**Series OVERVIEW**

Looking at our world today can be pretty discouraging. Sometimes even looking at our own lives can feel discouraging as well. We think, “There’s got to be more than this!”

The good news...there is more! And his name is Jesus! In this 5 week series we’ll focus on Jesus’ teachings and discover his vision for our lives. Following him can lead to a life of more...More Life! More Joy! More Love! More Impact! More Hope!

This is a 3C series. In this series we’ll also want to continue to promote the 3C Spiritual Growth Plan. Let’s brainstorm ways to promote this tool both inside and outside of the message content.

**WEEK 1  | SEPTEMBER 16 | MORE LIFE**

**Scripture: John 1:1-14, John 10:10, Matthew 5:1-10**

**Message Big Idea**Jesus offers us a more blessed life than we could ever imagine.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4* ***In him was life****, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. 9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.*

*14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. -John 1:1-14*

***I have come that they may have life****, and have it to the full. -John 10:10*

*Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 2 and he began to teach them.*

*He said 3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit,*

 *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*4 Blessed are those who mourn,*

 *for they will be comforted.*

*5 Blessed are the meek,*

 *for they will inherit the earth.*

*6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,*

 *for they will be filled.*

*7 Blessed are the merciful,*

 *for they will be shown mercy.*

*8 Blessed are the pure in heart,*

 *for they will see God.*

*9 Blessed are the peacemakers,*

 *for they will be called children of God.*

*10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,*

 *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. -Matthew 5:1-10*

**Message Description**

It seems most of us are chasing “the good life.” Our culture portrays a clear picture of what that means: a life of comfort, a life of abundance, a life of prestige and privilege. No matter where you are on the socio-economic scale, “the good life” always seems to be “just a little bit more.”

Most of us never arrive at “the good life” we’re chasing after. And, even those among us who do are often filled with a nagging sense of unfulfillment wondering, “Isn’t there more than this?”

The answer is...yes. There is more. There is more life to be lived than what the American dream can offer. And it’s not found in titles or vacation homes or bank accounts. The “more” we desperately long for can be found in only one place...or, rather only one person: Jesus.

Jesus is God who came to earth to live among us. John tells us that “In him was life.” The source of life, real life is Jesus. Jesus himself said he came to bring us this life (John 10:10).

Yet the “life” Jesus came to bring is much different than “the good life” we think will bring us satisfaction.

The original language of the New Testament has two words for “life.” One is the word BIOS. BIOS is the root word for biology. It means “natural life.” It can also refer to a chronological life. The average BIOS life includes:

* 250,000 hours of sleep
* 76,000 meals, and
* 200,000 trips to the bathroom

All of that is a part of a BIOS life. Much of it can feel like “going through life, but there’s no life going through you.”

But there’s another word for “life” in the Bible, and it’s the word ZOE. ZOE includes a BIOS kind of life, but goes way beyond that. BIOS, is about quantity, but ZOE is about a quality of life that comes from knowing God. A ZOE life ultimately refers to eternal life, the kind of life that you and I were made for that will never end. But ZOE life is also about the kind of life God has for us right now.

When Jesus says, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” guess which word for life he uses? Right, ZOE! Jesus is talking about a quality of life with God that changes your past, present, and future. When you find your way back to God, you begin to experience the ZOE kind of life.

John Ortberg writes: “Jesus’ statements about who the good life was available to are called the Beatitudes. They became the most famous statements on the good life ever made, and perhaps the most surprising, because he taught that through God the good life is now truly available to anyone regardless of outer circumstances.” (*Who is This Man? Chapter 9)*

When Jesus delivered the Beatitudes, he wasn’t saying, “Try to live like this.” These are not behavioral instructions. What Jesus is saying is that people who already are like this are in good shape. They are already blessed. How could he say this? Because, as N.T. Wright says: “[The Beatitudes] are a summons to live in the present in the way that will make sense in God’s promised future; because that future has arrived in the present in Jesus of Nazareth.”

Because of Jesus, “life and life to the full” is available to live right now.

Plan to have a fywbtG video testimony in this message.

The goal of this message is to spark people’s desire to chase a different kind of “life” than the one they’ve been chasing. While Jesus walked this earth, he told us how to find this “life.” At the end of this message, we’ll want to vision cast for a life that is shaped around the three relationships of the 3Cs.

**Docent Requests:**

* Commentary on John 1:1-14 and John 10:10
* Commentary on the Beatitudes as a whole. What was the overarching message Jesus was communicating through this collection of sayings.
* Material on BIOS vs ZOE life.
* Illustrations of what Americans believe is “the good life.”
* Research on what Americans believe they need to be happy in life.

**Week 2  | September 23 | More Joy (Celebrate)**

**Scripture: John 15:1-11**

**Message Big Idea**Jesus offers us more joy as we remain closely linked to him.

*“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. 9 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. 11* ***I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.*** *-John 15:1-11*

**Message Description**

We long for joy...true joy. So often we settle for counterfeit happiness...chasing after relationships, possessions, and experiences that will bring us pleasure. But the happiness these things bring is temporary.

Jesus wants something far more lasting, far more meaningful for us than fleeting pleasure. He wants us to experience lasting joy. So what did he teach about finding more joy?

Jesus taught us to stay closely connected to him so that his “...joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” (v. 11) He used an illustration of a branch remaining connected to the vine to describe the kind of relationship he wants to have with each of us.

That’s what CELEBRATE in the 3Cs is all about. CELEBRATE is all about my relationship with God.

Daily and weekly we engage in practices that help us stay closely connected to Jesus. These practices are not meant to be religious duties but relational encounters. They are conduits for receiving Jesus’ joy.

We CELEBRATE Jesus daily through practices like prayer, reading Scripture, and reflection.

We CELEBRATE Jesus weekly by gathering as a community to praise God for who he is and to thank him for what he is doing in our lives.

In this message, keep in mind that we will have many people who came to COMMUNITY for the first time on Show Up Sunday. This is the first time they are hearing about the 3Cs. Let’s focus on them as we explain what it means to CELEBRATE. Encourage people to engage with the 3C Spiritual Growth Plan to take next steps in the area of CELEBRATE.

**Docent Requests:**

* Commentary on John 15:1-11
* Insights/Quotes from spiritual writers on how the practice of spiritual disciplines help us “remain” in Jesus.
* What does Scripture/tradition have to say about “enjoying” or “delighting” in God?
* How do we convey the importance of celebrating together consistently, making Sunday gatherings a priority?

**Week 3  | September 30 | More Love (Connect)
Child Dedication Weekend**

**Scripture John 15:12-17, 1 John 4:7-21**

**Message Big Idea**Jesus offers more love by demonstrating what true love looks like.

*12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other. -John 15:12-17*

*7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.*

*13 This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. 16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.*

*God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. 17 This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. 18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*

*19 We love because he first loved us. 20 Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. 1 John 4:7-21*

**Message Description**

We all long to be loved. We were created for love. We are made in the image of a God who is love.

God’s very nature is communal. From the beginning God is described as Father, Spirit, and Son. Right away we see that God is a God who exists in community. He is a relational being, One being existing in three expressions - God the Father, God the Spirit, and God the Son – a mystery that came to be known as the Trinity. They have a selfless relationship where they all revolve around each other. Not one of them makes the others revolve around himself; each person in the Trinity loves, adores, defers to, and rejoices in the others.

Some of the earliest Christ-followers described this relationship among the Trinity as a dance. They called it **PERICHORESIS** *(PAIR-ee-KOR-eh-sis).* I know that sounds like a skin disease, but perichoresis means to dance or flow around each other. We get our word “choreography” from this word. This God who is three persons in one being has this relationship within himself where each member flows around the others like dancers on a dance floor who are in perfect step with one another. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit exist in this this dance of community, a dance of endless, creative, self-giving love. (See the previous message [In the Beginning - Week 1](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1XuZsnPRBWNOOrc0bg8DWp-n2ZOil_VGN) for more on the Trinity.)

That’s why John went on to describing God this way: *“God is love.”* (1 John 4:8) Not God is loving or God likes to love, but that God IS love. God is a relational God who is defined as love.

We long for love because as creatures made in God’s image, we were designed us for love. God wants every one of us to experience this love so he came himself, in the person of Jesus, to love us. How did Jesus love us? Through the greatest act of love: by giving his life for us.

And then he gives us this command: *“Love each other as I have loved you.”* (John 15:12)

How do we love like Jesus loved? In this message, we’ll explore what it means to lay down our lives for one another. What does it look like to live out this kind of sacrificial love on a daily basis? (Sidenote: One of the greatest compliments is when someone says, “He would do anything for you.” Do we love like that?)

Jesus wants us to experience more love. These are the kind of sacrificial relationships Jesus wants us to have as his followers. That’s what CONNECT is all about. CONNECT is about the relationships we have with one another in the church as brothers and sisters in Christ. CONNECT is about intentionally building relationships with others we can love and encourage on this faith journey. We experience this kind of deepening Biblical community through intentional gatherings we call Small Groups.

Plan to have a strong Small Group push this week. Might want to plan to have a SG video testimony.

Want to experience more love? Live out Jesus’ command to “Love each other as I have loved you.”

**Docent Requests:**

* Commentary work on John 15:12-17, 1 John 4:7-21.
* Insights and quotations on what it means to “lay down our lives for one another.”
* Trends regarding the decline in authentic “connection” in the United States.
* Neurological and physiological benefits of authentic connection and community.

**Week 4  | October 7 | More Impact (Celebration Generosity)**

**Scripture: Matthew 14:13-21**

**Message Big Idea** Jesus offers us the opportunity to have more impact together than any one of us could have on our own.

*13 When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. 15 As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.” 16 Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.” 17 “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered. 18 “Bring them here to me,” he said. 19 And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.20 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 21 The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children. -Matthew 14:13-21*

**Message Description**

There are lots of things that in my hands, that can be OK, but in someone else’s hands can be amazing.

For example…

A basketball in my hands...OK. But in Lebron James’ hands...amazing.

A guitar in my hands...OK. But in Jimi Hendrix‘s hands...amazing.

A paintbrush in my hands...OK. But in Picasso’s hands...amazing.

The disciples had something in their hands...5 loaves and 2 fish. In their hands, this little bit of food was rather ordinary, but in Jesus’ hands it became something amazing. Jesus took something seemingly small and did something miraculous with it.

That’s really what Celebration Generosity is all about. We all have something in our hands. What is in your hand might not seem all that amazing. What is in my hand certainly isn’t. But when together we put what is in our hands in Jesus’ hands, he can do something amazing...miraculous even.

Today we will challenge one another to give generously by giving Jesus what is in our hand and watch as he uses it to change the world.

**Docent Requests:**

* Just a short brief with commentary on Matthew 14:13-21.

**Week 5  | October 14 | More Hope (Contribute) All Church Baptisms**

**Scripture: John 8:12, Matthew 5:14-16**

**Message Big Idea**Jesus offers us more hope so that we bring light to the darkness.

*12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” -John 8:12*

*14 “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. -Matthew 5:14-16*

**Message Description**

Jesus is the light of the world. He is our hope for a better tomorrow.

Yet, he also says that *we* are the light of the world. We are called to let his light shine through us so that *others* might find their way back to God. Contributing to the Jesus Mission is one way we let our “good deeds” point people back to God.

Many of us are familiar with the line, “the city upon the hill.” This phrase was inspired by the Sermon on the Mount given by our Lord and Savior Yahshua the Messiah or Jesus Christ.

As Christians, whether we like it or not, we are all like a city upon the hill. *People will look at us*. They will observe how we think, speak, and act. They will take notice of our character, behavior, and attitude.

So what does it really mean to become a light of the world? What did Jesus mean when He instructed His followers to serve as a beacon of light to this darkened world?

In this life, we have two choices. We can either be part of darkness and be part of this world *OR* shine as lights and be *different*. This world is dying for a light. People are desperately seeking for a beacon of hope. We are called to be Christians not just to attend church services once a week. We are to do a work and that is to become a light to those around us.

It is too easy to just conform to this world. Just go with the flow and simply live a life with less resistance and stay within our comfort zone. *But,* we are supposed to be different. We are to be a light.

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. **He who follows me**  shall not walk in darkness, *but have the light of life*.”

This verse tells us that in order for us to produce the light, we must follow the Light of the world! We need to follow Jesus Christ, His teachings, and examples.

Christ is telling us that if we are to be a light, ***we need to do good works***. It is impossible to be a light to the world without doing something good! Jesus is making a point here. It is not good that we only have an academic knowledge of the truth. It is not enough to memorize scriptures from Genesis to Revelation. We need to actually do something.

Today we get to celebrate with people who are taking hold of this hope (All-Church baptisms).

(Could also tie in how Jesus’ baptism was the marker of the start of his public ministry. Baptism as a commissioning day - you are now the light.)

Note: We’ll need to leave 600-700 words in this message for All-Church baptisms.

**Docent Requests:**

* Commentary work on key Scripture
* Context for the physical landscape and cultural framework from which these words were spoken.
* Modern-day examples/illustrations of a city on a hill/lamp.
* Reasons we don’t “shine”; are tempted to hide.
* Examples/challenges for practical ways we can actually *walk* in the light