

**FRESH START - 5**  
**“Really Living Instead of Just Existing”**

*I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. John 10:9-11*

Ranking right up there near the top at the number five position of New Year's Resolutions for 2006 is *Enjoy Life More*. The fact that this thought ranks so high is indicative that many, if not most, people are not satisfied with how they are living. I think it is safe to say that enjoying life is pretty much a universal desire. I don't think there are very many people who want to be miserable.

Since it is such a universal desire will explain why people will go to great lengths to experience enjoyment. The problem is that many of the things we do which we think bring joy actually do the opposite when all is said and done. For example, a man may try to drown his sorrows in a bottle, but it will only make his problems worse.

The following are some of the most common misconceptions about truly enjoying life:

- **I'd enjoy life more if only I had [fill in the blank]**
- **I'd enjoy life more if I could achieve my ambitions.**
- **If I become a Christian, I'll miss out on all the fun things that make life so enjoyable.**
- **If I become a Christian, I'll never have another problem.**

I am convinced that God has created us to enjoy life, even in this life which is affected by sin. God is not a cosmic kill-joy seated in the heavenlies just waiting to squash any joy or happiness that might come our way. Somehow many have the perception that the Christian life is the most dull and boring

life imaginable. Maybe they got that idea because they know dull and boring Christians or because they have heard a lot of dull and boring sermons. Someone has said that many preachers have the amazing skill of taking the most amazing and exciting book that ever existed and making it boring by their presentation. Whatever the reason, the perception is clearly wrong.

Following Jesus will bring persecution (God promises that.)

*Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 2 Timothy 3:12*

But Jesus said that we can rejoice in times of persecution.

*Blessed are those who persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matthew 5:10-12*

God has not promised us a life which is free from problems, but He has promised us a life which is worth the living. There is so much more to life than merely existing. There is so much more to life than merely living for the day.

**1. ABUNDANT LIFE BEGINS WITH THE GIVER OF LIFE.**

*I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.*

- Many shepherds in ancient times would lead their sheep to an enclosure for protection through the night. The shepherd himself would lie down in the doorway to protect the sheep. Anyone or anything which tried to get into the sheep had to go through the shepherd.
- **Jesus is the door.**

He is not a door - one of many. The Scriptures are clear

and are adamant. There is only one way to God and that is through Jesus Christ.

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. John 14:6*

- **Salvation is offered to all who come through Him.**

Just as no one is good enough to enter heaven through their own merits (they must come through Christ), no one is too sinful to come to Him for salvation.

*"Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Isaiah 1:18*

## **2. ABUNDANT LIFE COMES WITH KNOWING YOUR PURPOSE.**

Nothing matters more than knowing God's purposes for your life, and nothing can compensate for not knowing them. Without a purpose, life is motion without meaning, activity without direction, and events without reason. Without a purpose, life is trivial, petty, and pointless.

- **Knowing your purpose gives meaning to your life.**

Without God, life has no purpose, and without purpose, life has no meaning. Without meaning, life has no significance or hope. But knowing that God has a purpose for our existence will make life worth living. Because of their sin and disobedience, God allowed the Jews to be carried into captivity by the Babylonians. But in the midst of their despair, God gave Jeremiah a message to remind them that God would deliver them and that He had a plan for their lives.

*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11*

- **Knowing your purpose gives direction to your life.**

Without a clear purpose you have no foundation on which you base decisions, allocate your time, and use your

resources. You will tend to make choices based on circumstances, pressures, and your mood at that moment. Without clear purpose, you will keep changing directions hoping each change will settle the confusion or fill the emptiness in our heart. You will accomplish little or nothing with your life because you have no clear sense of direction.

On the other hand, there is nothing quite as potent as a life lived on purpose.

*...but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:13-14*

- **Knowing your purpose brings motivation to your life.**

Purpose produces passion. To live a life without passion is to simply go through meaningless motions. That's merely existing; not truly living. But a life focused on its purpose will continually be motivated to fulfill its purpose.

## **3. ABUNDANT LIFE GIVES ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE**

Many people spend their lives trying to create a lasting legacy on earth. They want to be remembered when they're gone. Yet, what ultimately matters most will not be what others say about your life but what God says. Living to create an earthly legacy is a short-sighted goal. You weren't put on earth to be remembered. You were put here to prepare for eternity.

To experience the abundant life that Christ has for us, we must know and follow His purpose for our lives. We need to live with the realization that we will stand before Christ one day.

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 2 Corinthians 5:10*

When we fully comprehend that there is more to life

than just here and now, we will begin to live differently. We will start living in the light of eternity. That will affect how we handle every relationship, task, and circumstance. Things that seemed so important at one time will appear trivial or petty. The closer we draw to God, the smaller everything else appears.

God has a purpose for your life on earth, but it doesn't end here. His plan involves far more than the few decades you will spend on this planet. Abundant life is more than a fulfilled life on this earth. You can truly experience abundant life when you live with eternity in view.

**About this Sermon:** The above is a sermon outline prepared by Pastor Michael Switzer and was preached for the family of believers at Cornerstone Baptist Church, Middletown NY. It is published here for instructional purposes. Although it is copyrighted to protect from abuse or misquotation, it may be quoted in-part or linked freely from other websites. When using more than 33% of the text or if using in any printed format, please contact us for permission. All Bible references from the New King James Version (NKJV). Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. ©2006 **Cornerstone Baptist Church**