles Wilson

1. *Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him,*
2. *and he began to teach them, saying:*
3. *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
4. *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*
5. *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*
6. *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*
7. *Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*
8. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*
9. *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.*
10. *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
11. *Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.*
12. *Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

INTRODUCTION

Jesus' Ministry Was Three-Fold

- **TEACHING**
- **PREACHING**
- **HEALING**

I. THE HAPPY LIFE DESCRIBED

Matthew 5:10 – 12

A. A COMMITMENT TO GOD

10 *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

11 *Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.*

12 *Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

B. A CONTENTMENT IN GOD

II. THE HAPPY LIFE PRESCRIBED

Matthew 5:2-10

A. AN EMPTINESS FOR GOD – 5:3

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

B. A BROKENNESS FOR GOD – 5:4

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

C. A SELFLESSNESS FOR GOD – 5:5

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

D. AN OPENNESS FOR GOD – 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

E. A TENDERNESS FOR GOD – 5:7

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

F. A HOLINESS FOR GOD – 5:8

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

G. AN ACTIVENESS FOR GOD – 5:9

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

H. A FEARLESSNESS FOR GOD – 5:10

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

CONCLUSION

The conditions are tough to fulfill, but we can strive to do no other for two reasons:

1. God gives us the ability.
2. There is no other life worth living.

The Abundant Life Is A Hungry Life

Rev. Richard Wilson

Abundance and hunger are two thoughts that don't seem to go together. Hunger seems to imply the absence of abundance. Many great themes in scripture are paradoxical. Here we see the paradox of hunger and abundance.

Spiritually speaking a person who is hungry for God will find abundance in life. The person who is easily satisfied will never find abundance but only a mere taste of spiritual things.

What would our spiritual lives be like if we were not so easily satisfied? What if we wanted more? *What if our hunger exceeded our reach?*

The Bible has several examples of people who were hungry for more. The Old Testament tells us of David who was a man after the very heart of God. The New Testament tells us that Paul wanted to "know Christ and the power of his resurrection."

My favorite Old Testament character is Moses. Moses was a man who was never satisfied and always wanted more of God. His hunger led to an abundance that we can only imagine.

Just a Glimpse

To read the first part of the story of Moses is to see just a glimpse into what God had for him. He was set apart in the beginning as a special child. Kept from death, he was placed in a basket and sent down the Nile. There he was taken into the house of Pharaoh. God's hand was with him. Later in life he knew something was not right. One day, while observing one of his own people being beaten, he took matters into his own hands and killed an Egyptian. Even then, there was a glimpse of things to come. Moses had a taste of what God wanted of him. The taste would never leave; it would tease him for more.

A Bush and A Voice

After many years Moses had a real encounter with the living God. The glimpse of God and His purposes led to a life-changing encounter. In Exodus 3 Moses sees an unbelievable sight; a bush on fire that is not being

consumed. As a drew close to the burning bush, he heard a voice. The voice called, "Moses, Moses." This was the first time he heard the voice of God and this voice would become his consuming passion. The Voice put things into proper perspective, "Do not come any closer, take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."¹

Would We
Pursue
The
Voice?

Moses had an encounter with the living God. He heard the voice of God. He experienced the holy presence of God. Was this enough for Moses? Would it be enough for us if we saw a burning bush? Would we write a book? Would we go on television and tell our story of the bush? Or would we look closer? Would we pursue the voice? Would we want to hear it again? Would we be hungry for more?

A Voice and A Cloud

The call at the burning bush led Moses on a mission to fulfill God's purposes. Moses would serve the God who called him. In the days that followed his call, he would see first hand the power of God. Moses would see the miraculous rescue of the people he sought to help years before.

Once in the desert he was again called upon by God. God called him to the mountain. The presence of God appeared before the people with lightning and thunder. The people were afraid but Moses once again pursued God who had called him. The Bible says, "When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. . . *The people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.* Then the LORD said to Moses. . ." ²

Why did Moses go where others would not go? It was because he was hungry for the presence of God. He ascended the mountain and went after God. Into the cloud and into the darkness he went seeking God, to hear His voice and to experience His presence. Is it possible that we do not seek God's presence in new ways because we are afraid? Are we fearful of the flashes of lightning and the peals of thunder? Are we afraid of God might

¹Exodus 3:5

²Exodus 22:18;21-22

say? Are we afraid of where God might lead? Are we afraid of what we might find about ourselves? Or would we strap on our climbing boots and ascend the mountain? Would we enter the new places others fear to tread. Some of us tremble and stand at a distance. But some of us approach the presence of God. Here is a secret: There is abundance in the cloud of His presence.

A Cloud and A Hand

Moses was the only one who had the privilege of experiencing God's personal presence. Time after time he ascended the mountain and disappeared into the cloud. After many journeys to this private place with God, Moses asked for something more, "Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."³ Moses wanted to see the presence of God in a new way. God knew what Moses was asking and God replied, "You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."⁴ Moses really wanted to see the face of God. He had experienced the presence of God so often that now he wanted more. He could not see the face of God but God would touch him. With his hand he would cover the face of Moses and he would catch a glimpse of the glory of God, "Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by."⁵

Can you imagine a passion for God in such a way that God tells you that you cannot have it? How often it must be that God wants us to desire *more* but we want no more. Moses wanted more than God would give him at that moment!

A Hand and A Face

The end of Moses' life had come. One last time he climbed the mountain to meet with God. He went to meet the God he had pursued for many years. Upon the mountain, God showed Moses the land that would be given to his people. The Bible tells us those last moments, "Then Moses climbed Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah, across from Jericho. There the LORD showed him the whole land-- from Gilead to Dan, all of Naphtali, the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far

³Exodus 33:18.

⁴Exodus 33:20.

⁵Exodus 33:21-22.

as the western sea, the Negev and the whole region from the Valley of Jericho, the City of Palms, as far as Zoar. Then the LORD said to him, "This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over into it." And Moses the servant of the LORD died there in Moab, as the LORD had said. He buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is."⁶

Moses died and now the hands of God that once covered his face now buried him upon the mountain.

Many people believe that after seeing the Promised Land that Moses died a heartbroken man. This is not true. There was one thing that Moses wanted more than the Promised Land- *come closer and I will tell you*- Moses wanted to see the face of God. When Moses died, and God buried him, he opened his eyes and saw the face of God.

Finally, he was satisfied, for what he wanted was no longer beyond his reach but was finally within his grasp as he held to the bosom of God and gazed into His Sweet Majestic Face. Satisfied! Satisfied! Hungry no more!

The hungry soul cries, "Show Me Your Face!"

Are you easily satisfied?

Have you tasted more, and that was plenty?

Is God offering more but you are not taking?

Or

Are you not yet satisfied?

Have you tasted more, and now you are hungry for even more?

Do you want to find more of what God is offering?

Are you so hungry that you want to taste of the abundance that God has for you? *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*⁷

⁶Deuteronomy 34:1-6

⁷Matthew 5:6

The Broken Life

Focal Passages: Romans 1:21; 3:10-12; 7:14-15, 21-25

Ernie Hack

More often than we care to imagine, God's will for us is the exact opposite of what we experience. Far too often we pursue those things, situations and achievements which we think will bring us fullness, only to find that they are shallow. "Keep on trying" is our motto. But trying, and trying again can be very tiring. In fact, in God's books "trying" is futile. He is looking for the opposite in us. He wants us to *give up trying* to be a success and *give in to Him*. We want to *make something* of ourselves while God wants to *break us* of ourselves.

God plans are to bless us – to make us exceedingly happy. He wants to do this for every one of His children. It seems to me that only a few amongst us ever arrive at this point. Why? One answer lies with the fact that we think that we need a big "wheel of fortune" experience before we can be exceedingly happy. However, if this were God's strategy only a handful of all God's people would be blessed. And then the blessing would not be everlasting. It would soon wear out. Instead God's desire is to truly bless all of us, and to do so in an everlasting way.

How then can more of us experience this kind of blessing? In ways opposite to what we think! As incredible as it may seem, it only comes through brokenness.

Consider a few scripture verses on this subject:

Isaiah 57:15; 66:2; Psalm 51:16-17; James 4:6-8; Romans 1:21; 3:10-12; 7:14-15, 21-25.

1. What Does It Mean To Be Broken?
 - a. What it is not
 - b. What it is
2. Who Are The Broken Ones?
 - a. Compare the sinful woman with Simon (Luke 7:36-50)

b. Compare the two sons (Luke 15:11-32)

c. Compare the two men who went to pray (Luke 18:9-14)

3. How Do We Become Broken People?

a. It's not a matter of brazenness, but _____

b. It's not a matter of looseness, but _____

A Full Life Is a Life in Pursuit

1Peter 1:15-16

Dr. Larry Scott

John 14:9-12

9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.

12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

(NIV)

How did Jesus maintain this intimate of a relationship with the Father?

- It wasn't because he could do miracles
- It wasn't because he was a great teacher
- It wasn't because he knew the scripture
- It wasn't because he prayed a lot

** All of these things are outward expressions of what Jesus was inside.

They are not the **cause** They are the **effect** (result) of the cause.

It was through His pursuit of HOLINESS , that Jesus maintained the kind of intimacy with the father that made them ONE.

The role of **HOLINESS** in Jesus' life / ministry

- I. All the other outward expressions and attributes of His Deity are "Perfected" by His holiness.
 - A. Holiness is the **essential** part of Christ's attributes
 - B. It is His holiness that allows him to exercise express all other attributes (judgement, justice, redemption, mercy etc...) With perfection.

- II. Jesus' holiness was not automatic
 - A. He was deity
 - B. He was also human (dual natures)

- III. Jesus had to bring his "flesh" into obedience to the Spirit
 - A. Temptation in the wilderness
 - B. In the Garden He submitted his will
 - C. He was tempted in all manners as we are

**It may bother us to think in these terms, but Jesus had to constantly bring His "flesh" into obedience to that holiness of God that was within him. If this were not so, how could the scripture teach that "he was tempted in all manner as we are-yet without sin"?

Remember His dual natures. (His Deity nature was HOLY- but His Humanity was as human as you and me)

Key Question: (1 Peter 1:15-16) **How can God demand, even command that we be as HOLY as He is HOLY? Jesus was DEITY! Our righteousness is as filthy rags in comparison to him (Isaiah 64:6) Is it even possible to meet this command?**

Answer: YES !! LET'S DISCOVER HOW!!!

Rom 5:19

19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

1 Pet 3:18

18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,
(NIV)

Heb 10:9-10

9 Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will."

10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

(NIV)

**In scripture, Jesus is referred to as... "without sin" (Heb.4:15),
"committed no sin"**

(1Ptr. 2:22) , "Him who had no sin"(2 Cor.5:21)

****** The holiness of Jesus was more than simply the absence of actual sin. It was also a perfect conformity to the will of His Father.**

Our Hope for Holiness!!

- ▶ Jesus was the FIRST person to possess dual natures within.(the Spirit of God joined with humanity) who did not fall to sin.
- ▶ It was because of this truth that he maintained His Holiness.
- ▶ When we are "born again" / saved, we take on dual natures. We possess the spirit of God as well as our flesh. "Spirit and flesh" at war with one another.

Paul describes the war this way.

Rom 7:15-25

15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.

16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.

17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.

18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do-- this I keep on doing.

20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

21 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.

22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law;

23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

25 Thanks be to God-- through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

(NIV)

Our hope is this then, we in and of ourselves are UNABLE to “be without sin”. But Jesus (who has overcome sin) lives within us and enables and empowers us to live the holy lives that God commands. His perfect Holiness becomes ours. But we must do our part.

Illustration: Pursuing holiness is like the relationship between the farmer and God. The farmer must plow, prepare the soil, and plant the seed. He must totally depend on God to provide the sun, rain, and then the harvest.- it is a partnership.

This leads us to the natural question of “ How do I pursue Holiness on a daily basis?

Conclusion

1. We must realize that Holiness is not about VICTORY but OBEDIENCE!! **We pursue holiness by:**
 - d. **Putting sin to death-by being crucified with Christ** Col 3:55 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality,

impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

- e. **Bringing every thought captive (obedient to Christ)** 2 Cor 10:55 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.(NIV)
- f. **Developing Holiness of Character** Rom 12:22 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will.(NIV)
- g. **Guarding our hearts (emotions)** Prov 4:23 23Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Ps 119:9-11 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.10 I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.11I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.
- h. **Submit your will daily**-Luke 9:23 23 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Jesus links OBEDIENCE and JOY in a cause and effect manner; that is, joy is the result from obedience. Only those who are obedient- who are **Pursuing Holiness** as a way of life will know the joy that comes from God. Notice the progression of this verse.

Rom 14:17-18

17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of **righteousness, peace and joy** in the Holy Spirit,

18 because anyone who serves Christ in this way is **pleasing to God and approved by men.**

A Life to The Full Is a Glorious Life

ACTS 7:48-49

Rev. Charles Wilson

48 . . . *The Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says:*

49 *"Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me?" says the Lord. "Or where will my resting place be?"*

INTRODUCTION

The very word "Heaven" causes us to think of joy, peace, harmony and the delights of glory. Heaven is associated with everything that stands for happiness, reunion, expectations and beauty. The word "Heaven" is used in the Bible almost 600 times. Most do not refer to the "Third Heaven", the dwelling of God.

Heaven is so glorious, so wonderful, that in our physical bodies we could not stand under the full description of our heavenly home.

Everyone will spend eternity somewhere - in one of two places - Heaven or Hell. This study will look deeply into what God has revealed about the eternal home of the believer - HEAVEN!

I. THE NEW HEAVEN - REVELATION 21:1-8

- 1.** *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.*
- 2.** *I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.*

3. ***And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.***
4. ***He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."***
5. ***He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."***
6. ***He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life.***
7. ***He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.***
8. ***But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."***

A. The Bible Speaks of Three Heavens

1. The Atmospheric Heaven - Where We Live
2. The Planetary Heaven - The Sun, Moon, Stars
3. The Dwelling Place of God

B. A Glimpse of Heaven

1. From Paul

2 Corinthians 12:2-4

2. ***I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know--God knows.***
3. ***And I know that this man--whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows--***
4. ***was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.***

2. From Stephen

Acts 7:55-56

55. *But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.*
56. *"Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."*

3. From John

Revelation 1:17-19

17. *When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.*
18. *I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.*
19. *"Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later.*

Revelation 4:1

1. *After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."*

Revelation 19:11

11. *I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war.*

C. Heaven Is a Place

John 14:1-3

1. *"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.*

2. *In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.*
3. *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."*

Philippians 3:20

20. *But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord, Jesus Christ.*

D. Heaven Is a Place of Total Satisfaction

Revelation 21:3-4

3. *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.*
4. *He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

E. Heaven Is a Place of Worship

Revelation 4:8-11

8. *Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."*
9. *Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever,*
10. *The twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:*
11. *"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."*

II. THE GLORIOUS LIFE RECEIVED

A. Through Jesus Christ

John 14:6

- 6. Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."**

B. There Will Be Evidence of This in Heaven

Revelation 20:11-15

- 11. Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them.**
- 12. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.**
- 13. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.**
- 14. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.**
- 15. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

CONCLUSION

Heaven is a place of perfection. Our sinful nature will be perfected. There will be perfect knowledge, perfect love and perfect communication with God. There will be no unfinished symphonies, no unsung songs, no shortened lives, no broken dreams. **HEAVEN IS A WONDERFUL PLACE!**

The Abundant Life Has An Enemy

Rev. Richard Wilson

The abundant life is so wonderful. The abundant life offers more than we can even begin to imagine. Scripture teaches the One who gives us this abundance “is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us”⁸ While this abundance is so freely offered we must also face the truth that the abundant life has an enemy. The abundant life has an enemy who wishes to steal away our abundance and leave us empty.

The very verse that tells us of the abundant life also describes the enemy, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. . .”⁹ In this lesson we will identify the enemy and how to defeat the enemy to keep our abundance.

1. Who Is The Enemy?

A. The enemy described in this passage is the same enemy of all scripture. John 10:10 contrasts the mission of Satan and the mission of Jesus Christ. Satan is the enemy across the pages of scripture.

1. He is the enemy who stole Adam and Eve’s abundance.
2. He is the enemy who lead Israel astray that resulted in the loss of the abundance of the “land of milk and honey.”
3. He is the enemy at work in the world- seeking lives to destroy.

B. John 10:10 describes the enemy as a thief. There are many ways to describe the work of Satan from and angel of light to a roaring lion. In this case we see his work in the light of the abundance Christ offers. *Satan desires to take while Christ desires to give.*

1. The Greek word “kleptes” is used. This word literally means “a stealer.”

⁸Ephesians 3:20.

⁹John 10:10.

2. We get our world “kleptomania” from this word.
- C. Satan’s purpose is simple. He wishes to steal our abundance. He cannot steal our life because we are safely kept in the Father’s hand, yet he *can* steal our abundance.
- D. Satan is so successful at this that many Christians live lives that have tasted little of the abundance Christ is offering.

2. **What Does The Enemy Do?**

- A. John 10:10 describes for us three efforts made against us. Each of these efforts is designed to steal our abundance.
- B. These words are strong:
 1. Steal- Satan is called a thief and this is the action of a thief. The Greek word is “klepto” which simply means to steal. The idea is that Christ gives to us in abundance and then Satan strives to steal away what is given. He desires to take away our joy, peace and so on.
 2. Kill- The idea of this word is to take life. We know that Satan desires to kill the actual life of a person. Satan also has the ability to kill in a spiritual sense.
 3. Destroy- To render useless. His goal for the Christian is to render the Christian’s life useless. Imagine, a person saved by grace, made an heir to glory, given the abundance of God and still living a useless life. Too many have found this to be true.
- C. Satan’s tools are still the same:
 1. Lies- to confuse us
 2. Temptation- to distract us
 3. Sin- to rob and destroy us

3. **How Can We Regain Lost Abundance?**

- A. There will be moments when Satan wins. One day we are doing fine, enjoying the abundance of our faith and a moment later we are reeling in a moment of failure. We feel that the abundance is gone. We feel that our lives go from being a “land of milk and honey” to a vast spiritual wasteland.

- B. *When we feel our abundance has been lost because of sin and failure we must take steps to reverse the process or we will fall into the trap of lost abundance. This is where so many go wrong!*
- C. There are four key steps to restoring abundance:
1. Confession- the first step is ours. John 1:9 "If we confess our sins. . ."
 2. Forgiveness- the key step is God's John 1:9, "he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."
 3. Restoration- the process begins after forgiveness Psalm 51:10 "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:12, "Restore to me the joy of your salvation. . ."
 4. Repentance- this step leads us away from the pitfalls that steal our abundance. Hebrews 6:1, "Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God"

The abundance we have is from Christ. Christ gives and Satan tries to steal. Are you living a life of abundance or are you struggling with temptation and sin? Why suffer unnecessary defeat when you can have the joy of abundance?

The Victorious Life

Focal Passage: 2 Corinthians 3:12-18

Ernie Hack

At times we find it heartbreaking when we Christians behave in a defeated manner. It is sad to hear of those who cannot speak kindly to their fellow Christians. Sharp tongues and harsh words quickly undermine our witness. Criticizing our fellow Christians can be very disturbing. Complaining about our apparent bad lot in life can be very hurtful. Pursuing and practicing sin is devastating. Likewise with covering up our sin. To justify, trivialize or deny it is a great mistake which we frequently make.

Defeat often comes in a more subtle way. It creeps into our lives through apathy -- indifference.

We take our eyes off God's very best to focus on good things around us. Our passion for Him fades and we settle for mediocrity. So it is not so much what we do that is wrong, but what we don't do. Neglecting our priorities becomes very damaging. The "sins of commission" may not plague us, but the sins of "omission" certainly do.

God still makes it possible for us to have victory over our sin. As Christians we know that this takes place, first and foremost, when we call on the Lord Jesus to redeem us. He sets us on the road to victory, yet we slip and slide off this road and sometimes really get bogged down. In Christ we are placed on victory's side, but in practice we often find ourselves facing defeat. So, how do we find this victory which God makes possible?

Three views are commonly promoted in answer to this question. Let's consider them by comparing them with the ways skiers could travel up a steep slope in order to ski down again.

1. First View: "Take One Step At A Time Up The Slope"

Bible illustrations of some who have held this view: Luke 18:9-14, 18-27.

2. Second View: "Take The Ski Lift Up To The Top Of The Slope"

Bible passages used to support this view: Acts 2, 8, 10, 19.

3. Third View: "Take Hold Of The Rope That Pulls Skiers To The Top"

See 2 Corinthians 3:12-18.

a. Two qualifications are needed:

-- _____ (unveiled faces—salvation)

-- _____ (contemplation)

b. A transformation takes place:

-- What kind? _____

-- How does it happen? _____

Abundance is Connecting

Mr. Richard Sanders

Intro: The abundant life from Scripture is being transformed from our sinful nature to the perfect and holy nature of God. Salvation allows God into our lives and assures us of a righteous position in heaven. Salvation is through grace alone, but we still have to choose to give our lives to Christ. In the same way, we must choose to give our lives to God. We must stay connected to the power source through faith and obedience.

As much as we allow Christ to control us is as much as God is able to work through us

I. Connection to Power

A. Example of Disciples (Matthew 17:14-21)

1. Problems after Success

- a. Disciples depending on _____
- b. Disciples lacking _____

REFLECTION: *What spiritual victories have I experienced recently or not experienced lately that I would like to? What does the example of the disciples teach about my spiritual successes?*

B. Jesus' Teaching to Disciples

1. _____ the size of a mustard seed will move
_____ v20

a. The most impossible _____
means dependance on a power source

_____ human strength

b. God calls us to a _____ commitment which
_____ what is normative

REFLECTION: Am I trying to solve my problems by praying that God would only help my plans or am I turning my mountains completely over to God abandoning human strength? Explain!

2. Preparation for Success

a. Faith = Obedience

(1) v21 Every circumstance takes faith through _____ and _____.

“Obedience is the one sure characteristic of the surrender of faith. Faith that is not coupled with obedience is a pretense”. ~ Andrew Murray states,

REFLECTION: Think about some immovable situations in our lives that may look like physical, emotional or spiritual mountains. Write them in the My Circumstances column on the left and then write in the God’s Solutions column on the right how God wants you to let Him help you through trusting Him.

☹ MY CIRCUMSTANCES

† GOD’S SOLUTIONS

HOW ARE TRUST AND OBEDIENCE RELATED?

II. Connection = Abundance.

A. _____ and _____ ourselves of self (Luke 9:23)

1. To deny one’s self is to:

- a. Disregard own interests, act entirely unlike himself, to reject or to refuse something offered.
- 2. Same word for deny used in Luke 12:9; the way God denies us heaven when we deny Him before men.
- B. Paul instructs that connection is a complete _____ by _____ process
 - 1. I Thessalonians 5:16-24 "...without ceasing, in everything, entirely, complete..." - give _____ all the time
 - 2. II Corinthians 10:5 "...take every thought captive into the obedience of Christ..." - all good and bad thoughts
- C. Our Weakness = His Strength
 - 1. Philippians 4:12-13 Paul's secret of _____ was born out of weakness from _____ and _____.
 - 2. His secret to contentment is that we are able to do _____ things _____ who strengthens us.
 - a. As much as we allow Christ to control us is as much as God is able to work through us
 - 3. We must _____ ourselves (Luke 14:7-11) and in our _____ He makes Himself strong (II Cor. 12:9)

APPLICATION: Choose A,B or C from above and memorize one or two of the verses from the section. Write a plan to implement the particular verse and pray for a greater desire to obey God in the coming weeks.

A Full Life Is A Life that Belongs To Someone Else

John 5:17-20

Dr. Larry Scott

When we have taken the first step and emptied ourselves of “ self” (session 1) and pursued a life of HOLINESS (refilled -session 2) Then we become a life that is usable to God... our life becomes a vessel that is emptied again in serving others.

THIS IS THE MODEL THAT JESUS GAVE US TO FOLLOW.

John 5:17-20

17 Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."

18 For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

19 Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these.

(NIV)

Examples of this model in Jesus' life

Jn.12 :49-50

Jn:7-16

Jn 8:28-29

Jn. 10-37-38

Jn. 14:10

Jn. 17:8

What we see In John 5 is very important- but perhaps what is not seen is as valuable a lesson for us, as we seek to give our lives to Him.

- ▶ ***Jesus never failed to recognize God's work around Him.***
- ▶ ***God never asks Jesus to stop working with Him.***

- ▶ ***Jesus never had a personal agenda for how he served***
- ▶ ***Jesus never confused who was the master / servant***
- ▶ ***Jesus was never unresponsive to whatever His father demanded of Him (even unto death)***
- ▶ ***Jesus was never confused about what His father's will was***
- ▶ ***Jesus understood the principle " When God is working through you - You can do anything God can do."***
- ▶ ***Jesus never felt frustrated about the fruits of His labor. The results were left up to his father***
- ▶ ***Most importantly - Jesus never skipped the "relationship" for the "doing of works" The relationship always came first***

The relationship is the key. For it is out of the relationship with the Father, that God reveals to us what He is about to do. It is through our relationship that God guides and reveals to us where and how he wants us to serve.

So Let's Examine our relationship with God!

1. Is my relationship God-centered or Self-Centered

2. Am I truly emptied of "self"? If not- what do I need to do to change that?

3. Have I pursued Holiness in every area of my life. If not, what areas Has God spoken to me concerning this?

4. What does God want you to do in response to His Spirit speaking to you this weekend?

That revelation is God's way of inviting us to join Him in a deeper relationship. God wants you to serve Him and His Church in Extra-Ordinary ways. Throughout the scripture we see ORDINARY people doing incredible things. Their relationship with God and God working through them is what made them EXTRA- ORDINARY.

My prayer for you is that you lead an EXTRA-ORDINARY LIFE!!The only way to do that, is to give your life to someone else in service to others.

The Abundant Life Is A Life Of Confident Assurance

Rev. Richard Wilson

The abundant life is not a life of uncertainty. The abundant life is a life of confident assurance. At times this might be the part of the abundant life that we take for granted

We could have a life of doubt and uncertainty. We could live not knowing about today or eternity. Instead we are given assurance in the Word of God.

1. Confident Assurance Of His Presence

- A. We do not have to wonder about God's presence. How difficult it would be to face the difficulties of life wondering where God is or what He is doing.
- B. Psalm 139:7 *"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?"*
- C. Psalm 23:4 *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."*

2. Confident Assurance Of Our Salvation

- A. Salvation is what it is all about. We have the assurance of our salvation. We can know if we are saved. Others do not have this luxury. The Jehovah's Witnesses have only 144,000 places. The follower of Islam has no certainty even if he lives to please Allah.
- B. I John 5:13 *"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."*
- C. 2 Corinthians 1:22 *"{He} set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."*

3. **Confident Assurance Of His Provision**

- A. We know that we will be cared for. The Father from His abundance pours out His blessing upon us.
- B. Malachi 3:10 *"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."*
- C. Psalm 23:5 *You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*
- D. James 1:17 *"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."*
- E. Matthew 7:11 *"If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"*

4. **Confident Assurance Of His Purpose**

- A. We can know that God has a wonderful plan for our lives. We do not have to wonder if God will harm us or lead us wrong.
- B. Philippians 1:6 *"being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*
- C. Philippians 2:13 *"for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."*

5. **Confident Assurance Of His Return**

- A. When we look ahead we have the confident assurance that Jesus will return. We know how things will be concluded as Jesus returns in victory and calls His children home.
- B. Acts 1:11 *"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."*

C. 1Thessalonians 4:15 "According to the Lord's own word. . ."

6. **Confident Assurance Of Eternity**

- A. We can also look ahead and know with confidence how we will spend our eternity.
- B. John 14:2-3 *In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*
- C. Revelation 21:5 *"He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."*

Assurance may not be something you can "put your finger on." But think, would you really have abundant life if you did not have assurance? Assurance is at the very foundation of the abundant life. We can be sure. Because we are sure we can enjoy the abundance given to us in Jesus Christ!

Quiet Time Suggestions

Ernie Hack

For Thursday Evening's Quiet Time

Passage: Romans 1: 8-17

Meditate: In verse 11 of this passage Paul tells us that he longed to see the Roman Christians. Think for a few minutes about the Christians God has brought into your life and what you can do these days to help them in their faith.

Write: Now read the passage selected for this time and list a few of the great spiritual blessings Paul wanted to see built into the lives of the Roman Christians. If you are so inclined, underline some key phrases or verses in this passage.

Pray: Thank the Lord for the immeasurable blessings He has given you. Also thank Him for the Christian friends He has brought into your life. Ask the Lord to build His amazing blessings into all our lives, and pray for His special workings in our hearts through our Beach Retreat.

For Friday Morning's Quiet Time

Passage: Romans 5: 1-11

Meditate: This passage teaches us that we are justified through faith in the Lord Jesus. Think about what it means to be justified before God Almighty and some of the privileges and responsibilities that brings to us now.

Write: Read this passage and jot down some of the incredible benefits that the Lord brings our way when we are justified by Him. Even suffering brings us blessings according to verses 3 and 4. Look for the key words, "faith," "hope" and "love." Circle and then compare them with the wonderful verse in 1 Corinthians 13:13.

Pray: Thank God for the amazing privilege that is ours to be justified by the blood of Christ. Also thank Him for the priceless, spiritual treasures we enjoy when we are in Christ. Pray for one or two people you know who still need to be reconciled to God. And ask the Lord to guide you into what you can do to help them come all the way through to the Lord Jesus.

For Friday Evening's Quiet Time

Passage: Romans 6:1-14

Meditate: Look at the opening questions in verse 1 and the short answer given in verse 2. The longer answer is given in the rest of the passage. Note how victory over sin is dependent upon our unity with Christ.

Write: Underline in two different ways Paul's references to death and life in this passage, or jot down the references where they are found. Circle or note his use of the word "know" in verses 3, 6 and 9. Write down a summary of what he wants us to know. Now circle or note his use of the word "offer" in verse 13. Write down a note as to what we need to offer to the Lord., our God.

Pray: Thank the Lord for His plan for setting us free from sin. Ask Him to give you victory over any sin He sees in your life. Confess the sin which you know about. Even ask Him to draw attention to sin that you have not recognized as a problem. Seek His strength for victory in the days ahead.

For Saturday Morning's Quiet Time

Passage: Romans 10:1-4; 9-17

Meditate: Note the use of the word "saved" in verses 1, 9, 10 and 13. Who does Paul want to see saved? To whom is God's salvation available?

Write: Circle or note the word "righteousness" in verses 1-4. Write out a thought or two as to how this righteousness relates to our salvation. Now write out a list as to how this gift of righteousness reaches the peoples of the world. Especially note the use of the word "how" in verses 14-15.

Pray: Thank the Lord for the gift of salvation He has made available to you. Ask Him to work its on-going consequences into your life. Remember those you would like to see reached with God's salvation plan and pray about the role the Lord wants you to fill in reaching them with His message of salvation..