

# A Church Positive About Life

## By Bill Denton

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Illustration

Be such a man, and live such a life,  
That if every man were such as you,  
And every life a life like yours,  
This earth would be God's Paradise.  
Phillips Brooks

#### B. How are you living your life

1. Like the song: One day at a time?
2. Just muddling through, trying to keep your head above water?
3. Fast – hurrying here and there, never a moment to relax or enjoy it?
4. Fully, zestfully, with a sense of joy and fulfillment?

#### C. I suspect that last one is what we'd like to say, but it's often not the truth

1. People today suffer from a surprising number of ailments that affect the ability to live and enjoy the life we have
  - a. depression and anxiety are at all-time highs
  - b. crime, poverty, and stress still afflict millions of people
  - c. even among Christians, there is sometimes an inability to live in a way that resembles what we read to be God's will for us
2. Jn 10:10 -- "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have {it} abundantly. (NAU)
  - a. John 10:10 -- The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (NIV)
  - b. John 10:10 -- The thief comes only in order to steal, kill, and destroy. I have come in order that you might have life-- life in all its fullness. (TEV)
3. Barnes Notes:

[Might have it more abundantly] Literally, that they may have abundance, or that which abounds. The word denotes that which is not absolutely essential to life, but which is superadded to make life happy. They shall not merely have life-- simple, bare existence-- but they shall have all those superadded things which are needful to make that life eminently blessed and happy. It would be vast mercy to keep men merely from annihilation or hell; but Jesus will give them eternal joy, peace, the society of the blessed, and all those exalted means of felicity which are prepared for them in the world of glory.

--- (from Barnes' Notes)

#### D. This morning I want to talk about our need to be a church positive about life

1. If we're going to make an impact on our world, it will be because we think we've got something others don't have
2. If we miss it, no one else will ever find it

## I. OUR LIVES ARE PART OF GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN

### A. Rom 8:28-39 (read)

### B. Paul provided an answer to those who faced severe difficulties of life

1. Rom 8:35 -- Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (NAU)
2. God has given us an understanding of life that goes beyond the individual events and beyond the specific circumstances
  - a. this is where we so often get hung up in trying to live
  - b. no one says pain, hardship, distress, etc., is enjoyable or easy to handle
  - c. but God encourages us to look beyond the immediate
3. Rom 8:37 -- But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. (NAU)
  - a. God's intent is that you live like a winner, not a loser
  - b. even in the midst of turmoil and upheaval, a man or woman of God is not a loser, but a conqueror
4. A person who sees himself as part of God's eternal plan, is someone who who can be positive about living when everyone else has thrown in the towel

## II. WE UNDERSTAND THE KEY TO LIVING LIFE

### A. Note the following verses:

1. Prov 4:23 -- Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it {flow} the springs of life. (NAU)
2. Mark 7:20-23 -- And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting {and} wickedness, {as well} {as} deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride {and} foolishness. "All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man." (NAU)
3. Eph 4:17-19 -- So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. (NAU)
  - a. it matters greatly what condition you allow your heart to get into
  - b. you can significantly enhance your ability to experience life at its best by allowing God to shape your heart in positive ways instead of sinful ways (sin always destroys)

### B. The key to life is the heart

1. The heart is the residence of all that we value, and therefore, it directs

the steps of life

- a. Mt 6:21 -- for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (NAU)
- b. we hold in our hearts that which is valuable, important, vital
- c. it is what we treasure that determines what we will give ourselves to in life

2. Christians understand some fundamental secrets about life

a. Matt 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 treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; (NAU)

b. James 4:14 -- Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are {just} a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. (NAU)

c. here's what we know:

- 1) life is insecure and uncertain; therefore we prepare ourselves by laying up treasures of a better kind than the ones that are consumed by life
- 2) life is short, temporary; therefore we prepare ourselves now for something much more important coming our way
- 3) we are therefore insulated against life's disappointments, yet we are still able to enjoy and benefit from whatever blessings we receive in life

### **III. WE HAVE SOMETHING TO SHARE WITH OTHERS**

#### **A. We've seen enough of the problems**

1. We know that there is plenty of pain, agony and suffering in the world

- a. most of us have experienced the very same losses, defeats, disappointments and failings as anyone else
- b. we understand what happens when we allow temptation and sin to get the upper hand and put us at odds with God, ourselves and others
- c. no one has to convince us that life often seems unfair and unreasonable

2. What we don't need to do is add to the problem

- a. we have discovered God's answer for all the problems
  - 1) we know where forgiveness is – I the blood of Jesus
  - 2) we know where encouragement is – in fellowship with the Father who has forgiven us and enveloped us in his love
  - 3) we know where direction for living is – in the Father's word where he explains all about life

- 4) we know where the divine resource is – in our Lord and Savior who promises us life more abundantly
- b. if we know all that, don't add to the problem
- 1) Christians are positive about life because we understand what it's about
  - 2) we're positive about life because our burden of guilt and the fear of sin's consequences has been removed
  - 3) we're positive about life because we know that we're part of something eternal, not just temporary
  - 4) we're positive about life because we know the source of joy that defeats every negative about life

**B. If all that's true, then we need to act like we believe it**

1. A sour-dispositioned, negative, forever critical Christian is a contradiction in terms
2. A negative, condemning, harsh, abrasive Christian is a contradiction in terms
3. It's not that we don't have to deal with all the problems, the hurts, the depressing events of life – it's that we're not stuck there
4. What the world needs is a people who have seen through the mess and know that there is something better for those whose faith is in God

**CONCLUSION**

**A. Mark 16:15** -- And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. (NAU)

**B. Gospel means "good news"**

1. Wherever the gospel is proclaimed, it should bring cheer to the heart and a smile to the face
2. It ought to lift the cloud of sadness and hopelessness and holds so many people prisoner to despair
3. The good news message of Jesus Christ is one of freedom, of release, of hope and possibility
4. It tells us that whatever has gone wrong, God will put it right again; when we have failed, he will provide a way to recover; whatever life has robbed of joy, God will give a reason to rejoice

**C. Invitation**