

# TEXT STUDY 1

## The Meaning of Life: A Gift from God

**First Sunday: Life Is a Gift to Be Defended From Any Who Would Take It**  
*“My parents say they don’t want to be a burden. They want to die with dignity. Is that OK?”*

**Deuteronomy 32:39** <sup>39</sup> “See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.”

Context: Moses had led the people of Israel for 40 years. At 120 years old, he was handing the baton to one of the two oldest remaining men in Israel, Joshua. Having ordered Joshua to “Be strong and courageous” (Deuteronomy 31:7), Moses now recites a song to the people of Israel, reminding them of God’s greatness and mercy for them and their regular rebellion. He sings about God’s provision and His help in battle, and of their punishment that would come at the hands of their enemies. A large portion of the song is in the negative, because God had done all these things for them (making, redeeming, blessing) and they had forgotten Him. But now, as the song concludes, we have this beautiful reminder that God was still in control, and would rescue them from their enemies.

See all three parts in this song of Moses:

- God gave the Israelites life when they were nothing, making them a great nation.
- God had compassion on them when they strayed.
- God promises that no one can deliver out of His hand.

### The Text:

!yaeîw> aWhê 'ynla] ynlÜa] yKiä hT'a[; YWaar> <sup>WTT</sup> Deuteronomy 32:39  
 !yaeîw> aP'êr>a, ynlâa]w: 'yTic.x;'m' hY<@x;a]w: tymiâa' ynlôa] ydl\_M'i ~yhiPl{a/  
 'lyCi(m; ydlPY"mi

<sup>NIV</sup> **Deuteronomy 32:39** “See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.”

<sup>KJV</sup> **Deuteronomy 32:39** “See now that I, *even I, am* he, and *there is* no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither *is there any* that can deliver out of my hand.”

<sup>ESV</sup> **Deuteronomy 32:39** “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.”

<sup>NAU</sup> **Deuteronomy 32:39** “See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand.”

### Translation Notes:

ynla] ynlüa - repeated for emphasis – I am the One...

~yhipl{a/ - the strong and mighty One, the One worthy of fear. Other things might seem like they have power and influence, but the truth is, there is no god, no power besides the LORD.

ydl\_M[- m[ with first sg. Suffix, basic meaning “with,” but here “except” or “besides” as in Psalm 73 and 2 Chronicles 14.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Psalm 73:25** Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire **besides you**.  
ʾ#r,a'(b' yTic.p;îx'-al{ ^aM.[iw>÷ylm"+V'b; yliî-yimi <sup>WTT</sup> Psalm 73:25  
 rAz[.l; ^ÜM.[i-lyae( hw"©hy>èrm;aYOW: éwyh'l{a/ hw"âhy>la, as'ø' ar"q.Ylw. <sup>WTT</sup> 2 Chronicles 14:10

<sup>NAU</sup> **2 Chronicles 14:11** Then Asa called to the LORD his God and said, "LORD, there is no one **besides You** to help."

tymiää' - twm Hifil Imperfect, first singular – cause to die. The imperfect tense is used for future, repeated and durative action. This is God’s thing. He is the One in control of this. He is the One who causes death.

hY<©x;a]w: - hyx Piel imperfect, first singular – *let live, preserve alive, give life*; Again the imperfect marks this as what God does, will do and continues to do. He is in charge of life and death.

yTic.x;'m' - #xm Qal perfect, first singular – *shatter, smite, wound severely* – Perfect tense is a switch from the two previous verbs. Some (KJV, ESV, etc.) translate it as the general truth using the same pattern with the imperfects around it (*I put to death and I bring life, I wound and I heal*). I prefer noticing the difference in tense (NIV, NASB, etc.) and see God telling his people that He is the One who “has wounded” and then he switches back to the imperfect, “...and I will heal.” The general truths are true, but minding the differences in the tenses, it seems to personalize it more for the hearer. “Yes, I have allowed those problems to come. And yes, I will bring relief.”

ynläa]w: - All of these verbs are first person singulars, but here He repeats the pronoun to emphasize who is doing it. And the emphasis comes as He is giving us the most beautiful thing He does...

aP'êr>a, - apr Qal Imperfect, first singular – *heal* – I am reminded by the word the Holy Spirit selected here of the promise in Malachi 4, that the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing (aPer>m;) in His wings. And we will leap like calves released from the stall.

The healing that our Savior brings is something that affects us powerfully and will affect us eternally. He would help the Israelites time and again, and His mercy and healing covers us completely.

Illustration: The new seminary graduate, who had gone to seminary after more than two decades of farming, was asked how it felt on Call Day, shortly after having been assigned to his new church. His answer: "I feel like when a cow just gave birth to a new calf...and that calf is just leaping and kicking around."

lyCi(m; ydlPY"mi lyaeiw> - *and there is not from MY hand a snatching away.* Lcn – Hifil participle – *snatch away, deliver.* He is the One who heals and protects and no one and no thing can get us away from the protection and peace in our loving God's hands (not even death or life, wounding or healing).

Consider Paul's words to the Romans: **Romans 8:38,39** <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

#### **Other Relevant Passages:**

Context - **Deuteronomy 32:6** <sup>6</sup> Is this the way you repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?

**Deuteronomy 32:9-11** <sup>9</sup> For the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance. <sup>10</sup> In a desert land he found him, in a barren and howling waste. He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye, <sup>11</sup> like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions.

**Lamentations 3:37,8** <sup>37</sup> Who can speak and have it happen if the Lord has not decreed it? <sup>38</sup> Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both calamities and good things come?

**1 Peter 1:18,19** <sup>18</sup> For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

**1 Corinthians 10:13** <sup>13</sup> No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

**Genesis 9:6** <sup>6</sup> Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

**Psalms 41:1** Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the LORD delivers him in times of trouble.

**Text Thoughts:**

Malady – Thinking we should be in control of life.

Telic note – God is in control of our lives (and our deaths) for our good.

Specific Law – “There is no god beside me.” We do not have the right or authority to think that we should control what God so clearly states is His domain.

Specific Gospel – God brings to life, He heals; no one can take us out of His hands.

**Preaching Thoughts on Life Sunday:**

“What about removing the feeding tube?”

“Shouldn’t people be able to make their own decisions on when to die?” “Is it wrong to want to die?”

Quality of life vs. sanctity of life, death with dignity, relieve the burden “Should I pull the plug?”

“Can I let them die with dignity?”

*Think of the feeding tube issue – it is legal to starve someone to death. Think of our attitude – it must be based on the desire to glorify God above everything else.*

**Outline Thoughts:**

Life is a gift –

Given by God Purchased by

Jesus Protected

My Life is the LORD’s

I. It’s a First Commandment Thing\*

II. It’s a Common Sense Thing\*

\* Substitute the word “Issue” if you prefer more formal sounding parts

**Introduction idea–**

“Death with dignity” movement. There is no such thing as death with dignity.

Introduce series: For the next three weeks we’ll be talking about how we view our life, specifically dealing with the topic of death. And I know, we just don’t like thinking about death, but it is one of the most certain facts of life. And the way we handle our own death or the death of a loved one affects so intensely our own lives and the lives of those we care about. In fact, it could even affect those lives for all eternity. So thinking about our death and understanding that my life is the LORD’s, that is vital.

My Life is the LORD’s

I. It’s a First Commandment issue (you’d think Fifth Commandment) – but people were thinking they’d handle it their way – like we do when suddenness of death decisions arise.

II. It's a common sense issue – he made, redeemed and guides – of course, He gets to make the call – and things will be so much better.

He gave you life.  
He purchased your life. He  
controls life.

**Terms:**

**Euthanasia** – From the Greek, meaning “good death.” It is a term that has been used to describe “mercy killing.”

**Physician Assisted Suicide** – **An act in which** a physician intentionally provides the means to kill a patient, usually with an overdose of prescription medication.

**Active Euthanasia** – **An act in which** a physician actively kills the patient, usually by lethal injection.

**Some websites with helpful information:**

Christian Life Resources: [www.christianliferesources.com](http://www.christianliferesources.com)

Oregon's reporting of death with dignity stats: <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/pas/>

Oregon's annual stats and lots of additional information:  
<http://www.internationaltaskforce.org/sptlt2.htm>

Nightingale Alliance: [www.nightingalealliance.org/cgi-bin/home.pl?section=3](http://www.nightingalealliance.org/cgi-bin/home.pl?section=3)

Compassionate Healthcare Network:  
<http://www.chninternational.com/Gunning%202006.html>