

# SERVICE PLAN 1

## The Meaning of Life: A Gift From God

### First Sunday: Life Is a Gift To Be Defended From Any Who Would Take It

*“My parents say they don’t want to be a burden. They want to die with dignity. Is that OK?”*

*This week we consider God’s gift of life and our responsibility to defend human life. This is true even when worldly philosophies determine that life only has value if it meets a perceived quality.*

#### **Service Plan:**

Hymn Suggestions: CW 414, *I Leave All Things to God’s Direction*

415 – *Be Still, My Soul*

428 – *Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me*

429 – *What God Ordains Is Always Good*

440 – *On Eagles’ Wings*

**Opening Hymn:** 428 – *Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me*

#### **Invocation:**

P: In the name of the Father

**C: Who gave us life**

P: In the name of the Son (+)

**C: Who purchased our life with His blood.**

P: In the name of the Holy Spirit

**C: Who makes new life ours through faith. Amen.**

#### **The Confession and Absolution:**

P: As we consider the gift of life that we celebrate today, God brings us to the realization that our sins, in fact, deserve death. But our God is a merciful God who wants to declare all of our sins forgiven and give us new life. Therefore let us confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to grant us forgiveness.

**C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment, both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

P: God our heavenly Father has been merciful to us and has given His only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Jesus came to pay for your sins and buy you back with His holy precious blood and His innocent sufferings and death. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ, and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

P: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord

Gloria suggestion:

Glory to God by David Haas, GIA Publications, G-3109

Melodic Gloria by James Chepponis, GIA Publications, G-2955

CW, Hymns 262-264

### **The First Lesson: Jonah 4:1-11**

*(Introduction ideas) Jonah wanted to take life into his own hands. He thought he knew better than God. Through the vine, God teaches Jonah a lesson in the concern He has for every soul and the authority over their life and death that is His.*

**Jonah 4:1-11** But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. He prayed to the LORD, "O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live." But the LORD replied, "Have you any right to be angry?" Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. Then the LORD God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine. But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered. When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live." But God said to Jonah, "Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?" "I do," he said. "I am angry enough to die." But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?"

### **The Psalm of the Day: Psalm 41 (Read Responsively)**

P: Blessed is he who has regard for the weak.  
**C: The LORD delivers him in times of trouble**  
P: The LORD will protect him and preserve his life;  
**C: He will bless him in the land.**  
P: In my integrity you uphold me,  
**C: And set me in your presence forever.**  
P: Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel,  
**C: From everlasting to everlasting, Amen and Amen.**

### **The Second Lesson: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 & 10:13**

*(Introduction Notes) Paul reminds us about the purpose and goal of our life – eternal life. And he reminds us that God will bring us safely there. There is nothing that will be too difficult for us.*

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

**1 Corinthians 10:13** No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

**Verse of Day: Alleluia Alleluia. Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. Alleluia.** [Proverbs 31:8,9]

**The Gospel Lesson: John 8:1-12**

*(Introduction Notes) The woman's life seemed worthless, disgusting, pointless. Jesus reminded the people that all have sinned and deserve death, and God decides when that will happen. In His intervention, He gave the woman the gift of life. Jesus tells her to use it to God's glory.*

**John 8:1-12** But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." 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."

**Hymn of the Day:** 429 – *What God Ordains Is Always Good*

**Sermon Text:**

Deuteronomy 32:39 "See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand."

**Sermon Theme: My Life Is the Lord's**

- I. It's a First Commandment Thing\*
- II. It's a Common Sense Thing\*

\* Substitute the word "Issue" if you prefer more formal parts

**The Confession of Faith:** *As our confession of faith on this Life Celebration Sunday, we use the words of Martin Luther's Explanation to the First and Second Articles to confess God as the Giver and Purchaser of our lives.*

**I believe that God created me and all that exists, and that he gave me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my mind and all my abilities.**

**And I believe that God still preserves me by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, property and home, spouse and children, land, cattle, and all I own, and all I need to keep my body and life. God also preserves me by defending me against all danger, guarding and protecting me from all evil. All this God does only because he is my good and merciful Father in heaven, and not because I have earned or deserved it. For all this I ought to thank and praise, to serve and obey him.**

**I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord. He has redeemed me, a lost and**

**condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death.**

**All this he did that I should be his own, and live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally.**

**This is most certainly true.**

### **The Prayer of the Church**

P: LORD God, heavenly Father, you are the Giver of life and the One who controls life, death and everything in between. We glorify You and thank You for the gift of life You have given to each of us. We ask that You would be with us as we go about our lives and help us to remember that our times are in Your hands and You control it all for our good. Teach us to number our days aright that we may gain a heart of wisdom. Lord, in your mercy...

**C: Hear our prayer.**

P: Forgive us, Savior of all, for the times when we imagine ourselves in control of our own life and death. Give us the strength to put You as Lord of our lives and help us to act in a way that clearly demonstrates our trust in You. Lord, in your mercy...

**C: Hear our prayer.**

P: God who wounds and God who heals, we don't always understand why You do what You do, but help us to accept it as it truly is – good. Now we ask that You would be with all those who are faced with difficult decisions about their health. Comfort them with Your promises and keep those promises, that not even questions of life and death can pluck them out of Your hands.

Lord, in your mercy...

**C: Hear our prayer.**

P: We especially ask that You would be with those who cannot help themselves because of their weakness or disease. Allow them the peace of knowing that You will do with them exactly as You wish according to their good, and strengthen their families to be able to say with confidence: My life is the LORD's. Lord, in your mercy...

**C: Hear our prayer.**

***At this point specific prayers for local issues may be highlighted***

P: Now hear us, LORD, as we bring You our private petitions.

P: In Jesus' name, we pray all these things, in whose name we also pray:

**C: Our Father... THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**Closing Hymn:** 440 – *On Eagles' Wings*

or Nunc Dimittis – (Consider version in CW – Occasional Services, Prayer at the Close of Day II)