

THE SUPERLATIVE LIFE

Perhaps you have seen the sign, “He who dies with the most toys wins.” This philosophy is akin to the statement, “The difference between men and boys is the price of their toys.” This sadly depicts a culture caught up in non-essentials. We sometimes think of our culture as unique, yet in every age there is the temptation to live with values upside down and priorities misaligned. Solomon had it right when he said, “The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9). In our message today we observe our Lord criticizes the world’s worried view of things and closes off His comments on the cure from the worry of the world. Christ promises us in this passage of Scripture the superlative life. Superlative is defined as an expression of the highest, unparalleled, consummate and preeminent quality of a person, place or thing. In this sermon we are talking about life at its zenith.

Our Lord promises us:

1. Freedom From the Wish to Survive

Jesus said, “Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?” (Matthew 6:25). It is so easy to worry about the basic needs of life. Even in our comfortable environment here in the United States, there can be a temptation to worry about our sustenance. I have met people with master’s and doctorate degrees from major universities, who have trained to be proficient in their chosen field. Many start out with the promise of a comfortable living and subsequently buy houses, cars and other things in prospect of their future income and then overnight that income is gone. Many a broken hearted person out of a job wonders, “How am I going to eat?” For all time, those who know God should not worry about this basic need, for the Lord has said, in Psalm 37:25, “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”

We all love living within our comfort zone. One of the zones of comfort is possessing a surplus so that you may have something to fall back on, a “nest egg” if you please. We often live just beyond our nest egg. This is reflective in Luke 20:46, when Jesus said, “Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes,

and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts.” In Mark 12:41-44, Jesus examines who gives, how they give and how much is left over after they give. In this story of the widow’s mite we find the ideal attitude one should have of money. The widow knew everything she had belonged to God. She knew it was God’s desire and God’s duty to look after her. She also knew that total dependence on God obligated God to meet her every need.

2. Freedom From the Fear of the Future

Jesus said in Matthew 6:26 and 27, “ Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? A few years ago, the Telegraph, UK’s newspaper, posed this question: “What made Adolf Merckle, German billionaire commit suicide?” Their answer: “To casual observers, it appeared that the 74-year-old businessman had committed suicide because he was unable to cope with losing the sort of riches the rest of us can only dream of.” Hard to believe that a man who was worth 12.5 billion dollars at the time of his death was worried about his future. This reminds me of the answer that Henry Ford gave when asked, “How much money would it take to make you happy?” He answered, “Just a little more.” We want security. We want security in our finances and we want security in our health. When Jesus said, “Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?” He was not referring to the length of time we live rather than our height. In other words, our worry over how long we are going to live will not increase our years on this earth.

In the oldest book in the Bible Job said, “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass” (Job 14:1, 2 and 5). The Bible teaches us in Hebrews 9:27, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” Psalm 17:14 and 15 says, “From men which are thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” The word “portion” means allotment. God has allotted us our time on earth. Since God has given us a certain time on earth, we should therefore follow the admonition of I Peter 3:10-12, to “...love life, and see good days....” According to this passage we will see the best life on earth by speaking righteously, hating evil, following the course of peace and living in such a way that reflects the fact that you know God is watching.

3. Freedom From the Bondage of Worry

Matthew 6:28-34. In this passage of Scripture we learn from the Lord Jesus that even Solomon in all his glory could not compare to the regal splendor of the most humble, yet beautiful display of God's creation. The point Jesus makes is if God cares for the little things in life, how much more will He care for you and me. The Lord therefore gives the command, in Matthew 6:31 not to worry about your food, drink or clothing because He said your Heavenly Father knows that ye have need of all these things. At this point, the Lord establishes a goal for us with one of the most famous verses in the Bible, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). When we arrange our priorities aright, God lines everything up in our life to go well when we seek Him and His will. The Bible promises, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:6).

Jesus said in Matthew 6:34, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." What our Lord is saying is, don't worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow has enough evil things that will happen. When we worry we are adding to tomorrow's evil by committing the sin of worry. Paul addressed this in Philippians 4:6 and 7 when he commanded, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Conclusion:

Consider God's sovereign control over life and the favor He bestows upon those who seek Him first!

Psalm 75:6, 7: "For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another."

Deuteronomy 8:18: "But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day."

Colossians 3:1-4: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

Psalm 5:12: "For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield."

Putting Jesus first grants us the superlative life!

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