

Games People Play  
The Game of Life.

Really Living

Video of 1960's commercial

What is life?

Some would say it's a magazine.

Some would say it's a game.

Some would say life is great - others would have a different opinion.

Some say life is what you make it. Others - life is unfair.

Today we continue our games people play series.

We've been using some board games as spring boards into spiritual talks about life.

We've used Jenga to talk about building a life for God.

We've used Aggravation to talk about responding to life's pressures

We've used Risk to talk about stepping out and doing great things for God

We've used monopoly to talk about proper attitudes about money

Last week we used Pit to talk about navigating the chaos of life.

Today we are talking about the Game of Life.

Rummaging through the Day Care game closet and came across an updated version of the game of life.

Still the same premise.

Start life by taking two tracks

The college track or the career track

Then you accumulate stuff as you go through life. You get paid. You pay rent or buy a home. You get married. You get a blue and or pink child.

The game I used to play you had convertibles. Today - it's a minivan.

Also - there are squares I don't remember

Upgrade your computer - pay \$10,000 - must be a MAC

Have web site designed - pay \$45,000

Day Care - Pay \$5000 per child

They will probably update someday to an even more current version.

Tax bill due - pay your entire year's salary

It's uncanny how this simply game follows our real life.

Life in essence - according to culture, and Milton Bradley

chose something to do that makes money, chose a mate and have children, try to keep accumulating some wealth and try not to land on the spaces where bad things happen and you lose your investments. End in Millionaire Estate or country acres. The one who dies with the most wins.

That's life isn't it.

Well, that's life for some but not for everyone.

So is it real life? Is it really living? It's existing but is it living?

This morning I want us to understand real life. True life is not measured by how we do in the stock market or how many children we have or the type of care we drive or whether we have a college degree or whether we work at saving the planet - whether we have a lot of toys.

The Bible has a lot to say about life.

More specifically Jesus had some things to say about it.

Lu 12:15 Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

Lu 12:23 Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.

What we label the "good life" is not necessarily that at all. We can amass a great fortune. We have lots of fun in the sun. We can throw ourselves into our families and into providing for their well being.

While those things might not be necessarily all that wrong, I'm not sure they are true indications of real life.

John 10:10

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Jesus said he came that we might have life.

Interesting verse.

There were a lot of people already alive when He showed up on the scene. They were living. They had a pulse. They were going to work every day . They were buying and selling. They were being educated. They were wrestling with life decisions and choices that affected their futures. By our estimation - these people were alive. Yet Jesus comes on the scene and says I have come to give life.

So what did Jesus mean by life? What was He talking about?

Look at the scripture.

### **I - Life is the absence of death**

That's profound isn't it. Life is not death. Dead people don't live. And Live people are not dead.

Jesus told people who were already walking around that he had come to give them life.

How can that be?

Ephesians 2:1 ¶ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,  
2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.  
3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

Paul is also talking to people who are living and breathing, but he tells them that they were not alive but dead. They were not really alive.

There are people going through the motions everyday. You see them on the streets. You work with them. You shop with them. You sit next to them in restaurants. They look like they are alive, but they aren't , they are dead.

When God created Adam and Eve and placed them in the garden of Eden, there were also two trees in that garden which were very significant. One was the Tree of Life, the other Tree of the Knowledge of Good and evil.

One Tree produced life. A life that was full of contentment and peace. A life that was never wanting but filled with all that a person could ever need. A life that was totally dependent on God and a life that was totally connected to God.

The other Tree produced death. It produced intrigue, dissatisfaction and unfulfilled

desires. It produced selfishness and self-gratification.

Which tree was the most important for Adam and Eve. Which Tree brought them life?

The Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil became a distraction to Life.

And after they ate of its fruit, they became the living dead.

I think it is interesting that God did not say - If you eat of that tree I will kill you.

He said - if you eat of that tree - you will not have life - you will surely die

Sin brings death.

Ro 6:23 For the wages of sin is death,

The problem with the game of life is that it doesn't address one of the fundamental issues.  
- SIN.

I'll bet there is no space on the game of life that says - You are dying in sin. Get right with God . You don't have to pay. Jesus already paid.

The board game is just like how so many people live life. They compartmentalize. Spirituality has no place in the Milton Bros Board game and it has no place in our everyday lives. People think that spirituality is other. It is other than the norm.

( Sarah Palin ) Don't know what you think about her. Don't care. But she does not compartmentalize her faith. Recent articles have expressed concern that she might mix her religion and politics. In fact did you know she asked people to pray for the Alaska pipeline she was working on?

**Rev. Tim McGraw, Palin's pastor when she became mayor of Wasilla,**

**"I believe Sarah would not live in a fragmented world," he said. "The idea that Sarah would take this huge influence of the worldview that really only the Bible and the relationship with Jesus opens up ... and suddenly marginalize it and put it over on the shelf somewhere and live apart from it—that would be entirely inconsistent."**

The first thing we all must do if we want to live is to get rid of sin. The wages of sin is death.

If life is the absence of death, then we need to get rid of the death in us.

How do we do that?

Follow Jesus.

He said he has come that we might have life.

1Co 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

Let's look again at the Ephesians passage.

Ephesians 2:1 ¶ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

4 ¶ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,

5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

When you decide to follow Jesus and make Him your Lord and Master. When you accept His death on the cross as payment for your sin - you are made alive. Death is gone and life come in.

Real life only begins when we deal with the sin issue in our lives and receive the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Ro 8:2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

## **II- Life is a meaningful present**

When Jesus says He has come to bring life - that's now. Not necessarily in the future.

There is another passage which talks about life.

2 Peter 1: 1- 8

Notice - His Divine power has given us everything we need for life. When? In the future?

No - now.

Life and Godliness.

Through These = His glory and goodness

Through Them - precious promises

notice something incredible.

God wants us to participate in the Divine Nature - when? Now

We've heard it before. I'm just a sinner saved by grace. I'm just a sorry, sad, old sinner saved by Grace.

While that is true - it does not reflect who you really are. If you are saved by the

grace of God then you are not a sinner - you are something different.

The Bible says 2Co 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

A NEW CREATION. That's what you are . If you are in Christ, then you are NEW. Your very nature is changed.

WOW - to me, that's life.

Jesus said - I have come that they might have life abundant. What kind of life would that be?

In the Game of life board game, we are told the same message that we hear everywhere else. Real life is things. If you can accumulate wealth, family, fun, prestige, production, then you are really living. That's life.

But God says - if you want to really live , then participate in the Divine Nature.

Doing good, Sacrificing, Serving God, living for righteousness. Being Holy - that's really living.

There is another key we need to see from this 2 Peter Passage.

Through what do you participate in the divine nature? Through the precious promises.  
And where are those promises found? In His Word.

You cannot experience real life apart from the Book.

PS 19:7 ¶ The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

9 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring for ever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous.

10 They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.

11 By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

Heb 13:7 Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

John 1

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with GOD and the Word was God.

The Word became flesh and made His Dwelling among us.

It is the Word that brings life. Jesus himself said - You word Is truth. Was He referring to Himself or the written word? Probably both.

Phil 2:14 ¶ Do everything without complaining or arguing,  
15 so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe  
16 as you hold out the **word of life**—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.

I think it's interesting that here we have the Word that brings life and we know so little about it.

We have a wonderful gift from God. These Words will certainly give us real life.

We can really live today. Christians should be more alive than anyone else. We are participating in the Divine nature and we have the Word of God bringing us life.

### **III - Life is a Fearless Future.**

Saturday I did a dumb thing. I looked at my retirement investments. I'm so encouraged. Actually what can you do?

My life is much more than a current financial melt down. My life is wrapped up in much more than whether I will ever retire. I think I've said this before. While it might be nice to slow down a little or change focus to something different - I don't see in the Bible where retirement is an option. IN fact the guy who decided to fill his barns and take it easy for the rest of his life didn't fair too well.

When Jesus said he came to bring us life - that was for today AND tomorrow.

The Game of Life tells us that we have two ends to our lives - One is in Millionaire Estates - the Other Country Acres. That's pretty much our view as well. It's going to either be a condo or the nursing home.

Once again - if that is your goal for the future you are missing out on real life. Life is not what we are going to do in retirement. Life is not more golf or white sand beaches.

Real life is eternity with God

But when Jesus gives us life - We have another option. Living forever with God.

Real life - Life that is optimum - life that is abundant is a life that holds the promise of a future with God. My life is more fulfilling today because I know where I am headed for eternity.

My life is more fulfilling today because I base it, not on whether I am happy or not, whether I am financially secure or not, whether I am healthy or not, whether I have a great job or not – My life is fulfilling today because it is based upon a secure and glorious future.

Last week we talked some about the apostle Paul. Paul's life was not necessarily one that we would all sign up for. Remember what He said about himself?

2 Cor 11:23 I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again.

24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one.

25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea,

26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers.

27 I have laboured and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.

Man Paul, that is really living. Wow - look at that. No boats. No cars. No mansions. No vacations in the Caribbean. No nest egg. No hobbies. No golf.

Would you say that Paul knew what it was to have a fulfilling life? Would you want His life?

But listen to what he tells his son in the faith - Timothy.

2Ti 4:8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

When Jesus was preparing his disciples for his death, this is how he encouraged them.

John 14:2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

This morning I want you all to have life.

Life is not in the stuff. It's not in a secure annuity. It's not a secure America or a better or different President.

Life comes through Christ.

It is the absence of death. If you are not born again today, you are still living in death. You are still guilty of your sin.

It is a meaningful present.

If you are not experiencing abundant life today, the problem may be that you have not taken on the Divine Nature through Christ or maybe it's the fact that you are not allowing God's Word to permeate your life. Psalm 119 - Your Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path. Vs 107 - quicken me according to Your Word

Quicken - give life

It is a fearless future.

If you are unsure about your eternal home, then it's tough to have a fulfilling life now. When that issue is settled then your life takes on new meaning and relevance. Your life becomes so much more than before. There is a greater dynamic to who you are and what you are doing.

The writer of 1 John says it best.

He who has the Son has life. He who does not have the Son of God does not have life. Jesus came that we might have life and have it abundantly. Are you experiencing that?

The seven ages of man: spills, drills, thrills, bills, ills, pills, wills.

Richard J. Needham, The Wit and Wisdom of Richard Needham.