

SERVICE PLAN 3
The Meaning of Life: A Gift from God
Third Sunday: Life Is a Gift to Be Used to God's Glory
"Why am I still here? Why won't God just let me go home?"

For the past two weeks, we've been discussing how to handle death as Christians. Today God's Word directs our focus to how to handle the life we have before we die as Christians.

Service Plan:

Hymn Suggestions: CW 452 – *Let Us Ever Walk With Jesus*

CW 446 – *I Am Trusting You, Lord Jesus*

CW 457 – *Fight the Good Fight*

CW 399 – *To God Be the Glory*

CW 469 – *Take My Life and Let It Be*

Opening Hymn: CW 452 – *Let Us Ever Walk With Jesus*

Invocation:

P: In the name of the Father

C: Who gave us life.

P: In the name of the Son (+)

C: Who purchased our life with His blood.

P: In the name of the Holy Spirit

C: Who makes new life ours through faith. Amen.

The Confession and Absolution:

P: As we consider the gift of life that is ours this Sunday, God brings us to the realization that our sins, in fact, deserve death. But our God is a merciful God who wants to declare all of our sins forgiven and give us new life. Therefore let us confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to grant us forgiveness.

C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed You in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve Your punishment, both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

P: God our heavenly Father has been merciful to us and has given His only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Jesus came to pay for your sins and buy your life back with His holy precious blood and His innocent sufferings and death. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ, and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord

Gloria suggestion:

Glory to God by David Haas, GIA Publications, G-3109 Melodic

Gloria by James Chepponis, GIA Publications, G-2955 CW, Hymns

262-264

The First Lesson: Isaiah 45:9-12

(Introduction Ideas) In determining the timing and method of our deaths, God's purpose and will are perfect. It is not our position to second guess His decisions, but to thank Him for them and use what time He has given us so that we might bring Him glory.

Isaiah 45:9-12 “Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you making?’ Does your work say, ‘He has no hands?’ Woe to him who says to his father, ‘What have you begotten?’ or to his mother, ‘What have you brought to birth?’ “This is what the LORD says-- the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker: Concerning things to come, do you question me about my children, or give me orders about the work of my hands? It is I who made the earth and created mankind upon it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshaled their starry hosts.

The Psalm of the Day - Psalm 90, pg. 99 CW

The Second Lesson: 2 Corinthians 1:3-12

(Introduction Ideas) God uses our lives and our troubles for many reasons – to give us opportunities to give and receive comfort, to give us our brothers and sisters opportunities and reasons to pray, and, ultimately, to build up God’s Church on earth.

2 Corinthians 1:3-12 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort. We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many. Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace.

The Verse of the Day: Alleluia. Alleluia. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. Alleluia.
(Romans 14:8)

The Gospel Lesson: Matthew 25:35-40

(Introduction Ideas) In our Gospel lesson, Jesus reminds us that the works we do for others and the things others do for us are really done to and for Him.

Matthew 25:35-40 “ ‘For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’
 “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’
 “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’ ”

Hymn of the Day: 469 – *Take My Life and Let It Be*

Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 10:31

Sermon Theme: Understand Your Purpose – the Glory of God

- I. Let It Shine in Your View of Death
- II. Let It Shine in Your Use of Life

The Confession of Faith: *As our confession of faith on this Life Celebration Sunday, we use the words of Martin Luther’s Explanation to the First and Second Articles to confess God as the Giver and Purchaser of our lives.*

I believe that God created me and all that exists, and that he gave me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my mind and all my abilities.

And I believe that God still preserves me by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink , property and home, spouse and children, land, cattle, and all I own, and all I need to keep my body and life. God also preserves me by defending me against all danger, guarding and protecting me from all evil. All this God does only because he is my good and merciful Father in heaven, and not because I have earned or deserved it. For all this I ought to thank and praise, to serve and obey him.

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord. He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death.

All this he did that I should be his own, and live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally.

This is most certainly true.

The Prayer of the Church

P: LORD God, heavenly Father, You are the Giver of life and the One who controls life, death and everything in between. We glorify You and thank You for the gift of life You have given to each of us. We ask that You be with us as we go about our lives and help us to remember that our times are in Your hands and You control it all for our good. Teach us to number our days aright that we may gain a heart of wisdom. Lord, in Your mercy...

C: Hear our prayer.

P: Forgive us, Savior of all, for the times when we live our lives for our own glory. Give us the strength, Lord of life, to give You glory with all we do. Lord, in Your mercy...

C: Hear our prayer.

P: God who wounds and God who heals, we don't always understand why You do what you do but help us to accept it as it truly is – good. Now we ask that You would be with all those who are faced with difficult decisions about their health. Comfort them with Your promises and keep those promises, that not even questions of life and death can pluck them out of Your hands. Lord, in Your mercy...

C: Hear our prayer.

P: We especially ask that You would be with those who cannot help themselves because of their weakness or disease. Allow them the peace of knowing that You will do with them exactly as You wish according to their good, and strengthen their families to be able to say with confidence: My life is the LORD's. Lord, in Your mercy...

C: Hear our prayer.

At this point specific prayers for local issues may be highlighted

P: Now hear us, LORD, as we bring You our private petitions.

P: In Jesus' name, we pray all these things, in whose name we also pray:

C: Our Father... THE LORD'S PRAYER

Closing Hymn: 457 – *Fight the Good Fight*

Or - Nunc Dimittis – (Consider version in CW – Occasional Services, Prayer at the Close of Day II)