

Jesus, The Way

Jesus, The Way To A Better Life

INTRODUCTION:

- I. Two weeks ago we began a brief series of lessons entitled, "Jesus, The Way."
 - A. The purpose of these lessons is to look at Jesus as being the source of EVERY spiritual blessing.
 1. Therefore, in our first lesson we briefly previewed the various topics we're going to cover in this series.
 2. And last week we began by looking at all the places where we can find the REAL, AUTHENTIC Jesus.
 - a. And so we turned to the only reliable source of information about Jesus: THE BIBLE!
 - (1). And, we found Jesus In the Old Testament – especially in the writings of the prophets.
 - (2). We also found Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John which give us details about the life and teachings of Jesus.
 - (3). But since Jesus didn't reveal everything to His apostles while He was on earth, we found Jesus in the book of

Acts where we saw Jesus fulfilling the promise to send the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth, and where we found Jesus in the preaching of the gospel and in the establishment of the Lord's church.

(4). And we found Jesus in the epistles or letters of the apostles to show first century Christians how to live Christ-like lives.

B. However, in THIS lesson we want to focus on how Jesus, is TRULY the way to a better life.

1. In fact, Jesus made it clear that it was His desire for His disciples to live an ABUNDANT, FULFILLING life.
2. **John 10:7-10** – Speaking to the Pharisees who had criticized Him, we're told: *Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*
3. The desire to live an "abundant" – what some would call "the good life" – is nothing new.

- a. It's been the desire of mankind throughout all time.
 - b. In every age, and in every walk of life, it has been the desire of all peoples everywhere to get the most out of life.
- C. But what does Jesus say about the WAY TO A BETTER LIFE He has to offer those who would be His disciples?
1. If Jesus IS the way to a better life – and He said He is – then just what IS this abundant life Jesus offers, and how do we OBTAIN it?
 2. However, to understand the abundant life Jesus offers, we first need to listen to what Jesus says abundant living is NOT.

BODY:

- I. If you were to ask most people how THEY would define "THE GOOD LIFE" what do you think they would say?
 - A. Although there would be a wide range of answers, they would basically fall into three main categories.
 1. Most people would define "THE GOOD LIFE" as having:
 - a. Pleasure
 - b. Prosperity
 - c. Popularity
 2. Why do you suppose people think these are the three key ingredients of "THE GOOD LIFE?"

3. Most everyone would agree that "the good life" should bring us peace and happiness.
 - a. And they believe pleasure, prosperity and popularity will bring peace and happiness.
 4. But most everyone would ALSO agree that MANY high-living, pleasure-seeking, wealthy, famous people are extremely unhappy and live lives that lack inner peace.
- B. Jesus Himself taught that these things don't bring lasting peace and happiness.
1. For example, Jesus taught that the abundant life He offers is more than simply having great material possessions that can lead us to become covetous and self-centered.
 - a. **Luke 12:15** – *"Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."*
 2. Furthermore, Jesus said the peace He offers is unlike anything we could ever hope to find in this world.
 - a. **John 14:27** – *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you."*
 - b. Therefore, Jesus gives us what the world and all it offers could never give us.

3. And not only that, but those things people value most – pleasure, prosperity and popularity – are only temporary at best.
 - a. **1 John 2:15-17** – *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*
- C. Since the world and all it offers can't lead us to an abundant life, how does Jesus accomplish this? How does Jesus lead us to a better life?
 1. In the time we have remaining this morning, let me suggest just **THREE** ways Jesus leads us to a better, more abundant life.

BODY:

- I. The first thing Jesus does to lead us to a better life is by identifying and removing the **SOURCE** of unhappiness and the **MAIN REASON** why we lack inner peace.
 - A. Once again, if you were to ask most people to list the things that cause unhappiness and a lack of inner peace, they would say:
 1. It's because we live in a world filled with immorality and rampant lawlessness.

2. Or, it's because we live in a world given over to greed and covetousness – a world filled with envy.
- B. While it's true that immorality and lawlessness, coupled with greed and covetousness or envy can destroy any civilization, these are only the SYMPTOMS of the REAL problem – the problem of SIN.
1. Jesus taught that the source of all evil in the world is SIN that becomes IMBEDDED in the hearts of men and women.
 - a. **Mark 7:21-23** – *"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. 23 All these evil things come from within and defile a man."*
- C. But what has Jesus done to remove this problem?
1. **Titus 3:3-7** – Paul wrote: *For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that*

having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

- a. Through Jesus Christ, God has saved us and made us righteous in His sight – and all this was done out of His kindness, love, mercy and grace.
- b. This took place when we experienced the "*washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit*" (a reference to the act of baptism, where those who believe in Jesus are truly born again of water and Spirit! – **cf. John 3:5**)
- c. In other words, Jesus removed the problem of unhappiness and lack of inner peace by FIRST removing the CAUSE of unhappiness and a lack of inner peace – SIN!

2. But there's more.

- II. Jesus ALSO leads us to a better life by teaching us to readjust our focus – to focus LESS on those things that PERISH, and focus MORE on those things that are IMPERISHABLE!
 - A. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus pointed out the foolishness of seeking after riches.

1. **Matthew 6:19** – *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal..."*
 - a. Not only do treasures on earth perish over time, they are open to theft.
 - b. That's why we try to safe-guard our possessions and protect them.
 - c. But it's really all IN VAIN!
- B. Therefore, Jesus taught that we need to put our treasure in heaven.
 1. **Matthew 6:19-20** – *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal."*
 - a. Obviously, Jesus isn't talking about MATERIAL treasures being laid up in heaven, but treasures of a SPIRITUAL nature.
- C. But how do we do this? How do we lay up treasure in heaven? Let me suggest the TWO vitally important things we need to do to lay up SPIRITUAL treasures in heaven.

1. The first thing we need to do to lay up treasures in heaven is to LIVE FOR JESUS, even under the most adverse and difficult circumstances.
 - a. **Matthew 5:10-12** – *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*
 - b. Living for Jesus will most certainly bring persecutions in one form or another – loss of friends, family, jobs, etc.
 - c. In fact, the apostle Paul put it this way: **2 Timothy 3:12** – *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*
 - d. But the BENEFITS of living for Jesus is that we will not only INHERIT the kingdom of heaven, our REWARD in heaven will be GREAT!
2. The second thing we need to do to lay up treasures in heaven is FOLLOW THE LORD'S TEACHINGS.

- a. **Matthew 7:21-27** – *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' 24 Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."*
- b. And the REASON we need to follow the teachings and the commandments of Jesus is simply this: **John 14:15** – *"If you love Me, keep My commandments."*
- c. Or as the apostle John put it: **1 John 2:3-6** – *Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He*

who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. 6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

D. And do you know the BEST part about laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven? They are not only IMPERISHABLE but they are ETERNALLY SECURE!

1. **1 Peter 1:3-5** – *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."*

III. But there's something else Jesus does to lead us to a better, more abundant life. He gives us what we don't expect.

A. When we refuse to make pleasure, possessions and popularity our goal in life, but rather learn to follow Jesus and His teachings, the Lord will actually provide us an unexpected portion of THE VERY THINGS

WE'VE BEEN SEEKING – PLEASURE, POSSESSIONS, AND
POPULARITY!

1. When it comes to the Lord supplying our desire for pleasure, He DOESN'T provide SENSUAL, WORLDLY pleasures, but a JOYFUL PLEASURE that is FULL and INEXPRESSIBLE.
 - a. **John 15:10-11** – *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."*
 - b. **1 Peter 1:3-9** – *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to*

praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls."

2. And when it comes to POSSESSIONS, when we put God first and seek Him and His righteousness, He will provide us with EVERY MATERIAL BLESSING WE NEED.

- a. **Matthew 6:31-34** – *"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."*
- b. **Psalms 37:25-26** – *"I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread. 26 He is ever merciful, and lends; and his descendants are blessed."*
- c. **Mark 10:28-31** – *Then Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You." 29 So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left*

house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, 30 who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time — houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions — and in the age to come, eternal life."

3. And what about POPULARITY – or FAME? The Lord promises us a FAME that lasts FOREVER.
 - a. To the nation of Israel, the Lord said this: **Exodus 19:5-6** – *"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."*
 - b. But speaking to Christians, the Lord, through the apostle Peter, said this: **1 Peter 2:9-10** – *"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy."*

- c. Not only does the Lord see us as a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people NOW, but when we enter heaven and walk it's streets, it will be because our name has been recorded in the greatest of all BOOKS!

(1). **Revelation 21:23-27** – *"The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. 24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. 25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). 26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. 27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life."*

CONCLUSION:

- I. The world has a completely different system of values than we do as Christians.

- A. We live in a world that seeks pleasure, prosperity and popularity – and yet even when people achieve these things, their life is still empty and void.
1. Solomon spoke of the futility of those who are constantly seeking material wealth, and even when they get it, the wealth they sought still doesn't bring true happiness.
 - a. **Ecclesiastes 5:10-11** – *He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity. 11 When goods increase, they increase who eat them; so what profit have the owners except to see them with their eyes?*
- B. But Jesus calls on us to seek a better, more abundant life that will bring about true lasting peace and satisfaction.
1. As Jesus Himself said: **John 10:7-10** – *"Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*

2. And the real beauty of this kind of peace is that it's attainable even in the worst possible conditions and under the most pressing circumstances.
3. Just look at the peace and joy experienced by faithful Christians who may be going through intense trials or persecutions.
 - a. Their focus is NOT on the trials or persecutions.
 - b. Their focus is on the REWARD of heaven they will receive for faithfully following Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
4. OUTWARDLY they may be suffering from physical illness, heartache, social ostracism, persecutions of various kinds.
5. But INWARDLY they still have a JOY that is FULL, and a PEACE that is UNSHAKABLE.

II. Are you TRULY happy and at peace in your heart?

- A. If you're NOT happy, or if you're NOT at peace in your heart, if you are looking for a better life, why not let Jesus be "*The Way*" for you?
 1. Let Him take care of your problem of sin, which is the true cause of unhappiness in life...!
 - a. Let Him be your guide in giving you new direction in this life!
 - b. Let Him be your key to "*the good life*"!

2. Jesus can solve the problem of sin in your life – the source of unhappiness – in two ways.
 - a. If you have never come to Christ seeking the forgiveness of your sins – you can receive the forgiveness of those sins by coming to Jesus Christ in complete faith and obedience, bring baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins, and by being added by the Lord to His body of the redeemed.
 - b. If you have come to Christ in faith and obedience, and have been baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins, but have allowed the cares and worries of this world to pull you away from the Lord, you can come back to Jesus Christ by confessing those sins, and He will forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.