



## TIME OF GRACE®

### *My Best Life Possible* Study Notes

#### *Summary*

*Life* is one of the Bible's most loaded words. Jesus called himself the Life, offered people abundant life, and often spoke of eternal life through faith in his name. But what does that all mean? This message discovers the true meaning of life so that we can enjoy every moment of the eternal life we have through Jesus.

- Q: What did Jesus say about life?
  - **John 10:10b** <sup>10b</sup> I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.
  - **John 17:3** <sup>3</sup> Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.
  - **John 14:6** <sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
- A: \_\_\_\_\_ is Life.
- Q: Why trust what Jesus said about life?
  - **Revelation 1:18a** <sup>18a</sup> I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever!
- A: Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Q: What would Jesus say about your life?

#### *Points to Ponder*

1. Read John 1:1-18 and learn more about the life that Jesus offers.

2. Do you know someone who is living life without Jesus? What can you do or say to encourage them to seek Jesus in their lives?

### *Homework for Next Week*

Read assorted Psalm verses.

Time of Grace Ministry  
**My Best Life Possible**  
John 10:10; John 17:3; John 14:6; Revelation 1:18  
April 17, 2022

*Pastor Mike Novotny*

You do not have to say it out loud, but when you woke up this morning did you feel like despite all the flaws and imperfections that everyone deals with, that you had relatively good, meaningful, purposeful, worth living life?

As you think about that question let me pull out some toys that I brought with me today. Let us pretend that this green oversize Lego is you. If you cannot see in the back, I wrote the word 'you' on it. As you think about the things that give you meaning and purpose I wonder if a lot of them are connected to this; the family, the friends, your work and your health. A lot of people would say that they enjoy life. That they love life. That they feel really blessed in life. Because connected to them is all this. And I wonder if many of you were thinking the same thing. Do I have a good life?

Well, some of you would immediately think of your family. A number of you, after church today, you are going to gather around the table with people that know you and love you. People that you can laugh with. There is not going to be tons of tension or drama. There is going to be board games and too much food. And more board games and another round of food. And it is not going to be the worse day of the year because family is not terrible, family is good. And you know dad has his flaws. And your little sister is your little sister. But still, you have a good family, you have a good life.

Some of you think of the person you fell in love with. The person who stuck with you over all these years. The person that has given you beautiful babies and children to raise. Your son, your daughter might be at that table. A family can give you a really meaningful life. And so can friends. You do not have to be married with a couple of kids to have a good life. Jesus was not married and he had an amazing life. The apostle Paul was satisfied with his life. He was not married either. You know, if you have some of those people that you could text today, Snapchat, share a ridiculous meme with; friends maybe you hung out with this weekend, you spend some time with, if you have Easter Monday off. If you have people to do life with, that is one of the best ways to do life.

Or maybe some of you would think of work. You know work kind of gets a bad rap, doesn't it? Mondays are the worst. Everyone wants to retire. But honestly, a bunch of you do not feel that way at all. You kind of feel like me. Love my job. I love what I do. I love coming to church. I love studying. I love working with the people that I work with. And some of you, you know work has its frustrations but you -- like if you were 65 and you could get out and survive you

would not. You want to work because it gives you meaning and purpose and something meaningful to do.

Or maybe some of you would think of good health. A world where knees wear out, where ankles go bad, where backs can get sore. In a world with anxiety and depression and mental health issues, you may feel really good today. And some of you maybe walk to church. Some of you, maybe if you got here late, you had to walk about a 5k to get to church from the parking lot. Some of you are sitting at home watching on your couch. But you could have walked around your house. You can run a 5k, survive a 5k, endure a 5k without slowing down. Like you have good health. Your blessed with that. Especially if you are older. And you put all these things together and a lot of us would say my life is pretty good. I am loved by friends. I pass my days with meaning and purpose. I do not have to reach for a pill in the medicine cabinet. I have a good, good life.

But others of you would not say that. Maybe one or more of these things were kind of difficult to hear about because maybe your work is not very meaningful. Maybe you have been through a divorce, or your parents have. Maybe Easter is going to be a little bit awkward and you are not going to be able to talk about this or that because you know something is going to blow up and it is going to get ugly. Maybe you moved to a new city and it is been hard to connect and find friends. And maybe your health is a wreck, and this has been the most anxious year that you can remember in a long, long time. The doctors cannot figure out what is wrong. You are going through chemo. A thousand different things that can mess with your health. And you would say I wish, but life is kind of like this. And I know those are the two extremes. You are probably somewhere in the middle with some of the good and some of the bad.

But today I want to talk to you about the best life possible. In John 10 Jesus spoke these words, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." I love that last little line right there. Jesus said the reason I came, the reason I left my father in heaven was not just to tell people what to do. And not just to say well do not drink too much, and be careful with sex, and you better give money, and you should really go to church. Sometimes you think of Jesus as one who kind of restricts life. And Jesus said no, no, no. I have come, I have taught, I have preached so that people could have life. And then he paused and said to have it to the full.

That is just a sweet thought to me that Jesus himself wants me to have a full life. Some Bible translations say an abundant life. A life with meaning and purpose. Not just a miserable life as I follow him as a Christian, but a great life now and an even better life to come. If you would ask Jesus what he meant by that, like a full life, like are you going to give me the love of my life, are you going to fix my back problems and are you going to give me a new job? Jesus would smile and say something better.

In John 17 he spoke these words, he says, "Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." Alright guys, quick confession. Have you ever, from your high school years, do you remember ever like seeing a girl that you really liked? And you told one of your buddies. And because he was a good buddy, he said something like, dude, she is out of your league. Thanks for dreaming. That would be nice. Good luck if it happens but

maybe let us adjust the people we are going after here. You know Jesus, in a very serious way, kind of said that about God. Like if God is so good, if he is not just God but glorious and wonderful, spotless and pure; if he is holy, then there is kind of a problem that you know because I am not; I am normal, I am flawed, I am human, I make mistakes. I am not as perfect and as good as God like that. So how could a person like you, a person like me, have life if life means being with God.

And then Jesus would smile again and say, I will tell you. In John 14 Jesus spoke these words, he said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus, in incredible love and compassion, he became the way that people like you connect with a God like that. Jesus said that if he would actually come down from heaven, if he would love you, forgive you, make you good in the eyes of God, he could actually raise you up to have a life like that. And maybe it is childish, but if I had to make a pitch to say what is Christianity about, I would say this. It's not that we had to go through life with this Jesus and following him and God. There is this amazing glorious God and because Jesus lived and he died and he rose from the grave, you and I can be with him today, tomorrow and forever. We can have a gift of everlasting and eternal life. We can be loved. We can be known. We can have God in the room. We could face cancer. We could deal with breakups. We can survive pandemics. We could deal with the politics. If we knew that God, God himself was right here, we would be okay. And it will be a really good life. So if you are taking notes, write this down. What did Jesus say about life? I will summarize it this way. He said God is life. If you know him, you know the way to a full and abundant life.

Now I want to connect those words really specifically to a whole bunch of you. But before I get there I want to pause and ask, I think, an intellectual question. Why would we believe Jesus? Jesus said the best kind of life you could live is to get connected through him to God. But why trust Jesus' word on the matter? If after church you would Google the meaning of life you would find answer after answer after answer. Philosophy after philosophy. Religion after religion. So why trust this book, this message, this Jesus? I think if you ask Jesus that question, he would say, Easter.

Which reminds me of this picture. It is a picture that I snapped in front of The Church of the Holy Sepulcher. It is in the city of Jerusalem. Have you heard the story before? That church is one of the oldest Christian churches on the planet. It was originally dedicated I think in the year 335 A.D. But its story goes back much further than that. About 200 years earlier the Roman Emperor Hadrian had wanted to build a temple to his gods over the supposed place where the Christians God had risen from the dead. And he so he covered it over with stone. He built massive statues to Zeus and Venus I believe. And for 200 years that is what people saw in Jerusalem. But Emperor Constantine wanted to know, he was curious, what is underneath this temple? And a fourth century historian was there taking notes, watching, as they broke through the stone and as they dug and dug and dug. As Christians who had heard from their parents, who had heard from their parents who had heard from their parents that this was the spot. Do you know what they found? A tomb. And do you want to know what was not inside. A Jesus. A first century tomb with no human bones. I love how Jesus himself said in it one passage of the Bible.

Revelation 1, he said, "I am the Living One; I was dead, but now look, I am alive for ever and ever and ever!"

It was not just some idea that Peter and James and John and Mary had. It was an event in history. An event that could be witnessed and seen. A living Jesus that could be touched. There was Mary as a witness. And then there was Peter. There were the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. There were all the apostles and Thomas the doubter. There was Jesus' brother James who thought no way my brother could be God. And there was the apostle Paul who was killing Christians until the living Jesus appeared to him. There were 500 witnesses. There were early songs and hymns written just years after the historical event. In the very century itself the world changed.

And if you are a reasonable person, if you are a logical thinker you have to ask yourself the question why. Why would people suddenly be willing to suffer? To give up everything? To die for a message if they knew it was false? And the reasonable answer is because it was true. And so if you are one of those people who is not sure just yet what to think about Jesus, I want to have you write down this answer. Why would you trust Jesus? Because Jesus is alive. There is a lot of people claiming to be the truth. But I do not know anyone who created his own death and his own raising from the grave and then pulled it off. What is life? It is being with God. Why trust Jesus? Because Jesus is alive.

And that brings us to the last thing I want to say this morning. What does all this mean for you? Jesus said this and, okay, maybe there is something to think about here to trust Jesus. What would Jesus say to you? Like if you are one of those people who does not have Jesus and God just yet, if life is hard or if life is really good, what would Jesus say to you?

Let me wrap today by applying this teaching to four groups of you. Those of you who have a good life but no God. Those of you who have a bad life but no God. Those of you who have a hard life and you do have God. And those of you who have a great life and you have God.

Right. So first let us start with those of you whose life is like this. If you are watching at home and you can say, "You know, I am not so sure. Life is good; I am not sure if I want to follow Jesus. I do not consider myself a Christian. I am not like an every-Sunday Bible-reading, praying kind of person. And you know what, it is kind of okay. I have a meaningful life. I love the life that I get to live." I think what Jesus would say to you is... think. Just think. If the reason you have a good life is things like this. Your marriage, your kids, your friends, your job, your health. Just think of how quickly any of those things can go. It is not one in a billion that people go through hard losses in this life. Like all of us do. The industry changes. A pandemic hits. We become a little bit too old to keep in the company. It is so easy to lose your job and your friends. You have these super close friends in college then they all get jobs, and they scatter to the four corners of the world. They start their own relationships. They meet new friends. They get really busy. And the people you used to be so close with, for some of you the people who stood up in your wedding you have not spoken to in forever. Because friends come and then friends go. And sadly, family does to. And not every marriage makes it. Not every family stays close. Even the closest families get busy. Even the best parents pass on.

And I do not have to preach to you about this part. How one accident, one lump, one condition, one false step, one twisted knee. You know anything can change our health in an instant. I think what Jesus would say to you is, just think. If the meaning of your life is based on something temporary, think of how terrifying that is. That one bad day, one unforeseen year could rob you of everything. And while you are thinking, Jesus would say, and what about the life to come? If it is just you and your truck and the great things you did at your job, what would that do for you when you have to stand before the face of the Almighty God?

Maybe some of you stumbled through the church doors today. Maybe there is some drama that you had with your kid's mother. Maybe you are battling an addiction like Michael Phelps did and you are bottomed out. Maybe you are watching at home because you do not even want to come because your anxiety was so high. What Jesus would say to you is that you can have an amazing life. An amazing life. Because you can have... you can have this.

And maybe the anxiety would not go away. And maybe you will not meet that special someone at Starbucks on Easter Monday. But you would wake up on Monday with God. With God. A loving, strong, compassionate God. You could face the next week, the next year, this whole life knowing that God is in the room by your side. Jesus' love is so great he says you do not have to be perfect. You do not even have to be good. You do not have to be popular. You do not have to be rich. You do not have to be strong. He said once about life, "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son. That whoever would believe in him would not perish but have everlasting life."

And so I want to extend the offer to you too that there is nothing, there is nothing, God is not stopping you from walking into his presence today. You could not do that with the President, you could not do that with the CEO, but with God you always can. So I will not beg, and I will not plead. But I will kind of beg and plead, check the box. You are so close, right. The pen is sitting on the chair next to you. The little card is sitting in the program. And I am passionate about this because, honestly friends, this is how it happens. The daughter comes to church for the first time and the boyfriend says, "Fine, I will go." And the kid says, "Well, Mom, if it will make you happy, before we eat brunch, I will come with you." I have seen this so many times where someone who did not think that they could find life here, that they came and they were just curious enough to have the courage to check that tiny box. And one domino to another leads to that life with God.

Third, some of you already have this. You do believe in Jesus. You believe he lived for you, died for you, rose for you. You are connected to the eternal God. You know him and you do not have this. What would Jesus say to you? I think he would say this. What a life. I have to imagine it is really hard when you do not have these four things. If you are putting out resumes and, just, it is not working. If you are grinding it out at a job that you really hate it must be so hard to see people who love their work. If family and friendships have not worked out for you. If you eat -- like your Easter meal is going to be a Salisbury steak TV dinner on a tray in front of a big screen. Like when you see all these happy put-together families in church after it must be really hard.

But what Jesus would say is what a life. There are billions of people. Think about this math. Billions of people who all they have is temporary stuff. That is all they got. But you have God. You have love. You are known. You are cared for. There is a plan for you. There is a future for you. You are so close, years, a couple decades for some of you from seeing the face of God. From never crying again, weeping again, mourning again. You are going to dance and celebrate. Even if you are Caucasian and male, you are going to dance in the kingdom of God. My goodness. Jesus would say no more pity parties. Life is hard. I am with you. I am going to get you through.

But you have a good life because you have the purpose of life. You have God. Or finally, Jesus would speak to some of you who have a life like mine. I know biblically that my life is temporary. But right now, I am in one of those stages at 40 years old, where all of this is really good. I love coming here on Sundays. My favorite day of the week to work. On Wednesdays I run around like a gazelle and kick goals in my soccer league. I love my wife, she loves me. Our girls are at the perfect age. I have amazing friends who are so stupid and so dumb and so wonderful. And they love me so much. Like everything is working.

I know that is going to change, but right now it is a really good Easter and some of you are just like that. Like you are not battling addiction. There is not drama in your home. It is going to be a good Easter. If that is you here is what Jesus would say, it gets better. Like when you are 1,800 calories into this Easter meal, Jesus would say, it gets better. But when that fat cheeked granddaughter is bouncing on your knee on the couch and you just -- I mean you feel all the feels Jesus would say, it gets better. When you are falling in love. When you get the job. When he texts you back. When you score the goal. When you get the project. When you knock it out of the park. When you are listening to your favorite song. All the good things of this life Jesus would say it gets so much better.

And so, for those of you who are so blessed this Easter here is what I want to say to you, just lean into it. Lean into it. Enjoy every moment. Do not think well this is just worldly stuff. No, just leverage it and think if people can be this good, if this life can be this good, imagine. Imagine the life to come. And you might not lift up your hands, but your heart will worship and say, "God, thank you. Thank you for life." And no matter what this life gives you, you will always have the best life of all. Let us pray.

Jesus, thank you so much for not being average. I mean, if you were an average spiritual teacher, you would have given us some wise sayings to live better, but you did not. Instead, you gave us the gift of life. Instead of preaching some mediocre God, you exalted him to the highest place in our thoughts, in our hearts. And then you took lowly people like us, sinful people like us, you washed us clean at the cross. And you raised us up on Easter to be with God forever.

Thank you. I pray, Jesus, right now that everyone who does not follow you yet, for everyone here, everyone listening, everyone watching that they are not really connected, they are not really sure, would you draw them and give them the humility and courage just to take a small step?



Jesus, for all my brothers and sister who are suffering, you see them, you know them, and you promise to be with them. Give them strength and courage to get through these days one at a time until they take that final breath and enjoy a life where there is no suffering or pain because you are alive.

And finally, Father, I pray for all of us who are so blessed. We have so many good things in this life. When we walk out of church today many of us are going to see the sunshine, we are going to breath the fresh air, we are going to hear the birds. We are going to see the smiles of the faces of the people that we love. We are going to enjoy good food, good shows and a really good day.

Help us just to think God, if a broken, backwards world can be that good imagine the world where you are at the center. Today, we worship you God. You are risen and you are alive and so we come out running out of the grave of hopelessness. We come running out of the grave of unbelief. We come running out of the grave of sadness. And when we see your face, we find the meaning of happiness that is life.

Thank you so much for your word. God, thank you for this message. Give us the strength to believe it and the faith to live it. We proudly say this in Jesus' name. And everyone who trusted in His voice, they join their voices and they say, amen.