



SS 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King's Kids.

News:

Wednesday Evening Classes 6:30-8:00
Church Workday Saturday, April 29th

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

Visit the website ~ www.myaletheia.com

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Emails: pastor@myaletheia.com, stacey.sundt@myaletheia.com

This life is endured in four basic ways:

- 1) By not thinking...
- 2) By creating a comforting narrative...
- 3) By adopting someone else's comforting narrative...
- 4) By embracing nihilistic fatalism...

That's absent Truth. What is Truth?

_____ are reality...

_____ is a comprehensive understanding of the way things are...

If there is a Creator of all things, His Truth would actually be the Truth.

That's why _____ said, "I AM the Truth."

So, there is a fifth option, and it is the only option that can possibly make an _____ difference.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

A Savior-God gives us hope for the _____, yes, but even more importantly, He gives this life and the next, _____...

If there is an eternal life to come, then this life is both _____ important and _____ important...

We Christians have mostly bought into that marketing pitch that makes it all about you and what you _____... (Ecclesiastes 12:13&14)

JOHN 12:20-26 ~

These verses constitute the setup and the first part of the three-part final public teaching of Jesus. There does come an _____ to all things...

The request of the Greeks was obviously important, but seemingly nothing is resolved. Jesus seemed to have _____ the whole thing, so why bring it up? The importance is in the _____, not in the players. It was their _____ itself that elicited Jesus' seemingly disconnected response.

As soon as Jesus heard it, He declared, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." Notice what the Jewish leaders had just said in their frustration, "You see that you are not accomplishing anything; look, the world has gone after Him!"

What does it mean it is time "to be glorified"? Glorify is δόξαζω (dō-xä-dzō). It's basically a considered _____. What someone thinks is praiseworthy...

Like Truth, there is what is glorious _____ because God recognizes it as such. There are also some things so obviously commendable that everyone, with any sense, agrees.

The single greatest praiseworthy act of all time is that Almighty God provided _____ in the way He did. Nothing comes close to the glory deserved for Christ's _____.

The seed, in essence, gives up its _____ in order to give life to many other seeds...

That's the difference between Galatians 5:19-21 and 5:22-24.

We are His, in order to be Him on earth to _____, as He directs. You want meaning in your life? You want true purpose? Yield to God and be a _____...

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

Name _____ Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____



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the gospel of

JOHN

ΕΝΑΡΧΗ Η ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΚΑΙ Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΗΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ
 ΘΝ ΚΑΙ ΘΕ ΤΗ ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΣΥ ΤΟΣ Η ΝΕΝΑΡΧΗ ΤΙΡΟΣ
 ΤΟ Ν ΘΗ ΠΑΝΤΑ ΔΙΑ ΤΟ ΥΕ ΓΕ Ν Ε Τ Ο ΚΑΧ Ο ΤΙ Ε



Last week we celebrated the most important event in the entire history of our physical reality - the bodily Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The event, more than all other events combined, that proved that He was the Messiah, that He was the Eternal Word, that He was God among us and that His sacrifice for the totality of our sins worked.



To start this morning, I want to take a foray into what may seem a bit deep and quite philosophical and what will certainly require more concentration than one would normally want to expend on a Sunday morning, but I wouldn't do it if I didn't think that it was worth pushing you.

This life we have here and now - this temporary physical existence we are currently experiencing has been, and is being, lived by billions of people who get through it, and they do that in four basic ways:



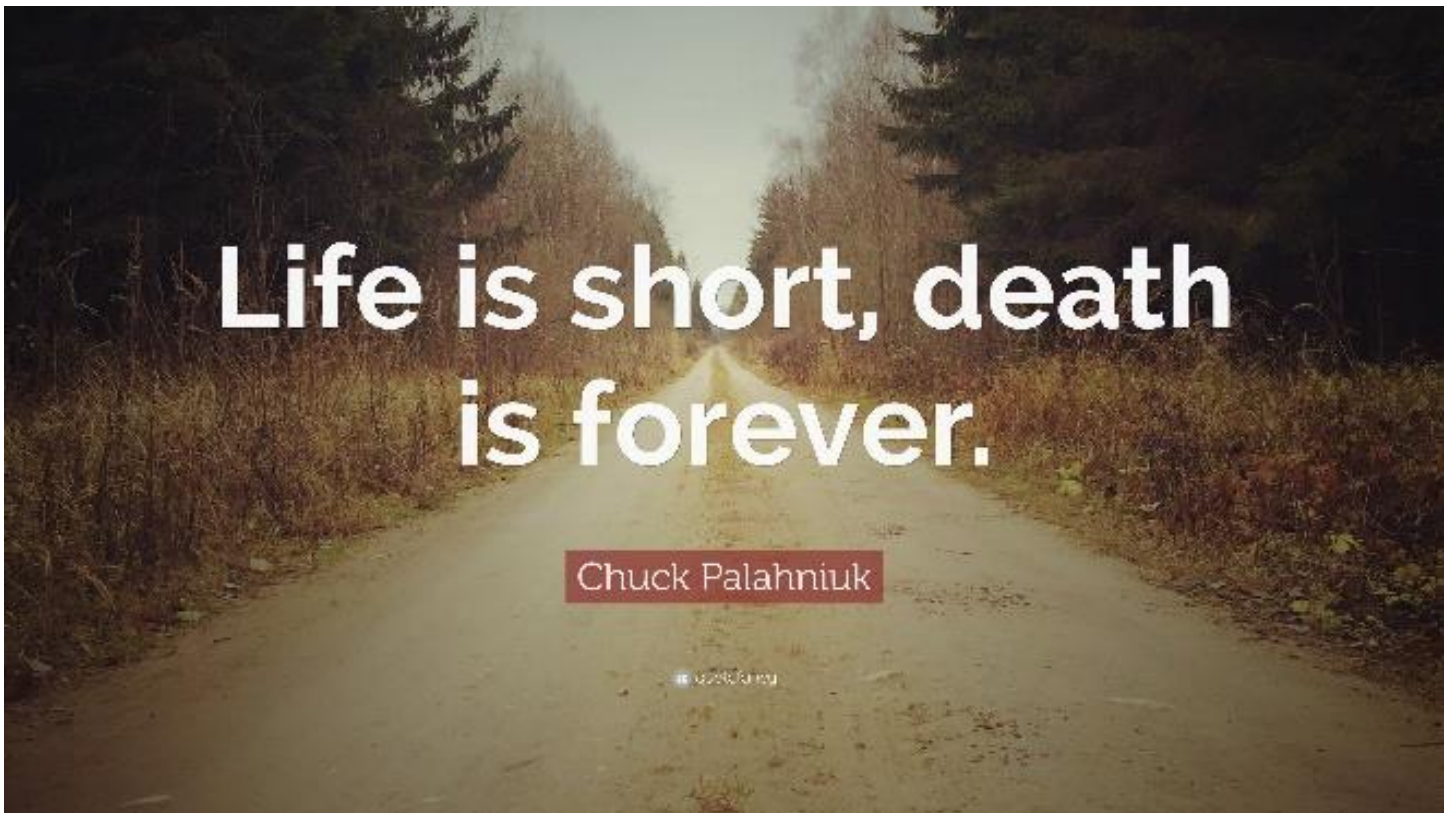
1) By not thinking about truly important things at all, which is what Socrates called, “living a life not worth living.” It’s ignorance. Remember ignorance is having a lack of information due to ignoring the information available, which is stupidity on purpose. Such a person is quite literally an ignoramus.



2) By personally creating some type of comforting narrative, usually by mixing together a lot of incoherent and contradictory beliefs, which is called being individualistically delusional, or naïvely idealistic, or as we used to say, being a hippy. It's creating your own religion.



3) Or by adopting someone else's comforting narrative, which is choosing an established religion rather than making your own. Science and other flavors of atheism can function as religions even though they should logically be in the final category. That's just evidence that people really do want some kind of hope.



4) By embracing a nihilistic fatalism, called meaninglessness. What's funny about that to me is it establishes meaning to life when it shouldn't. The idea is to live it up, because life is short, but nihilism should recognize that there is no more value in having fun, or being happy than there is in their opposites.

At the end of the day, or more to the point, at the end of your life, is there any difference between any of those various approaches? Absent some objective Truth with a capital "T," that is perfectly valid universally, the answer is no. The approach that serves a particular person best has to do with their temperament and

personality, more than anything else. Just get through life until you can't get through it anymore.



Absent Truth, I said. Well, what is Truth? Let's start with facts. Facts are reality. It is simply the way things are and there can be no debate about it. Unfortunately for us, we're not wise enough to know everything about anything, and so, we don't have enough facts to agree on more complex facts, and so, we actually debate what is not debatable. It's important to understand that the debate about facts is not about the facts themselves, they simply are, but it's about our flawed ability to interpret and correctly understand them.



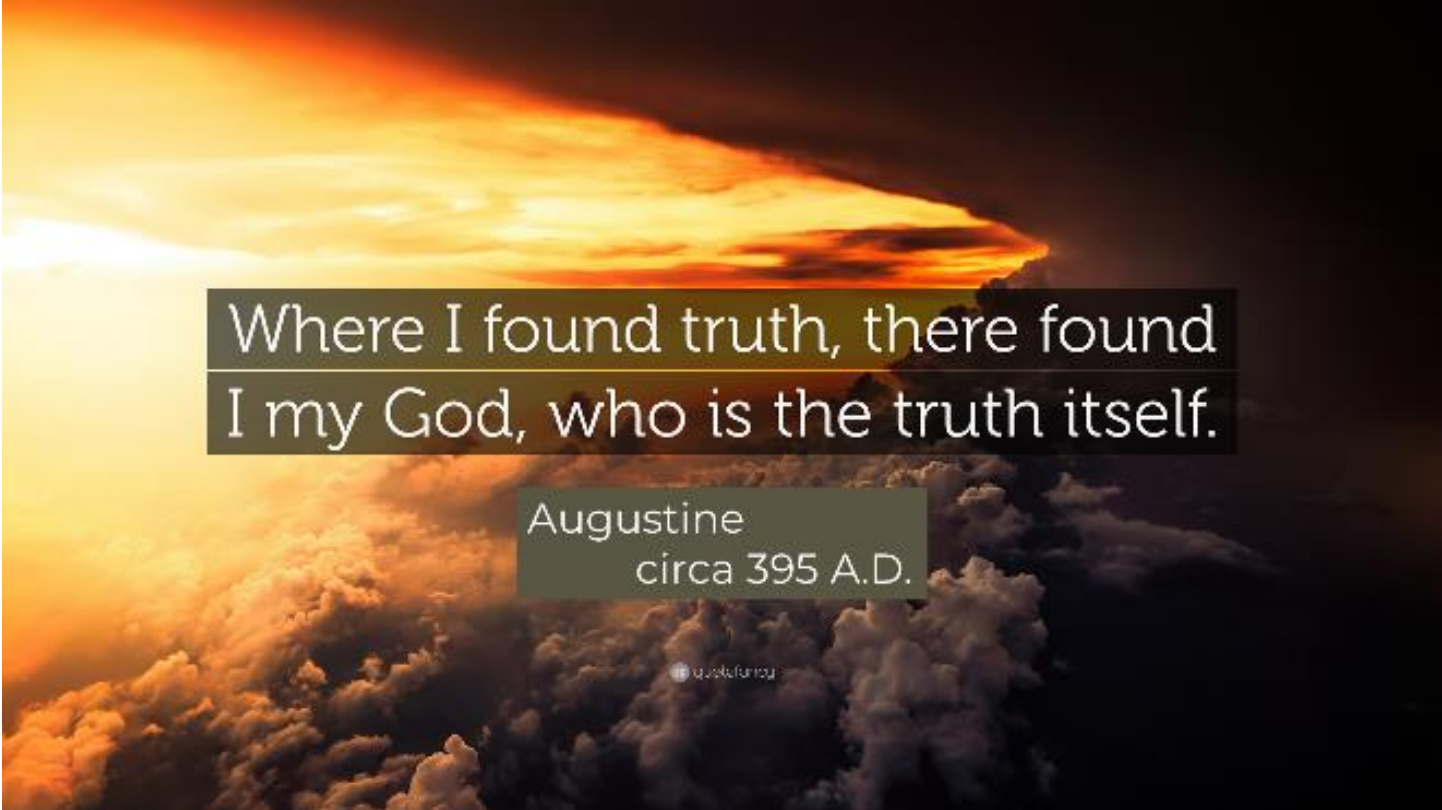
The situation is similar and worse for Truth. Truth is a comprehensive understanding of the way things are. Facts are a small subset of Truth. All Truth is factual, but far deeper than the facts it contains. In a way, the Truth is how someone sees reality... What they individually make of the world around them... It is the facts extrapolated out into meaning.

If we cannot know any of the truly complex facts, we certainly cannot know the Truth. This is why Truth has become subjective. It is the acknowledgement that we all see the world differently and it is, now get this, but also hang on, it is the purely reasonable and logically

correct recognition that each person therefore has their own Truth.

And that no one's Truth is any more valid than anyone else's Truth because Truth is therefore a purely subjective way to organize the facts as they are perceived and to extrapolate from them collectively, meaning.

We cannot even agree on most of the facts, so how could we ever agree on Truth? Like facts, our myriad dissonant truths would never alter what is actually Truth. The actual Truth would exist, it's just that we humans could never hope to discover it and so we fall back on subjective personal opinion as Truth.



Where I found truth, there found
I my God, who is the truth itself.

Augustine
circa 395 A.D.

Notice what we've done though... We've excluded God from our calculus. If there is a Creator of all things, Who holds all things together, Who literally knows every fact and Who knows all the causes and the effects of our physical reality from the first moment right through our future to the very end... His Truth would actually be the Truth. It would be perfect in every way and would give humans an escape from relying on subjective personal opinions. That is, if He shared Truth with us in some tangible way.

That's why Jesus said, "I AM the Truth." He tangibly came after 2,000 years of promises made through His prophets. He left us a tangible record of both those

ancient prophecies and of His teaching and ministry on earth and beyond. We are not left adrift to figure things out with our own imaginations - there is universal absolute objective Truth - and His name is Jesus!

Given that whereas the opposite of a fact can be a misunderstanding, miscalculation, or mistake, the opposite of Truth is a manufactured and embraced deception, swindle, or lie.

Taking that back to our earlier discussion we can see that there is a fifth option, and it is the only option that can possibly make an eternal difference. A person can yield to the One True God Who is the only One Who speaks perfect Truth as His Word is Truth.



What could be more important than an afterlife and what we can do to affect it from this life? What could give a person more hope in the trials and tribulations of this life than an assurance in the next?

An assurance not based on ignoring the future and expecting it to work out, not based on one's own smorgasbord application of nonsensical theories, not based upon corrupt institutional man-made religion, not based upon a pompous fatalism of human intellectualism, but a genuine hope based upon a Savior.

A Savior Who, as God made flesh, came, and lived, died, and lived again. A Savior Who is waiting on you. Waiting for you to be His entirely.

You see, such a Savior gives us hope for the future, yes, but even more importantly, such a Savior gives this life and the next... meaning. What is the point of your life? Why are you here, what are you supposed to do, what is your legacy, your future, your purpose?

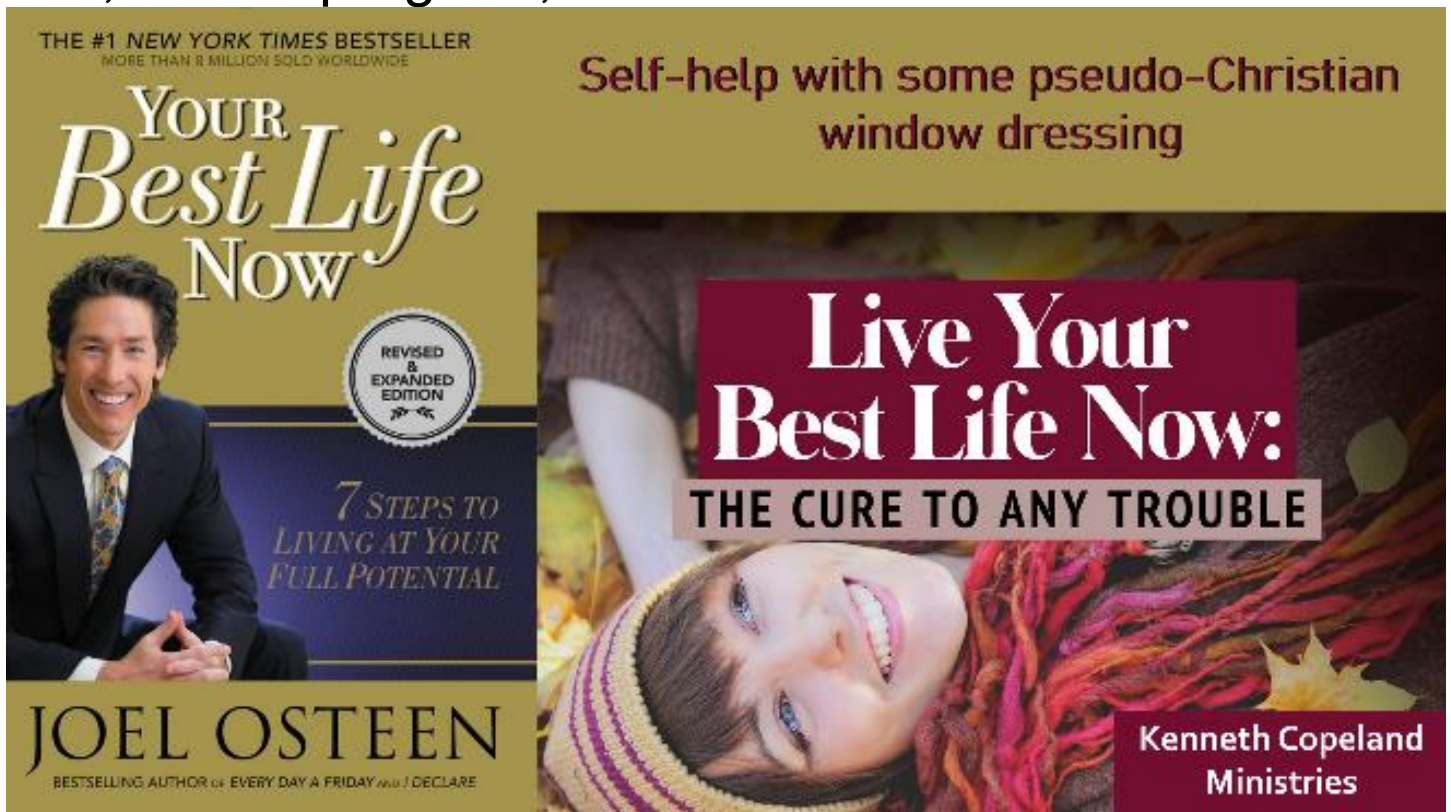
These are the really big questions, and this is what Socrates was on about when he said that “An unexamined life is not a life worth living.” He wasn’t just saying that non-thinkers lived a lesser life, he was saying that without a hope of an afterlife, based upon a grasp of deeper things, this life had no real meaning at all.

If there is an eternal life to come as Socrates thought and as Jesus established, then this life is both less important and more important, at the same time. Less important than the things that make it more important.

Think about that. This life is far less important than actually living it in accordance with the things that make it important. Even plainer than that, nothing in

this life matters more than the things in this life that affect the eternal life to come. Can you see both hope and purpose there?

Our culture says that it's all about finding the meaning of life, about reaching your potential, and realizing your purpose. It's all about living your best life, now. That's usually stated right before they try to sell you on a new diet, fitness program, or vacation.



We Christians have mostly bought into that marketing pitch - "You deserve a break today." Now we spend billions of dollars each year on every kind of treatment imaginable, every kind of supplement, every kind of - fill in the blank. We are focused on enjoying our

present life far more than we are on affecting the next life.

Our entire obligation is to fear God enough to Obey Him.

Ecclesiastes 12:13

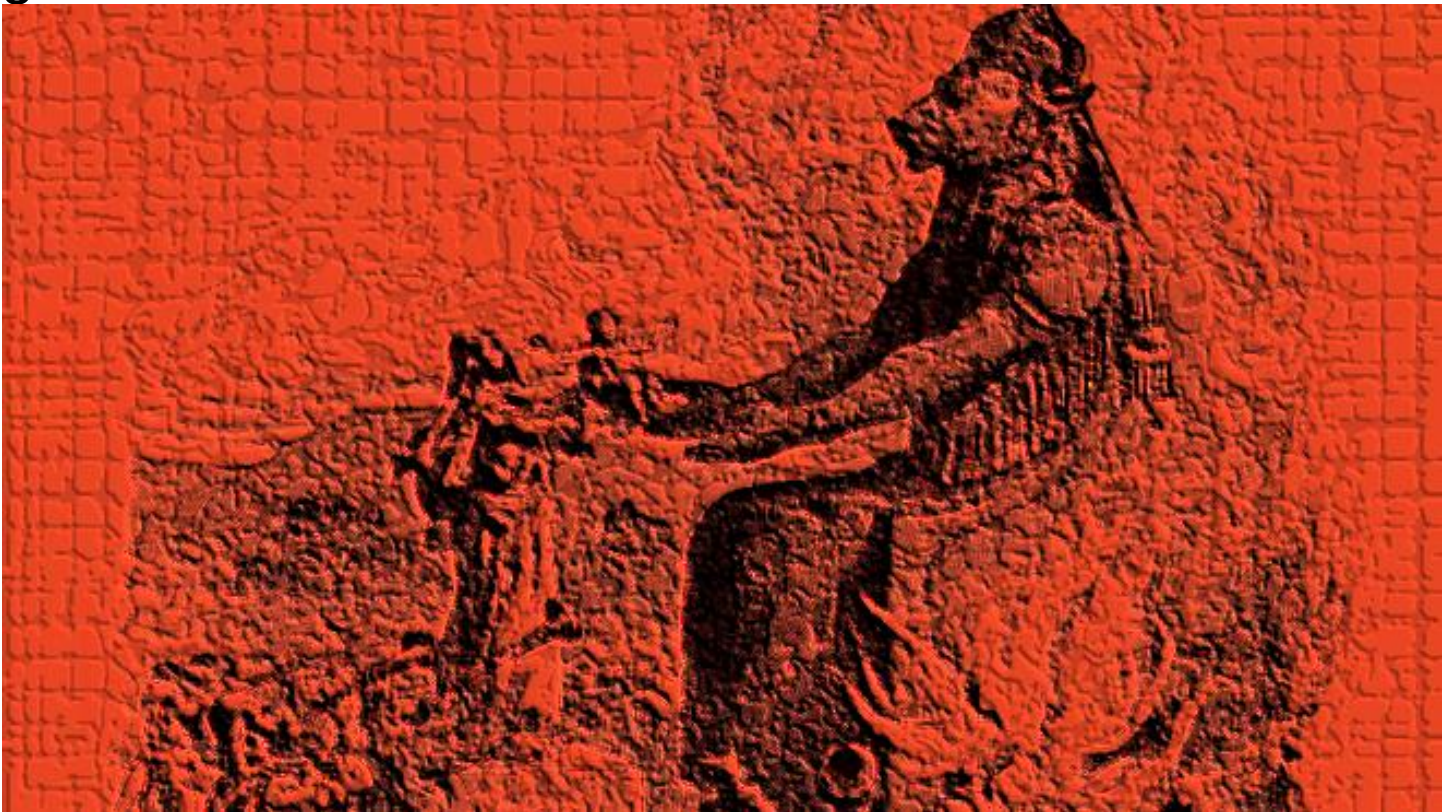


That's foolish, but more than that it is grasping at straws trying to find purpose where purpose can never be found because there is no purpose, no meaning outside of God. True purpose comes only from the Master and He has a purpose for you. A purpose for you today, tomorrow, and for however many tomorrows you may have left.

The wisest man to ever live wrote a Bible Book that is pessimistic at best. In that book he carefully examines all things and then at the end concludes that when everything is said and done, the only certainty in life is

that the whole duty of man is to fear God and keep His commands. Why? Well, because it's the right thing to do, but perhaps more convincing is the final line in that book, Ecclesiastes 12:14, "For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil." Like it or not, we'll all stand before a Holy God one day.

You want meaning and purpose? Be a vessel through whom the Lord Jesus Christ can operate. Be His, heart, mind, soul, and body. Keep nothing back, hold nothing in reserve. Pick up your cross every day and follow Jesus. When we make anything more important than doing that, we are actively worshipping other gods.



We worship Molech and Baal every time we care more about this life, than about doing with it, what Christ desires. You cannot have it both ways. Jesus said, “You cannot serve two masters.” We will see that in our passage in John...



THE GREEKS

John 12:20–50, 20Now there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast; 21these people then came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and were making a request of him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” 22Philip came and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip came and told Jesus. 23But Jesus answered them by saying, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls

into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25The one who loves his life loses it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it to eternal life. 26If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

John 12:23-26 ~ Christ's glorification

John 12:27-43 ~ Christ's mission/purpose

John 12:44-50 ~ Christ's final public witness

This passage, and what remains of chapter 12, taken together as a whole, constitutes a three-part summary of Jesus' mission and His purpose. As go along, please note that His purpose and so, the meaning of His earthly life is to do exactly what the Father desires. That's what He's said from the beginning, and this will be the final time that Jesus attempts to explain Himself publicly.

We Christians often talk about final chances. Not only that there exists for each person a final opportunity to embrace Salvation provided by God in Christ Jesus, but also that it is unlikely that they'll know that no further chance exists for them when it comes. If a person is not a Christian yet, there will come a time when it's too late - when their fate is sealed forever.

That's a grim thought and it should drive us who have the Spirit to be light and salt as active ministers of God's Grace. For us then, there is likewise a generally unknown final opportunity that we have to share the Gospel with someone else. A last chance to be His mediator.



What I've read so far is the setup and the first part of the three-part final public teaching of Jesus. It starts with “some Greeks” who were eager to see Jesus.

A lot of people make a big deal about who the Greeks were, what they were there and what they wanted from Jesus. They make a big deal out of why they approached Phillip and why he approached Andrew and why the two of them approached Jesus. More than all of that they make a big deal about Jesus snubbing them by completely ignoring their request and instead launching into another cryptic illustration.

When you closely examine these few verses what you discover is that the Holy Spirit wanted to include the Greeks, their request, and a somewhat detailed way that their request was made known to Jesus, but he was entirely uninterested in giving us any of the information people spend so much time trying to figure out.

We have no clue who the Greeks were except that they were definitely not Jews and clearly not from the territory of the Jews. They were from distant, entirely Greco-Roman lands. They had enough respect for Jesus that they even called His disciples “Sir.” What they wanted was an audience with Jesus, but rather than just barging in on Him they politely requested a meeting. To spend this much space to this event and then to completely drop it as soon as Jesus gets the news, can only mean that it was important for a reason other than the players involved.

What we find when we carefully look at Jesus’ response and then His next three topics, is that He granted the Greek people’s request, but more than that, it was their request itself that elicited Jesus’ seemingly disconnected response.



As soon as Jesus heard from Phillip and Andrew that there was a large contingent of Greeks wanting an audience He solemnly declared, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” Clearly, God had informed Jesus that when the Greeks came seeking Him in earnest, it was time. Notice what the Jewish leaders had just said in their frustration, “You see that you are not accomplishing anything; look, the world has gone after Him!”

The whole world is key, and we’ll see it play out in the coming verses even more. Jesus has symbolically reached out beyond the Jews to the Greeks representing the whole world.

Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the World!



Jesus was always to be the Savior of the world. He is the “Lamb Who takes away the sins,” not of Israel alone, but of the “whole world.”



We are also going to see the word glory used through the remainder of His last public address. What is glory? What does it mean it is time “to be glorified”? Most people see it as the Cross. They almost see it as a somewhat gruesome euphemism for Jesus’ torturous death. Glorify is δοξάζω (dō-xä-dzō), the verb of δόξα (dō-xä) meaning glory from which we get the word doxology the highfalutin way to say a hymn or a prayer glorifying God. Those words derive from δοκέω (dō-kě-ō) which is a verb meaning to think about and therefore form an idea of how something seems to be. It’s basically a considered opinion. What a person thinks about a thing. Take that to the Glory idea and it means considering someone or something to be praiseworthy.

It is for a person to honor, respect, worship, adore, and applaud someone or something, because they truly think that that's the right thing to do, that they genuinely consider that object to be laudable.

Like Truth, there is what is glorious objectively because God recognizes it as such whether anyone else gets it or not. There are also some things so obviously commendable that everyone, with any sense, agrees.

One such thing is the single greatest praiseworthy act of all time. There is nothing more august than Almighty God unilaterally providing Salvation to His creatures, at the greatest personal cost to Himself, while we were still His enemies. That act, God sending the Word and the Word dying in our place, is the most glory worthy thing possible and whether people get that or not it doesn't change the fact that they should. One day everyone will, but for some it will be too late. There's that time thing again.



What Jesus said in His opening statement was quite literally, the time appointed, before the foundations of the universe were laid, has come for the specially Anointed God-man Messiah, to destroy sin by paying with His perfect life, has come. Nothing can come close to the glory deserved for that willingness, let alone the actual doing of it.

Jesus then spent the next three verses explaining His solemn opening pronouncement. He started with an illustration of a seed dying in order to produce fruit. Stupid people say that Jesus was wrong because a seed doesn't actually die in order to sprout. It's an illustration, not a science lesson. Put a seed in the

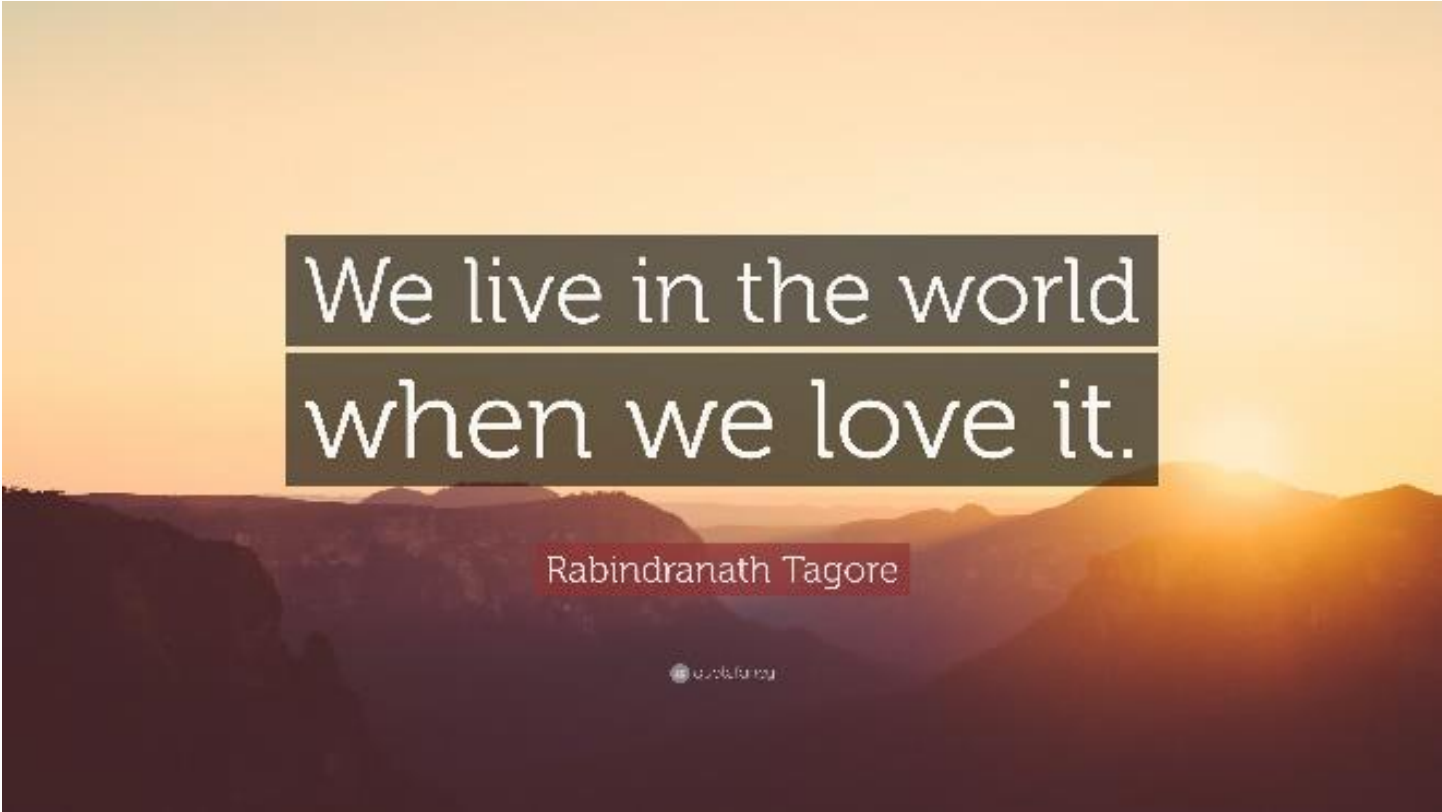
ground, let it produce a mature fruit-bearing plant and then go find the original seed intact and alive for me.



As an analogy it works very well. The seed, in essence, gives up its life in order to give life to many other seeds. Here Jesus spoke about the fruit produced rather than the seeds produced. By doing so He emphasized the value rather than the multiplication.

Jesus is the single seed and therefore all Christians derive from Him. In other words, we are not duplicates of Jesus who can likewise die and produce a new plant full of new seeds. There is only one Source, the source Who voluntarily laid Himself in a grave in order to give life and life more abundant. It is the job of the fruit of

His sacrifice to be fruit. That means to be of beneficial use to others. What apple exists for itself? An apple represents the tree from which it was grown, just as the tree represents the original seed from which it sprouted. To properly honor the original seed, the apple would be expended in bringing the goodness of the One Seed to others.



We live in the world
when we love it.

Rabindranath Tagore

© iStockphoto

True. Jesus went on to explain in more direct terms, the person who is focused more on this physical life than they are on the One Who grants them eternal life is a person who is destined to have only this physical life.

That should make people shudder in their boots. Eternal death is a thing, and it is the thing for those who cannot look beyond this tangible, but temporary mortal existence.

The person who hates their physical life will be Saved. That is hyperbole. That is a rhetorical way to greatly emphasize the importance of a thing by overstating it. It is exactly like the Pharisees saying in verse 19, “look, the world has gone after Him!” The whole world had not, at that point, or any point in the 2,000 years since, actually gone after Jesus.

The meaning of hating your life is that nothing in this physical reality would mean more to you than God and what He wants from you - His Will done in your life as opposed to your will done in your life.

It is oftentimes incredibly subtle. We plan for our future without considering that God might have a very different future in store. We deviate from God’s course in order to make adjustments that we hope will make life more pleasant now. The two biggest ways we do that have to do with money and with manipulation.



Show me a person's financial focus, their money trail. Show me how they acquire their money and how they use it to include their spending habits, and their investment portfolio, and I'll show you, their idols.



Likewise, show me what motivates a person to take action to influence a particular outcome. Show me where they work behind the scenes, where they run around trying to assemble supporters for what they believe is right, where they manipulate others to get their way, and I'll show you, their idols.

For the most part we gain and maintain some semblance of control in our lives through money and manipulation. It's incredibly sad really because control is only ever an illusion anyway. In our effort to control that illusion we push and push back, we fuss and fight, worry and fret, we cause all manner of strife in our life and in the lives of those around us.

God's Holy Word says this... "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: sexual immorality, impurity, indecent behavior, idolatry, witchcraft, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these."

Galatians 5:15, But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

Okay, praise God you say, I'm not doing too badly with that list. Well, guess what? I took out a few items that are on the list, things that are coequal with the rest. Do you want to hear what else is likewise on this Biblical catalogue of fleshly evil? Well, how are we doing with, "hostilities, (which is ἔχθρα [ěx-thră], ill-will, enmity, or animosity) strife, (which is ἔρις [ě-rēs], discord, contention, or having a beef, a quarrel, or a dispute) jealousy, (which is ζήλος [dzā-lōs], zealous or

passionate, so being passionate for another. In a good sense imitating and loving them. In a negative case, as here, it's being jealous that you don't have complete control over them - jealous of others in the object's life - suspicious, possessive jealousy) outbursts of anger, (θυμός [thü-mōs], annoyance, aggravation, indignation, or resentment) selfish ambition, (ἐριθεία [ě-pē-thā-ä], being mercenary, motivated by self-interest, scheming, grasping, self-serving, trying to get your way) dissensions, (διχοστασία [dē-χōs-tā-sē-a], disagreement, division, discord, and disunity) factions, (αἵρεσις [hī-rě-sēs], cliques, gangs, circles, and sects, it is creating power for your position by allying with some to better oppose others) and envy" (φθόνοϛ [phthō-nōs], a jealousy, described as pain felt and malignity conceived at the sight of excellence or happiness. That negative feeling you get when others think someone is better than you, or when someone is seemingly more blessed than you. You want what they have because they are getting what you deserve.)? God tells us, "that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21).

It all stems from our love of this life. That's why we struggle to control things with money and with manipulation.



Being a Christian isn't a matter of putting a little bit of Jesus in your back pocket, it isn't joining a social club, it isn't jumping through religious hoops, it isn't about getting God on your side so that you'll have a more blessed life here and it really isn't about the eternal life to come.



I am a free man,
the slave of Christ;.

Christianity is all about realizing that you've been bought with a price and the deal is that you'll be His entirely. As one scholar put it. "Christian living 'cannot be acts of mere self-abnegation. Self must be displaced by another; the endless, shameless focus on self must be displaced by focus on Jesus Christ.'"

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"The Whole World"

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