

Sermon Series: “Living Lives of Irresistible Influence”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—7/6/08

Title: “A Life of Distributing”

Text: 1 Peter 4:7-11

Intro.: *Ills.: Where would they bury your heart?*

Theme: Jesus has redeemed and filled up our lives not only with resources but also spiritual abilities so that we would effectively spill over his grace to a world around us which so desperately needs a Savior.

Knowing why you have been saved (1 Peter 4: 7-9)

- Moving from a hand-to-mouth Christianity to a purposeful existence because of Jesus
 1. **Illus.: Is there purpose in what you are doing?**
 2. *But He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose." Luke 4:43*
 3. *We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me. Col. 1:28-29*
 4. Why do you have the life you do? Belong to this church? Live in this community? Exist in this century/decade?
- Peter lines out why believers and the Church need to get serious about their unique purpose
 1. **Because the end draws near. (Vs.7)** – day/time when there’ll be no more time for friend, family member, coworker
 2. **Because love covers over a plethora/multitude of sin (vs. 8)** (grace-based living with a fallen world)
 3. **Because hospitality (foreigner love) requires thankfulness (vs.9)** if always grumbling, lose witness/generous spirit

Knowing what you have (1 Peter 4: 10)

- In Jesus you possess **something that is special (charisma)**
 1. You are valued in God’s special outpouring of the Spirit’s grace in you
 - a. *Don't you know that your body is a temple that belongs to the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit, whom you received from God, lives in you. 1 Cor 6: 19*
 2. You are valued in how God hard-wired you in giftedness, talent, passion, personality, experience to share w/others
 - a. **S**piritual gifts — special “supernaturally empowered” abilities to impact another for eternity
 - b. **H**ear – your passion, what you have fun doing, can be harnessed by God to bless others
 - c. **A**bilities – your sports/coaching, your career skills, your math or designing skills, cooking/gardening/hobby
 - d. **P**ersonality – God has hardwired you to connect with people like you to relate and pass on his gifts
 - e. **E**xperience – your experiences good/bad by which you can share wisdom and lessons learned
 3. You are valued part of this community of believers your community out there because God gave you as a gift
 - a. No room for consumer Christianity within the Church (*each one. . .serve. . .each other*)
 - b. Giving to each other of our time and energy and blessing as God intended through his gift to each of us
 - c. **Illus.: Oblivious to Treasure right under his nose**
 - d. Spirit helps us reorder priorities so that we find undiscovered treasure where never thought we had any
- In Jesus you possess **something that is significant (multi-faceted grace of God)**
 4. **Ills.: walking with a bowl of water naturally spills out**
 5. You become God’s vessel of grace to another when you spill out his grace
 - a. To a world which is “thirsting for living water”
 - b. *'Streams of living water will flow from deep within the person who believes in me.' " John 7:38*

Knowing what to do with it (1 Peter 4: 11)

- **Use it**
 1. If God has gifted us to speak, to do, to lead, to serve, to administer—do it with the confidence of his authority
 2. *“Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God” vs. 11*
- **Serve through it**
 1. Your giftedness is not about what is in it for you but about what God wants to do through you for others
 2. Your ministry is to **Discover, Develop, and Deploy** your gifts of grace is service to other
- **Worship with it**
 3. Your giftedness is not about extra credit with God or others but to give the credit to God for Jesus Christ’s sake
 4. *“ . . .so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.” (vs. 11)*

Where would they bury your heart?

If your heart were to be buried in the place you loved most during life, where would it be? In your pocketbook? Alongside of your children? In your entertainment? In an appropriate space down at the office? Where is your heart? The body of David Livingstone, great missionary to Africa, was buried in England where he was born, but his heart was buried in the Africa he loved. At the foot of a tall tree in a small African village the natives dug a hole and placed in it the heart of this man, whom they loved and respected and who gave his all that they might learn to love Jesus.

Is there purpose in what you are doing?

One of golf's immortal moments came when a Scotsman demonstrated the new game to President Ulysses Grant. Carefully placing the ball on the tee, he took a mighty swing. The club hit the turf and scattered dirt all over the President's beard and surrounding vicinity, while the ball placidly waited on the tee. Again the Scotsman swung, and again he missed. Our President waited patiently through six tries and then quietly stated, "There seems to be a fair amount of exercise in the game, but I fail to see the purpose of the ball."

Oblivious to Treasure

A rock hound named Rob Cutshaw owns a little roadside shop outside Andrews, North Carolina. Like many in the trade, he hunts for rocks, then sells them to collectors or jewelry makers. He knows enough about rocks to decide which to pick up and sell, but he's no expert. He leaves the appraising of his rocks to other people. As much as he enjoys the work, it doesn't always pay the bills. He occasionally moonlights, cutting wood to help put bread on the table. While on a dig twenty years ago, Rob found a rock he described as "purdy and big." He tried unsuccessfully to sell the specimen, and according to the Constitution, kept the rock under his bed or in his closet. He guessed the blue chunk could bring as much as \$500 dollars, but he would have taken less if something urgent came up like paying his power bill. That's how close Rob came to hawking for a few hundred dollars what turned out to be the largest, most valuable sapphire ever found. The blue rock that Rob had abandoned to the darkness of a closet two decades ago -- now known as "The Star of David" sapphire -- weighs nearly a pound, and could easily sell for \$2.75 million. **John MacArthur, *Grace to You Newsletter*, April 15, 1993.**

1 Peter 4:7-11

⁷The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. ⁸Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good manager of the manifold grace of God. ¹¹Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. [NASB]