If you only knew...  

God’s ultimate provision is LIFE  

For the sake of time, allow me to make a distinction between life and LIFE. Now that may sound strange in English, but that is because we only have one word for life. However, in the language of the New Testament, Koine Greek, there are two different words for LIFE: bios and zoe.  

The Greek word Bios carries with it the meaning of physical life...breathing in and breathing out, existing, the daily grind, surviving, getting by. And this word is used 9 times in the New Testament.  

Zoe carries with it a qualitative meaning of the absolute fullness of life, both essential and ethical, real and genuine, active and vigorous, which belongs to and is only given by God. And this word for life is used over 130 times in the New Testament.  

John, the one telling the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman, gets very specific about what does he say to them?  

In 1 John 5, he says, “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

Don’t misunderstand me: BIOS is important -- w/o it we are dead, you have to have bios. And the Scripture is clear that God is the one who sustains your bios, or your life. Just look at the 40 year journey of the children of Israel in the wilderness in Exodus. It was God who provided manna and quail, it was God who provided water from the rock. But the message is clear - God sustained them with bios that He might satisfy them with Zoe by inviting them into a covenant relationship with himself.

Look the story in John’s Gospel just two chapters after the story this morning’s passage. In John 6 we find Jesus feeding the 5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish, leaving the crowd by night and crossing over the lake. The next day they discover he has gone, they hear he is over in the city of Capernaum so they take off and catch up with him. And what does he say to them?  

Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.”

Here’s the point: God’s provision sustains our life that we might find HIS life. Let me say that another way: God’s provision sustains our BIOS that we might find his ZOE. 

Summary:

#1: when it comes to this book, it’s not about his EXPECTATION of you but about his PROVISION for you --

#2: God has provided you life that you might find LIFE, and that you might share that LIFE with others.

March 15, 2020  
Pastor Jared Stoner
This week three in the series of services that are leading up to Easter. As a way of review for those of you who have been here the past two weeks and update for those who were unable to attend, allow me to recap the past two sermon messages as we look forward to today’s topic. Week one was a look at what was called The Problem, meaning sin, and was looked at through the lense of Matthew 4:1-11, the temptation of Jesus. Week two covered the topic of salvation, or right standing before God, explored through John 3, the encounter between Nicodemus and Jesus.

This morning we will be moving into John 4:5-26 as we consider the topic of God’s Provision.

And from watching Jesus engage the young lady in these verses in John 4 I discovered one of the most effective ways of getting people to engage with me. On the surface it looks like he engages with her by asking a question; but, if we pause and ponder what is happening here, we will see that he is not asking the question God desires us to ask. We, ask “What do you want FROM me?” when God wants us to be asking, “What do you want FOR me?” There is only one letter difference in the spelling, but a world of difference in meaning.

As I study the Biblical record and revelation, I see that the agenda of God is not centered on what He wants from us but what He desires for us, not what He wants to receive but what He desires to give.

Let’s trace this theme through the Scriptures. Turn your attention to Genesis 2 where we hear God say, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” What’s God’s concern? What He wants to receive from Adam or what He wants to give to him?

Flip ahead a few pages to Genesis 12, and listen in on God’s conversation with Abraham – and note that this conversation immediately follows mankind’s open rejection and rebellion at the city and tower of Babel.

The Lord says, “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

Notice there is not one word, syllable or letter about what God wants from Abraham, only what He wants for Abraham.

Turn to the beginning chapters of Exodus and eavesdrop on God’s conversation with Moses: “The Lord said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey....”

The pattern continues as you move through the Scriptures, climaxing with one of the verses highlighted in last week’s sermon: John 3:16 -- “For God so loved the world He GAVE his only begotten son...”

This book, contrary to what the vast majority of people think, especially in our nation is NOT about God’s expectations OF mankind, but about God’s provision FOR mankind.

And that is critical. I volunteer at the elementary school in my neighborhood and we stress reading. One thing the students need to learn is how to pick out the main thought, or, what we call, the big idea, of the book or story. You and I would call it the thesis. Because it’s the thesis or the big idea of the author that pulls all the other thoughts in the book together and in their proper place. If you miss the thesis your understanding of the entire book will be skewed.

Before dialing in on what God has provided for mankind, let’s take a moment to observe Jesus’ approach with the Samaritan woman, and, hopefully, glean something from it that we can incorporate into our lives as we approach the world in which we live, engaging them with the Gospel message.

Jesus approaches the woman with a question; she, in turn, questions him; and he responds with the most brilliant phrase designed to further engage the woman’s heart and intrigue her mind.

He says, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is asking you for a drink....”

Three very powerful words: “if you knew.” I want to add a word that I believe is inferred in Jesus’ response, “if you ONLY knew.”

Jesus is basically saying, “If you only knew, it would turn this situation upside down and inside out. If you only knew, I wouldn’t be asking you for what you have; you would be asking me for what I have.”

Imagine you are a car salesman. A young man walks into the showroom and begins to eye the new Ford Mustang gt500. You walk up and he immediately says, “Oh, I’ve been wanting that.” You could spend 10 minutes going into detail about the engineering and design of the car, the aerodynamics and the horsepower, the luxurious interior and on down the list. Or, you could just tilt your head slightly to one side and say, “If you only knew...” and then fall silent. Now the young man leans toward you and says, “What?” And you continue.... “If you only knew what it feels like to grip the steering wheel of this car as your foot takes the accelerator to the floor and you are thrown back into the leather of the driver’s seat, if you only knew...” If you only knew the thrill of coming out of a tight corner in second gear and the rear wheels ever so slightly breaking loose from the roadway