

Becoming Fully Alive

Week One - Why is life so hard?

The Glory of God is Man Fully Alive - Irenaeus

The thief comes to steal kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

- John 10:10

<< What is *really* going on here - Answer the following question with your group. Pick the answer closest to you. If you have no idea what any of the answers mean, you are the last one by default.

If Donald Rumsfeld (who handled the confusing press conferences during the last war) gave a press conference on your life right now what would he say?

1. There are things that we know, that we know
2. There are things that we know, that we don't know
3. There are things that we don't know, that we know
4. There are things that we don't know, that we don't know

Assumptions - Most of us look at Christian life as some kind of resort that we get in for being good. If we follow the rules, wear our WWJD bracelets and, most especially, smile a lot, then our lives ought to be pretty good. Right?

<< There are few things as important to us as our own lives, and there are few things that we are less clear about. When we look at good and evil, we are basing our judgments on our own assumptions and perceptions. What assumptions do you have? How does perception affect your assumptions?

The Dichotomy - God wants us to have a great life, but the life we see is far from it. When things in our lives don't go the way we hoped, most people land in two possible explanations for this problem:

1. We are blowing it
2. God is holding out on us

The Offer is LIFE

You have made known to me the path of life - Ps 16:11

In him was life, and that life was the light of men - John 1:4

Tell the people the full message of this new life. - Acts 5:20

<< Your Best Life Now - *The Game* - God is pretty clear that he wants more for us in our lives than we do, and that life is more than we can even imagine. What is your best life?

1. I am at peace with this world
2. I am at peace with my family
3. I am at peace with myself
4. I am a piece of pizza

<< Everyone has their own idea about what a "good" life is. Discuss what would be a good life for you.

The Offer is NOW and NOT YET

Many people explain this dichotomy with the thought that, yes, God does offer us new life, but it is the future life in heaven, not the one we live here and now. But the Bible tells us that this life is more than eternal life after we die. It is also the now.

"I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life." - Luke 18:29-20

For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. - 1 Timothy 4:8

I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living - Ps. 27:13

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. - Romans 6:4

We are at War

The thief comes to steal kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.
- John 10:10

The scriptures tell us that a new life is already offered to us, a new, better life. It also tells us where the war for our lives takes place.

Above all, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life - Proverbs 4:23

But the gateway to life is small, and the road is narrow, and only a few ever find it. - Matthew 7:14

<< A State of the Heart - Pick the answer that is closest to your heart

1. Alabama - My heart is beautiful and verdant
2. Tennessee - My heart is a mixture of rednecks and cosmopolitans
3. Louisiana - My heart is a swamp, yet people flock around me seasonally to become incoherent
4. Mississippi - At least my heart isn't Louisiana

Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. - 2 Corinthians 3:12-18