

THE ONE THING

PART TWO – A LIFE LIKE NO OTHER

REVIEW

So last week, we began a new series entitled “The One Thing” where we are looking at the one thing that the LORD teaches us is the good part of our calling and our vital need – and that is our fellowship with God & spending time in His presence.

We began by looking at the wisdom in learning what this one thing is and applying it to our life by how it causes us to work smarter and not just harder for the LORD. Yes, there is power in avoiding distractions and making the “one thing” the “main thing” in our lives. And once we become laser-focused on this one thing, those limitations in our Christian walk are removed and we are able to become so much more fruitful for Him.

I shared the quote by the author of our protestant reformation, Martin Luther, when he said, “I have so much to do today. I think I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.” And while that sounds like a contradiction, it isn’t. If you have so much to do in one day, why would you spend three hours praying instead of using that time to accomplish your tasks? It’s because when you spend time with the LORD, you are sharpening that spiritual ax. And when your spiritual ax is sharp, you can accomplish more in less time with the Lord present that you can with all your might & power and with all the time in the world. Amen?

We looked at a couple of Scriptures that teach us about this power of being in God’s presence: In Psalm 27, we learned how having this as his one desire was what made David a man after God’s heart and how there are a myriad of benefits to dwelling in His presence. We also looked at Luke chapter 10 and how Mary was said to have chosen the good part which would not be taken away from her.

Saints, living in the presence of God is not just a good idea; it’s our vital need. Regarding this, we looked at the example of recharging our electronic devices and how most of us would not ever dare allow these things to go days or weeks without plugging them in and how this should be the same mentality we possess when it comes to plugging into His presence.

For example, Jesus said in John chapter 15, in order for the branch to truly live and be productive, it must abide in the Vine because apart from Him (i.e. Jesus Christ), we can do nothing. If Jesus were here on the earth during the 21st Century, He might have used the same illustration that I am using here because basically the point He was making is that if the branches do not stay “plugged into” the Vine, they will lose their “power” to be fruitful.

Therefore, just as is the case with our electronic and battery-operated devices, if we want to fulfill our mandate to be lights to the world, we must stay plugged into the source of that light. Why? It is because the quality of our spiritual life is directly tied to us having an abiding relationship with the True Vine.

Again, we are not saying that you will *die* physically or spiritually if you don't plug into His presence. But we are saying that you will not truly *live* if you do not learn to fellowship with God like we are describing. Which leads me to what the Holy Spirit is wanting to say to us today ...

You see, when it comes to our walk with God and our purpose in Him, it is all about having a personal relationship with Him. This is our purpose for becoming born-again Christians. Let me explain ...

Church, I consider this particular topic to be one of the absolute most important subjects that we can learn in the Christian life – because, as we are about to learn, our personal relationship with God is our primary purpose and calling as born-again believers.

Now I know we have a tendency to view ourselves through rose colored glasses and think that we have arrived in this area. Likely, the only people that would readily acknowledge that their relationship with God could use some work are those who are knowingly living in sin or something similar.

But I'm here to tell you that all of our personal relationships with God can stand to get a little better. I'll prove this to you by giving you a little parable:

THE PARABLE OF THE POOR RELATIONSHIP

Suppose you were able to watch a married couple in their daily activities together and you observed that while they spent their entire day by each other's side, you saw very little communication, particularly from the woman towards her husband.

You noticed that this man would try to talk with his wife countless times throughout the day, but it seemed as if the woman just had turned a deaf ear to him. It appeared like she couldn't even hear him, like she had blocked him out or something. However, you did notice that she spoke to him on three separate occasions during that day ...

The first time was earlier in the morning, when she asked him – “Honey, would you please take the dog out?” The second time was around lunchtime, when she asked him if he would do the dishes for her. Then, finally, she thanked him rather quickly for all he does for her and then proceeded to ask him – “Baby, would you please pick up this mess I made?”

Now, mind you, that particular day, they went everywhere together – almost like the husband was just following his wife around as she went to the grocery store, the gym, on her walk, etc.

So would you say that their relationship could you use some work? Would you consider that the woman needed to work on a few things from her end? Of course, you would!

Well, did you know that this is probably what the average Christian's relationship with God looks like? (And that's probably being very generous)

Friends, we are the bride of Christ and He who has promised never to leave us nor forsake us is with us everywhere we go. Yet most of the bride of Christ does something similar to what this wife did in this parable. We communicate with the Lord just a few times a day – basically when we just want Him to do something for us – and do our own thing the rest of the time.

Now I do not say this to condemn anyone. Like I said, we all could stand to grow in this area – gaining more of an awareness of His presence, learning to listen and speak to Him more frequently. And not just when we are making our requests to Him, but to simply commune with Him as a husband and wife would naturally do.

We are married to the Lord, saints. It's high time we start acting like it. And that is why we are on this particular subject – so that we can grow in our relationship with the Lord, learning how it is meant to be.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?

You see, the great question of mankind is: What is the meaning of life? People have been asking this question for centuries, and the truth is that the only way to find the answer is to find God. Faith in God is the only thing that will unveil to us the answer to our purpose.

Let's look at a couple of Scriptures that teach us why we are here...

Revelations 4:11 says, *“You are worthy, O Lord to receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.”*

Now, first of all, notice that what is being declared in heaven is that He is worthy to receive glory and honor and power (from His creation). Why? Because He created us, and therefore, we owe all that we have to Him. As the apostle Paul said, “In Him we live and move and have our being.” Our next breath, our next heartbeat, all of this comes from Him. Therefore, He is worthy to receive this praise, adoration and worship back from His creation.

Now the word “will” here describes one's desire (i.e. what they want). So we can see that we exist and were created because God wanted us here. He wanted you! He wanted me! He desired us to be here! And He didn't do this for selfish reasons. He didn't do it because He felt some responsibility as our Creator.

Now that is something that we need to reflect on because there are many people on this planet, even believers, who have not understood the fact that God actually created them

just the way they are because He likes them this way. So if this is you – if you are one of those who looks at yourself in the mirror and despises the way you look, the way you act or simply the way you are, look again! God created you because He wanted you here, just the way you are! You are valuable to His purpose and you are a part of His plan! So no longer blaspheme by looking at yourself and calling yourself “fat, stupid, or weak.” Rather, look at yourself and say, “I exist and was created for His pleasure! God wanted me here! I have a purpose! God has a good plan for me!” Amen!

Colossians 1:16 says, *“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.”*

So not only were we created because God wanted to create us, we were created for Him. This means that we were created totally for Him – that is, we are here for His purpose and His plan.

So the answer to that question of “What is my purpose?” is – our purpose is for His purpose. Yes, the simple answer to that question – “Why are we here? (And) What is the meaning of life?” is we are here because He wanted us here and our purpose is for Him.

But I want us to begin this week talking specifically about this because while most Christians would agree with what I just said, the confusion is in what our “purpose” looks like. Most think that His purpose for us is just simply to serve Him, but that is not completely true. Yes, serving Him and doing things for Him is important, but it’s not the main thing we were created for.

OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE AND CALLING

Yes, what we do for God is not the most needful part of our calling. Our relationship with Him is the most important part of our calling.

You see, contrary to popular opinion in many circles of Christendom, we were not primarily created so that we can evangelize the world. Someone might argue, “How can you say that? Winning the lost is our primary objective as children of God!” I can say that because when God created mankind in the beginning, there was no evangelism necessary. In other words, there were no lost people that Adam & Eve needed to win for the Lord. Therefore, I can assure you that God’s intention for creating us to begin with was not for the purpose of personal evangelism.

Now I am not downplaying the importance of witnessing, missions, and personal evangelism. These are important responsibilities we have as ambassadors for Christ, but what I want you to understand is that there is something more important than these services you perform for Him – and that something is personal relationship with Him.

Saints, this is why God created us in the beginning! We were created so that we could intimately know the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! And now our role is to, first of all,

have a personal relationship with God ourselves and then to introduce others into this same relationship with God.

You see, God created Adam & Eve because He wanted a family that He could have a personal relationship with. He wanted children created in His likeness and image to walk and talk with in the cool of the day. This is all He originally wanted of man – to have a personal relationship with Him. And if that was the original reason man was created, then we can be sure that this is God’s perfect will for us today.

Therefore, winning the lost is not the primary purpose of our salvation. But somebody else might say, “What about our individual callings? To fulfill what He has called us to do has to be God’s primary purpose for us, right?”

Well, did you know that God has called each and every one of us into the same calling? Sure, we all have specific gifts, talents and abilities given to us that are unique and specific, but we all are ultimately called into the same thing, and that general calling is to come into fellowship with Jesus Christ, our Lord!

The apostle Paul makes this clear in **First Corinthians 1:9** when he says. *“God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

What this verse is saying is that God Himself has called each of us for one specific and primary purpose, and that is to come into fellowship with Jesus. This means that above everything else God has called each of us to do to promote and expand His kingdom, He has called every one of us to fulfill this general calling first. This is important to understand lest we identify what we do for the Lord as being our relationship with Him.

Let me explain what I mean by this: a tendency that the flesh has is to let what it does for the Lord define its relationship with Him. We have to be careful not to do this because our works are in no way an indication that we have fellowship with Christ. While certainly our service and good works will follow our relationship with God, these works can also be done apart from knowing Him. You cannot know God without serving Him, but you can serve God without knowing Him.

So although we ought to strive to live for God and serve Him, we do not need to view what we do for Him as being our most important calling. Our relationship with God is our most important calling!

THE LIFE OF GOD

So if our relationship and fellowship with God is our primary purpose and calling, then it should not surprise us to see so many of God’s people living unsatisfied, discontent, and unfulfilled lives.

You do understand that there are countless people who have lived on this earth and never discovered God’s plan and purpose for their life, right? They live and die, never

understanding the meaning of life and certainly never experience the quality of life that is available for them. This is a grave shame.

And the truth is that the vast majority of them never understand the purpose of their life because they never come to know “Life” Himself – the Lord Jesus Christ. Life will most certainly be void of purpose and meaning if one does not receive Jesus into their life because He is eternal life and life is found nowhere else besides Him (John 11:25 & 14:6).

I like to use the analogy of a puzzle: Imagine that every person is made up of a puzzle. You have the outline of their body, and the interior is made up of many different pieces of a puzzle. This outline of the body is symbolic of their life – many of the pieces that are in place make up who they are, what they like and dislike, what their desires are, etc. Well, there is one big piece of this puzzle that is missing in the middle of every person – where our heart is – and Jesus is the only One who can fit into that void place. People try and fit everything else into that spot from other relationships, hobbies, drugs, alcohol, etc. but the only person or thing who can fill that void in their heart is Christ Himself.

Now it is easy for us to understand how a lost person can never experience a fulfilling life because they have never begun to taste salvation. But did you know that many Christians who have been legitimately born again never experience the abundant life that Jesus died to provide for them either? Sure, they have been saved, but they never discover their salvation’s purpose. This results in them failing to discover the true life of God. They simply continue to live life as they always have and never experience the walk with God that is available to them. This is an utter shame because there is more to Christianity than merely existing on this earth until we die and go to heaven.

You see, there is a big difference between what we consider “living” and what God considers “living.” In other words, there is a difference between living the life of God and just simply experiencing the life of man. When man speaks of “living”, they are referring to simply existing, but when God refers to “living”, it means so much more than merely existing!

To have life, according to God’s standards, is to experience a higher quality of life than most people ever experience. It is to have a full and satisfied heart to where we experience a peace and joy that transcends human understanding. It is experiencing a quality of life physically, where the Holy Spirit has quickened our senses and charged our body with His resurrection power. The life God intends for His children is one where we prosper in our souls, bodies, and in every other area of life (Third John 2). Therefore, the God-kind of life is a life that is supernaturally enhanced – both spiritually and naturally. This is the life available for all of God’s children and the life God wills that we all experience.

However, many Christians do not embrace this truth. They do not see the Christian life this way, but deep down believe that we are no different than the lost and dying world that we live in. Sure, they believe that a Christian will experience eternal life, but they think that it is only experienced after we die. In the meantime, we are just sinners saved by grace, living not much different than the other lost sinners in the world.

However, the truth is that we are not just little sinners who are saved by grace – doomed to live like the lost and dying world that we were saved from. We have been given an abundance of grace in this life, not just enough grace to get us into heaven! We are now kings and priests – clothed in Christ’s very own righteousness! Therefore, through Christ, we ought to reign in the God-kind of life right now (See Romans 5:17)! Thank you Jesus!

So let’s now look at this life of God that Jesus died to provide for us in more detail in order to learn more specifically what it is and how to experience it.

ETERNAL LIFE

If you were to ask many Christians what their favorite Bible verse is, probably the most common answer would be John 3:16. The reason this would likely be the favorite verse of the majority of Christians is because this verse perfectly illustrates the gospel message of God’s unconditional love and of His amazing grace. But even with as much time and energy that has been spent reading and studying this powerful verse, there is a major point that Jesus made in it that is not understood in many circles of Christendom. Let me explain.

Many only read John 3:16 from the perspective that God has saved us from something – namely, perishing in hell and eternal death. This truth that Jesus came to save us from an eternity of being separated from God has been emphasized time and time again through this verse. And while this is most definitely true and an important part of our salvation (for being “saved” is being delivered from eternal death), this is not all that is entailed in our salvation. You see, God did not just save us from something; He saved us unto something! And Jesus reveals what He saved us for in this classic verse. So let’s take a look at it...

John 3:16 reads – *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes on Him would not perish but have eternal life.”*

First of all, notice that this verse begins by talking about how much God loved the world. Friends, this is a good time for a commercial here- because I believe one thing that is the most detrimental thing to having a good, healthy relationship with God is the misconception to who God is.

You see, so many view God has a harsh, judgmental God who is out to get them and is only focused on their sins, faults and shortcomings, but this is simply not the truth. This verse says that God so loved the world, not just loved His people. No, He loved the world! This is the ungodly! The sinner! Those who were lost and without God in the world! And then this verse didn’t just say that He loved the world; it says that He so loved them! Amen!

“So” let me ask you a question: if God so loved the world, then how do you think He loves His church? I would answer that question this way: God so loves the world, but God so-so loves His church! Amen!

But my point is what so many fail to realize is that this verse not only shows us what God has done for us, but it also reveals to us God's purpose for our lives. In other words, John 3:16 provides us with more than just what God did for us; it also shows us what God did all of it for- revealing the purpose of our salvation.

Most read this verse and act like it ends with the word "perish." They seem to only acknowledge that God sent Jesus to save us from perishing for all eternity. Just like so many just stop at this point of the verse, this is as far as some get in their revelation of God's purpose in sending Jesus.

But no, finish the verse saints! Don't get stuck on that same old verse and dance; get to the chorus! The chorus to this beautiful love song says, "but have eternal life."

So "eternal life" is what God saved us unto and the purpose of our salvation! Again, this verse says that God sent His Son not only for the purpose of saving us from perishing, but that we would have "eternal life." God's redemptive plan involved more than just delivering us from eternal death; it also involved delivering us into eternal life!

So here is the big question then: What is eternal life? Is it, as it initially sounds, to "live forever"? It could not mean to just simply live forever because, I have news for you: as it pertains to eternity, everyone is going to "live forever." Some will spend eternity in heaven, and the others will spend eternity in hell, and our eternal destination is determined by whether we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior or not.

You see, contrary to popular belief, eternal life begins now, not when we die. Jesus said that we now possess eternal life (John 5:24 & 6:27). In other words, the invitation into eternal life begins the moment we put our faith in Him. Therefore, the gift of eternal life is something that is immediately available to all born again believers.

KNOWING GOD

So if eternal life is not what it seems like just from the casual glance as just beginning after we die and go to heaven, then what is it? We need to find out the answer to this question so that we do not miss any of the privileges and benefits of our salvation.

Jesus gave us the answer to this mystery in **John 17:3** ... He said, *"And this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."*

So eternal life is indeed more than what it seems on the surface! Eternal life is knowing God the Father and knowing God the Son! Now this makes the truth that we now possess eternal life easier to understand, doesn't it? We now have eternal life because we now have the glorious opportunity to know God! Hallelujah!

Now when this verse says that eternal life is to "know" God, it is important to note that Jesus was not referring to knowing about God or to just having some intellectual information about Him.

You see, it is easy for us to say that we “know” someone, but do we really “know” them? For example, if someone asked us if we knew Billy Graham or some other famous person, we would likely say that we do, but does this mean that we really know them? The answer is no. We might know about them or know of them, but this does not mean that we really know them like Jesus was referring to here. You see, there is a difference between how we use the word “know” in today’s language and how the Bible uses this word “know.”

The word “know” here in John 17:3 means to know experientially and intimately. For example, this word “know” was used this same way in **Genesis 4:1** to describe how Adam “knew” his wife Eve, which was meant to describe the intimacy in their relationship. So we can see from this example that when the Bible uses the word “know” it means much more than having head knowledge; it means to have an experiential knowledge! And from this example in Genesis, we can see that it means having a close, intimate knowledge of another individual similarly to what you would have when you have a personal relationship with them.

So I submit to you that eternal life – which is “knowing” our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus – describes having a personal relationship with God. It is having a close relationship with God as a parent and child or a husband and wife would have with one another! Eternal life is having a knowledge of God that goes beyond just being acquainted with Him or vaguely knowing about Him. Eternal life is knowing God on a personal level and having a personal and intimate relationship with the Godhead! Thank you Jesus!

RELIGION VERSUS RELATIONSHIP

What a wonderful opportunity we have to be called into an eternal, personal relationship with our Creator! He desires this from all of His children! He wants us to desire to know Him and to develop this close, intimate, and personal relationship with Him! He desires a relationship, not a religion!

You see, this is the big difference between Christianity and the other religions from around the world. These other religions consist of an unreachable and unknowable god. Generally, these other religions worship a god who is in the form of an idol. These are gods made with hands, according to the imaginations of men.

But, thank God, Christianity is not like this! We do not serve a god who cannot speak, hear, or see; we serve the Living God – the One who hears every word we say and loves to hear from us! We are in covenant with the One True God who wants to communicate back with us! We do not have to go to a building or some sacred place in order to communicate with Him. We are His sacred place! He is with us everywhere we go because we are His temple and He dwells within us. Therefore, we can walk with God just as Adam and Eve did because He will never leave us nor forsake us. Thank You Jesus!

You see, we must understand that Christianity is not a religion; it is a relationship! Religion is man’s desperate attempt to approach God, but Christianity is God’s successful act of

coming to where we are. He did what we could not do through the weakness of our flesh and made possible a personal relationship with Him. Praise the Lord!

This is a far cry from what religion has to offer. Religion is a distant, non-relational acquaintance between a creator and the creation, but Christianity is not so... It is a beautiful, one-on-one relationship between Almighty God and those who are created in His likeness and image. Christianity is personal and it is intimate. It is a close relationship and an intimate fellowship between God and us.

A LIFE LIKE NO OTHER

The great news is that when we fulfill our primary purpose, which is knowing God, it produces the ability to live our life for God.

You see, as we have briefly touched on already, this is one of the greatest benefits to walking in close fellowship with the Lord: the quality of life that it produces. When we develop this relationship with God the result is us experiencing the God-kind of life. This is why it is called eternal life!

You see, there is life found in knowing God! If we live our life apart from knowing “Life” Himself, our life will not differ much at all from everyone else’s life in the world. But if we enter into this eternal life that is available, we are entering into a quality of life that few ever experience.

Jesus briefly described this life that He offers in **John 10:10** ... In this verse, He says: “... *I have come that you may have life and life more abundantly.*”

You see, as we have seen through John 3:16, God the Father sent His Son, Jesus, that we might have eternal life. Jesus reiterated that here when He said, “I have come that you might have life ...” But Jesus takes it another step further when He says, “... and (that you may have) life more abundantly.”

You can live your life the way the rest of the world does, and I can guarantee you that you will not experience the abundant life that Jesus died to provide for you. You can even live a good Christian life of serving God and still not experience the fullness of life that Jesus has made available. In order for a believer to experience life more abundantly, we must develop this personal relationship with God that I have described. Let me put it this way: the only way that you will experience the abundant life of Christ is to experience eternal life with Christ. There is no other way to obtain this abundant, God-kind of life!

Personal relationship with God is the foundation to successful Christian living. Trying to live the Christian life apart from knowing God is like trying to build a large superstructure without ever laying a solid foundation. It just will not work! But, on the other hand, if our relationship with God is solid, then our life will be grounded, grand, and glorious!

So begin to develop this personal and intimate relationship with God today! Spend time fellowshiping with Him every day! I can give you an unconditional guarantee that if you practice these very things, you will begin to experience a life like no other! You will experience more peace, more joy, and more power! You will experience the abundant life of God! Amen!