



The Christian Life Institute

Friday, March 27

Thank you for joining us today as we continue our series, at the Christian Life Institute, presented through 15-minute encouraging messages three times per week, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 12:45 Central time on practical ways to grow forward in Christ in uncertainty, unpredictability, and upheaval. We will continue these messages next week and hope you will continue to join us for this live stream of encouraging as we continue to seek Christ and grow forward in Him.

This message is entitled: How then shall we Live?

As I was sitting down to write this message the words, ‘how then shall we live’ came very clearly to my mind – thank you Holy Spirit. Francis Schaeffer¹ wrote a book with this title and this question can be seen in verses, such as 2 Peter 3:11 “what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness.” We also see this question embedded in 1 Peter 3:13-17, where we read

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

To understand this passage it is important to understand the context and theme of 1 Peter which many say is found in 1 Peter 5:12. “I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.”² Peter, Paul, I would suggest all of the writers of the Bible, under the guidance of Holy Spirit inspiration wanted to encourage their readers to stand firm in the grace of God in the face of whatever may come our way – to live, as

¹ Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1983).

² F. MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Peter* (Chicago, IL: Moody (2004), p. 10.

John MacArthur wrote as “triumphantly in the midst of hostility without abandoning hope, becoming bitter, losing faith in Christ, or forgetting his second coming.”

So then how shall we live? As I shared on Wednesday, in my conversations with so many about how to navigate the challenges and opportunities of a variety of different rapidly changing environments we first remember to align ourselves vertically in the Truth and Hope, who is Christ. We then pause, breathe and remind ourselves that while we may be experiencing more, as a friend shared with me, chiseling – more refining – more testing (and remember God does not test us to condemn us (as He cannot condemn, that is the work of Satan, the world, our flesh, others – He, the Lord convicts), we are reminded of Psalm 66:10 where we read, “for you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried” but He does so to “see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Psalm 139:24).

Some of us are experiencing more feelings of isolation. Some of us are experiencing more feelings of cabin fever. Some of us are realizing that technology 24/7 is not our friend. Some of us just want some alone time because there are more in our shared space than we are accustomed. Some of us are cherishing the time with others in our shared space. Some of us are enjoying the flexibility of our schedules. Some of us are employed and some have lost jobs. Some of us are separated from loved ones and struggling to find a way back amidst travel restrictions. Some of us pray more fervently as loved ones and friends are essential services and may be at greater risk. As you can see the scenarios are all very diverse. As a psychologist and one who is passionate about Christ-centered spiritual formation it is critically important that we use wisdom in our conversations. It is easy to default to, what I refer to as bucket words, such as in speaking to a friend who is suffering to say, ‘we all have [fill in the blank]. “The truth is we ‘all’ have not [fill in the blank]. While we have shared negative emotions, such as grief, loss, hurt, pain, frustration and positive emotions, such as joy, peace, laughter – we do not necessarily ‘all’ share similar experience, context, environment, etc.

In this season, and life is a journey of seasons, we as Christ-followers, as we shared on Wednesday have opportunities. Opportunities to remind ourselves and others that there is One – whose name is Jesus, who can quiet every heart and still every storm.

How then shall we live?

Let us choose, and the key word is choose - as we have choices every second of every day - and yes we can choose to:

- Respond rather than react
- Forgive rather than retaliate
- Extend patience rather than impatience
- Help another rather than self-protect
- Bear with one another with an extra measure of grace

And the list continues. Perhaps you can reflect after this message and identify a few spiritual practices you will choose to implement to align more with your Heavenly Father and allow Him to flow from you as you choose then how you will live.

I would encourage each of us to identify, what I refer to as truth anchors – the driving, foundational values, traits, characteristics that you will holdfast to in choosing how to live. Often when confronted with challenges we default to control, self-protectionist attitudes and behaviors – as fear is a powerful force. If we can walk in an intense intentionality that cultivates a spiritual mindfulness about our own tendencies and susceptibilities, we can learn to recognize when we are apt to wander into flesh/self out away from the Spirit and Christ in us. In those moments, if we stop, pause, and as we refer to it, at the Christian Life Institute, deep dive (I always use this term therapeutically, as it has great value in learning about oneself which is critically important to becoming free of oneself and the power of our conditioned behaviors, destructive tendencies, and unhealthy ways) we can make a shift (a cognitive-behavioral term) and as Christ-followers, a shift into Christ. We can as we shared in the live stream on Monday, choose to be imitators of God, as beloved children. We can as we were reminded in the live stream on Wednesday, from Colossians 3:12-17, “put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you[we] also must forgive.¹⁴ And above all these put[ting] on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.¹⁵ And let[ting] the peace of Christ rule in your[our] hearts, to which indeed you[we] were called in one body. And be thankful.¹⁶ Let[ting] the word of Christ dwell in you[us] richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing

psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your[our] hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you[we] do, in word or deed, do[ing] everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

How then shall we live?

- As His beloved children.
- As surrendered vessels to His perfect will and way
- As cooperative with the Chiseler
- Invested in our own spiritual growth and the growth of others
- As imitators of Christ
- Live Philippians 2:1-10

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, ⁸ being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Yes, we can empty ourselves through the power of the Holy Spirit and walk in humility (read Andrew Murray’s *Absolute Surrender* and his book, entitled *Humility* for exhortation and encouragement in these this area). We can remember to look up and align, ourselves, individually with the truth of His Word – the living active, sharpening Word of God.

Let us, walk in love and be reminded that the greatest commandment is “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like

it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

As we shared on Monday, let us agree together to:

"Walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7)

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Thank you for joining us for Live Streaming on YouTube. Please join us again next week on Monday, March 30th at 12:45 CST.

Please visit our website at www.christianlifeinstitute.com and join our mailing list, consider contributing to support these resources, and please pray for us.