

Intro: The hunt has already begun! You know the hunt that I'm talking about right? Hunt for the "perfect gift!" Could be for husband/wife/kids/mom/dad/...even self!

You know the gift...the one that everyone says..."If I JUST had _____"

Life would be PERFECT!...I would be: Fulfilled, Joyful, Happy, Satisfied, Content: NEVER need another thing!

But...it doesn't work that way, does it?

Longer you live, the more you realize...Happiness, Joy, Fulfillment, Satisfaction, Contentment...Doesn't come from THINGS!

That is what John is writing about to he readers...and to us today in 1 Jn 4:7-21 Real Life! Page 863

John writes and tells us that Life...Real Life...Satisfying Life, Joyful Life, Fulfilling Life...Comes to us 3 Different ways!

1. Real Life Is Found THROUGH Knowing Jesus. 4:7-10

When the Father sent the Son into the world, it wasn't just for our SALVATION...but Also for LIVING LIVE to fullest. One of the greatest mistakes we make is the same that Adam and Eve made...Looking for life somewhere other than God!

- Gen 3: *They saw it was good for food...delight to the eyes, desired to make them wise....took and ate!*
- 1Jn 2:16 *"desires of flesh, desires of eyes, pride of life...."*

Because we continue to make the same mistake John reminds us of where true life is found. Look at what he says.

Vs 9: *"In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him!"*

Diagram 3 Things to note:

- ❖ **Person** where life is found: Jesus: The "Only begotten Son!" *"I am the way, and the truth...and the LIFE!"* Jn 14 Peter Acts 4:12 *"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."*
 - ❖ **Purpose He came:** *"So that we might LIVE through Him!"* Purpose clause: Greek grammar! Notice...not JUST salvation...but also LIFE! In fact, the focus here in this verse is on life!
 - ~Life that is Eternal in **QUANTITY!** Illus: *Letter...such a long time...and oh such a time it has been!*
 - ~Life that is Meaningful in **QUALITY!**
- Illus:** God doesn't just SAVE us...and then put us on the shelf to wait for eternity
All of this life is spent is making us more like his son...
And, helping us to live for Him NOW! *"Jesus said, the Kingdom of Heaven is among you!"*

- ❖ **Path to life:** So that we might LIFE THROUGH Him!

Applic: Do you have life...Eternal life...Through Jesus?

Are you experiencing the fullness of life that God wants for you?

If not...then the reality is that you are probably looking for that life somewhere else other than Jesus: Life is IN Him!

People: Power: Things: Significance: Experiences: Sooner or later they all fail.

2. Real Life Is Found In Loving and Serving Others. 4:11-15

Notice what John says in Vs 11 *"If we love one another, God abides (lives) in us and his love is perfected in us!"*

Kind of goes back to a little of what he talked about last week.

Here John takes on the "world system" directly. (thinking like the world instead of God)

A. What kind of mindset do you have? Vs 5-6

- ❖ **Worldly mindset?** Think like the world around you thinks?
 - ~CONTAINER mindset! You see yourself as a CONTAINER of God's love and Grace
 - This mindset says, there is only so much...I need it...When I get it I must hold on to it!
 - With everything within you, you struggle to hold onto what you have.
 - You think, act, talk and behave like....The love and grace of God is a limited commodity. Must keep what you have!
 - ❖ **Spiritual mindset: From God**
 - ~CONDUIT: Says: I am not a CONTAINER of God's love and grace...I am a CONDUIT of God's love and grace!
 - I don't have to "hold on to" what God puts in my life...My goal is to let it flow through me!
 - And in fact...the MORE that flows...the greater my CAPACITY is...I am enlarged by the flow...so that I flow more!
- What is The Obligation You Incurred.** Vs 11: *Beloved, if God so loved us...we also ought to love one another!"*
Ought: Lit = *To incur a debt, to owe something, to have a moral obligation!*
Vs 19-20: *"We love because he first loved us, If anyone says, I love God and hates his brother he is a liar!"*
John is very black and white. He does not give us any wiggle room...To love God IS to Love His children
And, if you aren't loving His children...then you really don't love God!

B. Where do you Find Fulfillment ?

"If we love one another, God abides (lives) in us and his love is perfected in us!"

Vs 12: His love is "**perfected**" in us! Lit = *To reach maturity, to arrive at the intended outcome, to be mature* (Fruit)

God's love reaches it's intended outcome when we are LOVING and SERVING others!

Mature love and Mature life is found in loving and serving OTHERS!

When we do that we are like the Father...and like Jesus.

That is the intended outcome of His love IN us...that we love other people the way He loved us!

Illus: Totally opposite what we have been taught:

Want a fulfilling life? Hold on to what you have...NEVER give it away!

Instead, Jesus says, the more that you GIVE AWAY of what God gives you...the more fulfilling life becomes!

We see this in 100 ways!

- ❖ Remember back to CityServe
- ❖ Some of you today, dropped off Christmas Boxes
- ❖ Some of you know what its like to visit and pray with someone, to teach a lesson that helps, share a verse that minister
- ❖ Old saying...Give til it hurts! Can I tell you something...At first it hurts...then it gets good!
We shouldn't be giving until it hurts. We should be giving until it feels good! SEE the wonderful things it does

Illus: There is nothing more fulfilling in life than KNOWING that YOU made a spiritual difference...for Eternity!

3. Real Life is Found In Confidence Before God! Vs 16-21

Confidence: Lit = assurance; boldness; lack of shame or hesitation

Remember in Gen after Adam and Eve sinned, they heard God coming thru garden...ran and hid!

Most people are still hiding today! We hide because we KNOW we have done the wrong thing

We hide because we feel guilty.

We hide because we don't want God to see us in all our sin: (As if we actually could hide)

John writes to them...and to us...and in a way he is saying...stop hiding...come out of the bushes!

Really gives us 3 reasons why we don't need to hide.

Because really...you can't have your BEST life...the Life God wants you to have...hiding in the bushes!

If your best life is found IN Jesus...and you aren't walking IN Him....

Not having the life that God intended you to have!

- ❖ Confidence before Him: When we spend time with Him Vs 16 When we Abide (live, or remain) in Him
Listen...we are confident ... because it isn't our first time there!
When we spend our life IN Him: (Abiding) the way John describes it: We are confident
Spend time devotionally; Spend time in Worship; Spend time with His family; Spend time in Service
- ❖ Confidence before Him: When we follow in his footsteps Vs 17 As he is...so also are we in this world
When we are loving our brothers, keeping ourselves from Sin, Having the right mindset...We are like Him!
When we are living the way He calls us to life, then we have confidence!
Illus: Remember the old question "Do you want to be caught doing that when Jesus returns?"
Always Negative:
Think of that in a positive way! Caught in Worship; Caught in Church, Caught serving Winter Relief, Tyler; CS
Think about that...YES!
- ❖ Confidence before Him: Vs 18: No fear of Punishment!
Listen...the price has been paid!
You don't have to hide, don't have to pay, you don't have to get it right every single time
God sent his son to be the payment for you sin...WHILE you were still a sinner, He died for you
So you can live your life with confidence: You are accepted; You Are loved; You are welcome in His presence

CONCL:

1. Do you KNOW that You have Real Eternal life:
It is found in Jesus:
1Jn 5:12
2. Have you found Real Life in serving others?
~Opportunity to do that with WR ~Opportunity to do that with Reindeer tree
~Opportunity to do that with decoration ~Opportunity to do that with Year End giving
3. Have you found Real Life ... Do you have Confidence Before God?
~Come out of the bushes:
~Spend some time with Him...Learn how to be in His presence
~Start living like Jesus...be like him
~Embrace the reality...you are forgiven in Him...You are accepted...You are welcome....You are LOVED!