

Good Life Series Slide

The 2007 movie "Bucket List" popularized the idea of ...making a Bucket List.

This has been my TED talk

It just means- a list of things you want to do before you die. A reference to the euphemism- Kick the Bucket.

Here's the list from the movie- the buckets lists 18 items are as follows

- 1- Witness something truly majestic.
 - 2- Help a complete stranger
 - 3- Laugh til I cry
 - 4- Drive a Shelby Mustang
 - 5- Kiss the most beautiful girl in the world.
- Get a Tattoo
Go Skydiving

and then the rest are all travel destinations

Stonehenge, the Louvre, Rome, Paris, the Pyramids, an apex predator hunt in Africa, visit the Taj Mahal, Hong Kong, Victoria falls and the Great wall of China.

What do you notice about all those things.
They're all experience oriented.

And none of them require an ongoing life of character. I mean, even Helping a complete stranger...I can do that to see how altruism feels- and then go right back to a selfish life.

We've been talking all year about how to live "The Good Life"
A life of deep fulfillment, satisfaction, and joy.

There are 3 components-
Spiritual Connection
Deep Relationships
Transcendent Purpose

Without all 3 of those- you are going to find it impossible to be truly happy.

The typical bucket list is an attempt to try and squeeze some happiness out of life through a bunch of one-off experiences. But one off experiences are not what make up an ongoing connection to God...one off experiences don't make deep relationships... and they won't give you purpose beyond death.

If you learned today that your life was ending soon- my advice to you would not be “Go out and experience all the things you haven’t yet.”

Rather- I would tell you “If you want to die with no regrets- truly knowing you’ve lived the GOOD LIFE- Go to Acts chapter 20...and with all the time you have left- live that life.

Moses -you know- the guy who spoke with God on a mountain, wrote down the 10 commandments, and led Israel out of slavery and to the promised land... he wrote this prayer.

Psalm 90:12 & 17

**12 Teach us to number our days carefully
so that we may develop wisdom in our hearts.**

**Let the favor of the Lord our God be on us;
establish for us the work of our hands —
establish the work of our hands!**

In those verses are the Good Life.

First- its a prayer. Spiritual Connection- A dependence on God’s favor.

Second- There’s deep relationships. He uses the first person plural. He’s not praying just for himself- but for all the people he loves and leads.

Third- there is transcendent purpose- He asks God to ESTABLISH...or make permanent and eternal their work. God- take what we’re doing and turn it into something that matters long after we’re gone. Make it matter to our children and grandchildren and great great great great grandchildren.

God- take our pitiful short lives— - and make them count.

See the phrase he opens with. Teach us to number our days so we develop WISDOM.

Martin Luther translated this verse “Lord- teach us to think about death so we learn how to live.”

In other words- you shouldn’t think about death and then think selfishly about all the experiences you might miss if you don’t hurry up like some macabre FOMO...
...instead- when you think about the end of your life- let it move you to ask the question-
AM I LIVING A LIFE THAT I’M PROUD OF Now?

Am I living a life of spiritual connection, Deep Relationships, and Transcendent Purpose now....and if not...then its time to repent...and change course.

All through the book of Acts- there is a word that comes up several times to describe the disciples after they saw Jesus resurrect and ascend into heaven. After he gave them a mission to go into all the world and preach the gospel and baptize people...

...that word is BOLD. Look how the book of Acts ends.

Acts 28:31

[Paul was] proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

**"The Bold Bucket List: The Six Phrases of a Good Life Well-Lived"-
Acts 20:17-36**

It's the way most of us want to live. Not backing down from a challenge to say and do the right thing.

Today- I'm gonna show you the way to live a life you're proud of when you die.
I'm going to show you the wisdom that comes when you number your days and God establishes the work of your hands.

I want to you show you a life that isn't just good for you...but beautiful to others.

This is the right kind of Bucket List- not short experiences centered on enjoying a moment- but choices, that have to be re-made day after day, commitments that have to be lived into morning after morning.. that's what makes a truly Bold Bucket List.

I'm inviting you today- to take a bold step toward this kind of life.

Acts 20:17-38

17 Now from Miletus, he sent to Ephesus and summoned the elders of the church. 18 When they came to him, he said to them, "You know, from the first day I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, 19 serving the Lord with all humility, with tears, and during the trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews. 20 You know that I did not hesitate to proclaim anything to you that was profitable and to teach you publicly and from house to house. 21 I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus.

22 "And now I am on my way to Jerusalem, compelled by the Spirit, not knowing what I will encounter there, 23 except that in every town the Holy Spirit warns me that chains and afflictions are waiting for me. 24 But I consider my life of no value to myself; my purpose is to finish my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of God's grace.

25 "And now I know that none of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will ever see me again. 26 Therefore I declare to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, 27 because I did not avoid declaring to you the whole plan of God. 28 Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Men will rise up even from your own number and distort the truth to lure the disciples into following them. 31 Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for three years I never stopped warning each one of you with tears.

32 "And now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all who are sanctified. 33 I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. 34 You yourselves know that I worked with my own hands to support myself and those who are with me. 35 In every way I've shown you that it is necessary to help the weak by laboring like this and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, because he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

36 After he said this, he knelt down and prayed with all of them. 37 There were many tears shed by everyone. They embraced Paul and kissed him, 38 grieving most of all over his statement that they would never see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.

BTW: this is the only extended speech in the entire book of Acts that is made to other Christians- all the other speeches are to unbelievers- so this gives us crucial insight into how the Holy Spirit wants all believers to evaluate their lives...and whether or not we are “successful”.

So here are the 6 Bucket List statements you want to be able to make at the end of your life.

1) I told the truth about sin, judgment, & salvation.

Twice in this speech Paul talks about his boldness in delivering to them a very uncomfortable message. One that a lot of us shy away from.

v 20-21

He tells them- he didn't hesitate to teach them about repentance from their sin, and salvation found only in Jesus.

Paul saw himself as a messenger who was responsible for delivering a message. He was not responsible for making sure they liked it, just that they heard it.

And that message is about repentance from sin and faith in Jesus.

v 26-27

He says because I delivered this message, I am innocent of your blood. That is likely a reference to what the prophet Ezekiel wrote.

Ezekiel 33:8

If I say to the wicked, 'Wicked one, you will surely die,' but you do not speak out to warn him about his way, that wicked person will die for his iniquity, yet I will hold you responsible for his blood

One of my favorite authors and essayists-- Chuck Klosterman wrote a book years ago about evil- called “I wear the black hat”. In it, he boiled down evil to a single idea.

Evil is when you know the most and care the least.

I'd say- that is pretty spot on to what Ezekiel says here- that Paul references.

Bridge ILLUS

Bridge out in a fog- I approach, but I don't go out of my way to flag you down- I'm committing an evil.

Back to 1)

Before you get to the good news- YOU CAN BE SAVED- someone has to believe the bad news- that the bridge is out.

The bad news is that humanity stands under God's judgment because of our rebellion against him. Paul wrote to this Ephesian church that we are dead in our sins and there is nothing we can do about it.

But the good news of the gospel is that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son— Jesus, who came and did for us what we could never do for ourselves. He lived the sinless life we were supposed to live, and then died the sinner's death we should have died, and now offers forgiveness as a gift to all who will receive it. The gospel declares that if you will turn from your rebellion, and admit that you need to be saved and that you cannot save yourself, he will save you and give you eternal life.

I'm not responsible for how you respond to that; I am responsible for making sure you hear and understand it.

Do the people God has put in your life know this? Have you made it clear to everyone in all your life circles? You might be the only one in their life who knows the bridge is out ahead of the road they are headed down- will you watch them drive off of it- or do everything you can to tell them the truth?

Listen- if you are too smart or sophisticated to believe in hell...then you are too smart and sophisticated for Jesus.

Who talked about hell more than he did heaven.

Trevor- do you believe in literal flames in hell- or is it just metaphor?

My question to you is "why do you think the metaphor is better?"

Rev 21:8 calls hell the fiery abyss of burning sulfur, where is weeping and darkness and gnashing of teeth, and the smoke of their torment ascends forever.

If those just symbols, then what are they symbols for? A winter retreat? A summer vacation?

No, it's a terrible reality... and it's an evil in and of itself to know that and live in complacency. TO know the most and care the least. It demands something of us. It ought to change how we look at our stuff.- our time, our talents, and our money.

The Queen Mary was a cruise ship for rich people that was turned into a troop transport during WW2.

As a luxury liner- it held 3000 people and carried every amenity.
But as a Troop Transport- rooms that held 1 couple- now slept 8 people. It increased its capacity to 15k people....but you know what had to go- a lot of luxuries.

Wartime and peace time demand different things.

City Church- we are in a war against the darkness of this age. The powers and principalities that want to convince you that even though you say you believe in the reality of sin and judgment- that in order to keep your life comfortable and free from awkwardness- don't say anything. Don't change your lifestyle. Use your money and resources on making your life more comfortable while you watch others drive off a bridge.

According to Paul and Ezekiel- their blood is on your hands.

At City Church- we want to remain a troop transport fitted for battle- not suburban luxury. We are an aircraft carrier sending you out on a rescue mission- not a cruise ship designed to give you every amenity.

The question is- when we send you out with the life saving gospel message- what are you doing with it?

2) I pointed people away from me and towards Jesus.

A leader often will talk about his victories, his accomplishments, his strengths when he is giving his resume. But notice- Paul talks about his trials- his weakness- his humility.

v 19

This word 'humility' in v 19 is was almost always considered an insult at this time in this culture. It means defeated, low, weak.

But its used 200 times in the Bible, and almost every time is considered a virtue

So why does Paul use it in his resume? Why does he take an insult and make it an honor?

Because the work you do in Jesus' name is not about how great you are or strong you are. Jesus uses the weak and the broken- the most guilty of sinners- and changes them into beautiful vessels of hope.

"A humble and weak person will show a crucified savior better to a listener than a polished, pulled together expert. Because that's how it happened for us: we weren't saved by pulling ourselves together, but by admitting we were sinners and calling on the one who was pulled apart for us." -Tim Keller

That's why when we talked earlier this year about Deep Relationships did you notice something about these 6 phrases I taught you.

Six Phrases of a Deep Relationship

I love you.

I'm proud of you.

I'm sorry.

I forgive you.

Thank you.

What do you think?

All of them are rooted in humility. They point away from me and value you. But especially notice I'm sorry and I forgive you. Those phrases recognize that in a relationship both people are sinners. Both people need to be prepared to own their sin...and forgive the others. Parents- that's why it's so important for you to say I'm sorry to your kids.

Sure-it's not the only thing you say, but when you sin against them- you model humility. And then you point to the forgiveness you receive from Jesus that gives you the strength to own your sin and be responsible for it.

That models to them a life of confession and a trust of Jesus' life and death in your place to forgive you.

It's one of the best ways to teach the gospel to your kids.

v 19-

Tears and trials are one of the best ways we testify to God's faithfulness in our lives. When you are broken- you can better testify to the way God met you in that brokenness and changes you- provided for you- sustained you- delivered you.

You look weak- but he is shown as strong.

This is also, the heart behind sacrificial generosity, by the way.

When you give your money sacrificially to honor Jesus, you are deliberately limiting your financial ability to strengthen yourself...in order to direct people's attention to Jesus.

When you give sacrificially, you are saying, "My life is not about me."

My talents and my treasures were not given to me for me, but for me to help people know Jesus!

That leads to this next bold bucket list item-

3) I invested sacrificially in Jesus' church.

Look what Paul says to the Ephesian elders- look at the command he gives them about the church they lead.

v 28

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood.

There is one institution, Paul says, that Jesus died for; one body he gave his life, and spilled his blood to create—the church.

Jesus did not die for your school, or corporation, or small business. He didn't die for your last name and the family history it carries. He didn't die for city or town that you love. He didn't die so your kid could get into the best college. He didn't die for your favorite football team. He didn't die for soccer, basketball, baseball, hockey, and he especially didn't die for pickle ball.

He poured out his blood for the church.

And yet, if you really looked at the way you spend your time and money- someone might wonder if you worship one of those other things because you dedicate so much effort and so many resources to it— while you don't serve your church or give to your church at all.

Back to 3)

The church is Christ's body—its the means by which he does his work on earth. o

ILLUS: When my brain wants to accomplish something in the physical world, it doesn't send out magic brain waves. It uses the body. So Jesus uses his people.

The church is described as Jesus' bride. You can't say you love Jesus and treat his wife like garbage.

If Jesus died for the church, you should be deeply committed to it. o I

I know it's not perfect—that's why Jesus had to die for it.

But you should be deeply committed to it, and very connected in it—not just a casual attender on the weekend... but serving and investing in it. Will you be able to say at the end of your life- i invested sacrificially in Jesus' church with my time, talents, and money.

4) I was faithful to do what Jesus called me to do.

Paul had a personal calling from Jesus. Jesus met him on the road to Damascus and completely changed his life. He went from murdering Xians trying to stop the new movement to joining it and eventually leading it.

v 24

But I consider my life of no value to myself; my purpose is to finish my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of God's grace.

Notice MY COURSE- the ministry I RECEIVED.

God doesn't give the same assignment to everybody. But he has given you an assignment.

And at the end of the day, we'll answer to him for what we did with what he gave us.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2

A person should think of us in this way: as servants of Christ and managers of the mysteries of God.

2 In this regard, it is required that managers be found faithful.

A manager was responsible only for what the master put him in charge of. You will not be held responsible for the overall vision and direction of City Church- but I will be.

But there is something that God has put you a manager over. Something that he has called you to steward. Your family. your job. your money...and- as we've already seen- the gospel. The mystery of the good news. You are responsible for using everything you've got to bring people to the knowledge of that beautiful mystery.

Back to 4)

What is your calling? To whom has God called you? At the end of your life can you say- I've run my course- I've been faithful to what Jesus called me to do?

5) I finished strong.

v 23-24

Paul says the Holy Spirit told him that difficult, painful things are ahead for him. This is when a lot of us want to quit.

But he goes on to say- that he is going to push through and finish strong.

He often uses the imagery of a race. And what we know about a long distance race is it doesn't matter nearly as much how you start- as much as it does how you finish. Do you finish with enough gas in the tank to push you over the finish line and win the prize?

Back to 5)

A lot of folks start strong in their walk with Jesus- but they get complacent and peter out over time.

We see this all the time when people come to the weekender and make promises to this church in how they will live-

Cultivate in the worship gathering
Cultivate in a City Church group
Practice Spiritual Disciplines
Share the gospel and make disciples
Give Financially and Sacrificially
Don't quit when it gets difficult.

But a few months in- literally those people aren't doing anything other than showing up for one worship gathering...and then they end up leaving the church without even having a conversation with our pastors.

Some of you have started following Jesus, and it's gotten hard. If you believe he is resurrected, get up and keep going!

For some of you, being faithful in your family or job has gotten difficult: FINISH.

Older men and women, don't get bored with life and buy a sports car or redo your kitchen... instead mentor young men and women and share the gospel! BE BOLD!

(Sports cars and new kitchens are fine...just don't substitute that for your calling to raise up the next generation in Jesus)

FINISH STRONG!!! DON'T RETIRE FROM the work Jesus has called you to.

6) I gave more than I took.

v 33 & 35

I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. 35 In every way I've shown you that it is necessary to help the weak by laboring like this and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, because he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

This is the last thing Paul says to them... a man's final words are probably the most significant; it's what is most on his mind; what he most wants them to remember. And Paul's last words are about generosity.

Paul thought of a successful, blessed life- the GOOD LIFE- as one in which you give more than you take.

Why? Because that had been the defining characteristic of Jesus.

His whole life had been defined by giving, not receiving.

Even on the night before he died, Jesus had washed the disciple's feet.

If I knew I was about to die, for you, the night before I would have been like, "Look, this is me time."

Is that how you look at your life?

Back to 6)

In your marriage— Do you think it is more blessed to give than to receive? o
Do you serve your spouse more than you expect them to serve you?

Men: Whose preferences do you think more about?

Women: Whose comfort and happiness are you more devoted to?

In your friendships; in how you relate to your parents?
Do you give more than you take?
The key to GOOD LIFE relationships is to give more than you take!

How about in your career: Do you look at your career primarily as a tool to 'get' all you can? Or have you asked how your career might be used to give to the mission of God?

Acts 28:31

[Paul was] proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

Boldness- dealing within- a courage from the inside out
Without hindrance- clearing the path outside you

What needs to change

I am deeply committed to the mission of City Church.

My Bold step of service is _____ (City Kids, D45, First Impressions, Worship and Tech Team)- yes there are other steps of service not on a Sunday- Leading a comm group, etc...I'm pointing you to this because often this is overlooked and seen as unimportant...when its one of the best ways you can make a smooth path to the gospel.

We're going to talk more about sharing the gospel in 2027 for sure- but start now! Who has God called you to.

My bold step of generosity is _____ (First time, Recurring, Tithe, Giving above a tithe you know you have a gift of generosity- last year- DYLAN full time CP resident- Two college residents. We're going to have City Project with hopefully 12 college students.)

Yes you can give in multiple ways outside our church- but this is a call to a commitment to the bride of Christ- and the embodied church you are a part of here.

TAKE OUT CARD- PRAY. INSTRUCTION.

Finally- Baptism Sunday- Oct 18.