

Whoever Finds Me Finds Life

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[0 : 00] Let's turn to the chapter we read, chapter 8, chapter 8, verse 25, verse 25.

For whoever finds me finds a life, and will take favor from the Lord. We know that wisdom is something that's essential for life.

Life will become very complicated, and it's not complicated enough without wisdom. And it's like anything you do is have wisdom, so that we will make correct decisions.

That we will do what I think, that we will be sensible in the things that we do in life. Because as we know, life is almost troubling and changing.

It's always so unpredictable, and we're often thrown into situations, and we confront experiences, and we say to ourselves, what do we do here?

[1 : 08] This morning was absolutely beautiful. We left this morning, a lovely Christmas morning. The forecast tells us the day won't end. The forecast is right.

The day won't end the way it began. Because there's a low pressure coming in, rain and days. And life is often like that. It's turning and twisting from times of pleasantness, and then all of a sudden it becomes difficult and problematic.

And we need wisdom to believe in life. And the Bible makes it very clear to us the importance of finding wisdom at the same time. This section here in Proverbs is an appeal to us to find wisdom. But you notice that wisdom is spoken of as a passion. Wisdom is a passion. Wisdom is a passion. Wisdom is a passion. And this is God's wisdom. And God's wisdom is spoken of as a passion. So we ask ourselves, who will that be? Well, again, the Bible answers us. It gives us that answer. And that's great thing the Bible sheds light or flows like in itself.

[2 : 19] Because when we go to the New Testament, we read in 1 Corinthians, we read there in chapter 1, verse 24, that Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

So as to the question, who is a Christian? Who is wisdom personified? We adore the New Testament, and it's Jesus Christ. Because he is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

And so really, what this version, this chapter is saying, we say, for whoever finds me, or whoever finds Christ, finds life, and obtains favor from the Lord.

But he who fails to find Christ, injures himself. All who hate Christ, love death. We quite legitimately put the name of Christ in there.

Because that is who this is talking about. Now, it talks about finding. And in order to find, we normally have to be searching.

[3 : 28] That's what we do. Occasionally, we find something we are looking for. We might have lost something, and we just come across it. So we go and looking for it. That's what we want to do. That's what we want to do. But we do spend a lot of our time searching for things.

I spend far, far too much of my time searching for things. I have an awful memory as to where I drew something, what I've done, and it's likely to be very frustrating.

And particularly, you spend a long time searching for something that's often unrelieved when you find it. But talking of finding usually means that prior to finding, there has been a search.

And so, I would hope today that everybody in here is searching or seeking for Christ. And somebody might say, oh well, only those who are outside Christ seek Christ more.

Everybody who has come to faith in Jesus Christ continues to seek him. In other words, we want more of him. That's what you've done when you came here today.

[4 : 42] You're saying within your heart, Lord, I want to discover more of his help. Lord, open the word up to me. Speak to me today.

I would love to think that everybody who has come here today has had that prayer in the heart, that can hear. Because if we're serious about that worship, we want to know this Lord.

We want to seek him. So seeking becomes an ongoing part of our life. The Apostle Paul, we've often said it before. Paul, who was that man who was just driven, driven in his work, driven in his missionary's deal.

He was a driven man who looked at him. But he was never content in his discovery of Jesus as Savior. I'm saying, well, that's it. I'm in the kingdom. I'll just saunter.

No. He was saying that I might know. But the knowledge that he had of Christ was such that he wanted to know more. And more. And more.

[5 : 47] Every day he wanted to know more and more. That is seeking the Lord. So I would hope that everybody here today has come, whether you have come to faith or not.

If you haven't come to faith, I hope you're seeking the Lord. You're certainly in the right place. The Lord loves his house. Wherever his people gather together.

And I would think to thee. And if you have come to faith and try, you're still seeking him and will continue to seek him. Now, we find here that there is this seeking.

Now, we know that by nature, there is a section in life. We're always looking for something. And so often people, it doesn't matter.

Some people will go down the road of religion. Some people will go down the road of the Christian faith. But others will go down the roads. And there are always looking. People that have restlessness in every heart.

[6 : 52] Sadly, some people never lift their eyes open. But they're still searching. They're still searching for something to satisfy life.

You find that people will often change. They'll move from one thing to another. Something satisfies to a certain extent. But there's always just this searching for something else.

I still haven't found what I'm looking for. It's been so often said. People are still saying that. I haven't found what I'm looking for. But you know when we come to Christ, we just say, Ah, I know I've found.

I have found. I have found the one. I'm looking for the one who makes life what it is. And that's what this verse is telling us.

It's all about life. It's all about faith. It's about God. It's about liberty. Because, you see, a Christless life, we're told at the end there, those who hate me will have death.

[7 : 51] That's the end result. Those who hate me, those who aren't interested in me, life is empty. You know what? In the Bible it tells us in Ephesians that those who are without Christ, that they're without God and without hope in this world.

And I find that one of the bleakest pictures that you can ever come across. Because that passion without hope is really strict on everything. I would hate to live my life and have no hope.

I can't think of anything worse. That's opening the door to despair. And so many people live within the realms of despair and futility and helplessness.

And they're saying, what's it all about? To me, life is meaningless. So many people are saying that. They exist. They go through the motions. They do. But it doesn't have a purpose.

And God is saying, you know, we slivered all day and that's how it is when we don't know God. Because God is our maker. And he's made us for himself.

[9 : 07] And he's saying to us, your greatest fulfillment in life, your greatest satisfaction in life, life will come together, the jigsaw will fit together when you find me.

Whoever finds me finds life. That's what we're told here. So we see that this, whoever finds me, finds life.

So I said, I hope everybody in here is seeking the Lord. So we have to ask for sure, how do we seek the Lord? Because I think that's a very important question to us.

And it's one that we have to answer. What I would say, the first thing that's important in seeking the Lord is that we are sincere in our seeking of God. Because Jesus knows we're more sincere or we're not.

Jesus knows why people were seeking. For instance, Jesus complained there were people who were seeking because they were seeking and for a lot of reasons.

[10 : 11] He said to them, you seek me because you saw the miracles and because you ate of the wrong soul. That's why you're seeking. Because you weren't the Lord. They were seeking Jesus because they saw the miracle.

And they were satisfied with the food that he gave them. But they weren't seeking him by themselves. And that's important. But obviously, when we seek Jesus, we seek to be saved. And we seek to be saved from death. We seek to be saved from eternal death. So, there is an aspect of it where we seek Jesus for what we can get out of it. Of course we do. But it's got to be more than that. We need to seek who he is in himself. That we might come to know then. And that's what's so important. And so Jesus knows if our seeking is sincere or not. Again, we have to seek him urgently. This is not a kind of a take it or leave an option.

[11 : 19] This is serious business. And we have to seek urgently because time is short. And the Psalms that we sang in Psalm 42 and in Psalm 63 are speaking about the urgency of seeking the Lord.

in the same way as a deer has been hunted. And that deer it's you can see it's a ton of that it's parched and it's looking for the water just to get some water.

And so there is this this is the idea of this emerging seeking. And this is what we have to do. The same way you remember the shepherds when they were seeking for Jesus.

The wise men who were seeking for Jesus. It was urgent with them. It was also a diligent search. There was the urgency but there was also the diligence.

In other words it was the kind of search that wasn't going to be signed by. Because my friend remember the seeking Jesus is hard but because there's a lot of powers and a lot of enemies that don't want you to see Jesus.

[12 : 28] there will be lots of obstacles and things put in your way to prevent you seeking Jesus. And if you're signed right there and roll off course right there that's no use.

It's got to be diligent. You've got to be where he is. Where is he? Where is in the Lord? If you're serious about seeking Jesus you've got to be leaving the Bible.

You've got to be playing. You've got to come to God's house. No point in saying I'm not seeking the Lord. I've never opened the Bible. Never prayed. Never come to God's heaven.

We tell these things are means of grace. And that is good that the Lord is to be found. He's to be found in his word. He's to be found when his word is read privately or publicly.

He's to be found amongst the preaching of the word. Amongst God's people. Amongst his house. Tells us that in the life. He has more delight in his house than in all the dwellings of Jesus.

[13 : 31] So we're going to remember that. So if we're serious and we're coming to the Lord, we're diligent in him, we will be with he is. And I think we're going to seek a humble.

Because we can't come to it without being clean. So cleaning out right and saying my Lord, I deserve to be saved. we must always remember he is the creator.

We are the creator. We must always remember that he is absolutely perfect and glorious. We come to him hungry. And that's the way that we have to come to see him.

But we're told that if we see him, we will find him. The Bible is full of that great promise of those who seek find. Ask him, you will be seated, knock and it will be open.

For whoever finds me, finds life. And that's the end of the season is finding the life. You see, by nature, by nature it's death.

[14 : 33] By nature, at the end of the day, dead to God, dead to Christ, dead to the world, dead to all these things. But when we find the Lord, we find life.

It's a wonderful thing where God's spirit will enter into a person's soul and you begin to see things and understand things. You know, it's funny that I say it's where you see people.

People come to the Lord. They don't know themselves where they are. But one of the things that begins to happen in their life, they say, things before the Bible was a cross group.

There were a few interesting stories. But it was by and large fairly meaningless. But it's begun to change a little bit. Because it's just growing in your heart.

And you say, you know, this is interesting. And you begin to enjoy coming to church. You begin to find uninterested things that before it was purely mechanical.

[15 : 46] You just did it, but it didn't mean anything. But now it's beginning to mean something. What's happening? God's spirit, the light, is beginning to go.

That's what happens. It begins to open things up. Beginning to see, beginning to grasp, beginning to understand, beginning to accept, beginning to enjoy, beginning to love.

All these things, it's an opening up of the truth. And this is all part of the finding. And so we find life, whoever finds life.

It's a meaningful life. And I think that's what we all want to listen to. You know, sometimes you hear people at the end of their life, and they say, I have to hear somebody say that, you know, I've lived a good life.

Sometimes you hear elderly people say that. And it's a great thing to be able, at the end of a person's life, to be able to look back and to be thankful and to be able to see it reflection, you know, I've lived a good life, a full life, a meaningful life.

[16:59] And you, would you think you're going to be able to say that? Now, I know that there are lots of things that we would say, well, I should have done this differently and I should have done that differently.

We all make mistakes, that's part and partial of life. But by and large, and we think we'll be able to look back and say, well, I've lived a meaningful life.

But if you're a Christian, you wouldn't be able to. because if you've gone down with that right road, you know, you know, you're one of those mistakes that you're away somewhere on holiday, you're in another part of the country and you're going from one place to another and you're driving and you have no idea whether you're on the right road or the wrong road.

And you're saying to yourself, you know, I have a feeling I'm going in the wrong direction. And eventually you arrive in a town or somewhere else and you say to yourself, you say to someone, this is way, you're miles away.

You say, you know yourself what it's like, that kind of feeling. And others with you know that feeling as well. But the thing is, you say, can you apply that to the life itself?

[18:19] How would it be to spend my life driving down the wrong road, going in the wrong direction? And the Lord is saying, you don't need to, you don't need to be going in the wrong direction.

It's still living the life that you do live in, in the environment that you live in, and the walk that you live in, and the family that you live in, and all these things.

This is life, this is your life, but at the heart of your life is the one who is life. And if we have him, then we know we're going in the right direction.

and we're able to see that it is a meaningful life. It's also we're told a happy, a pleasant life, that's what it tells us in the Bible, that the ways of wisdom, this is what it says, the ways are ways of presentness, and all the paths of peace.

That is this way. It's also a comfortable life, in the sense that we know that underneath us, there is a rock.

[19:27] All right, life sometimes moves, and you know, if you went on to sort of a, if you went into a, sometimes happen if you're out in the moor, walking in the moor, and you step into a marsh, you think, ah, this is okay, it's solid enough, and you go down, and all of a sudden, you start to really go down.

Sometimes you can go down, and you will find that underneath there's something solid, and you say to you say, oh, that's good, but sometimes there isn't, and it's an awful feeling when you say, ah, sometimes you just really sink down, and life can be like that, but you know, if we have Christ, the rock, in all the changing, in all the movement, if underneath us, there is one who is firm and solid, then that means we have a comfortable life.

There is comfort, even although there might be, and there will be storms, as Jesus himself painted the picture about the man who built the house on the rock and on the sand, and when the storms came, the one on the sand had collapsed because there was no foundation.

Is your life being built on the foundation that is Christ? If so, then you will have a comfortable life. You will live assured that you are on this rock.

It's also a developing life. You see, once you come to faith in Jesus Christ, you develop, you grow. There is continual growth. Now, that doesn't mean that the Christian is growing in leaps and bounds all the time, any more than you would say of a tree.

[21:04] That is, it is growing in leaps and bounds all the time. You go out just now, go to the castle grounds, and one of the things that you'll see all around is the ground strewn with leaves because autumn has come and winter is setting in.

And you don't see any buds. I do the way the seasons are working now. Sometimes you're almost seeing little birds, but normally in the winter, you won't see the bud.

And the growth, you're not seeing the growth. But then again comes spring and the start of the summer, there's the buds and the leaves coming in and there's growth.

And so it is very often in the Christian life. There are periods of winter in the Christian life. Many people will have their winter experiences, where they're maybe not growing in the way that they should or maybe the way they want to.

But the thing is, the Lord is still tending to them. And again there will come. He will deal with them and bring them back and the growth again is evident and they begin to flower and blossom again.

[22 : 11] again. And we've also got to remember that not every believer is going to grow at the same level. Not every believer is going to bear fruit at the same level. Jesus said that in the parable of the sower.

There's going to be some and they'll only bring forth thirtyfold. And there might be some in the church who will question whether they're Christians at all. Well, they ought not.

And the hundredfold believer should never look at the thirtyfold believer and say, I wonder if he's a Christian or not. In fact, I'll go as far as to say the hundredfold Christian would never even do that. The one who was bearing fruit would not be sitting in judgment and condemnation upon the one who's bearing little fruit.

But some will bear sixtyfold. And some will blossom, really blossom. And that's, Jesus said, that's the way it's going to be in the church. the important thing is that we do bear fruit, that we are growing, that we are developing.

And that's where the Christian life is. It's a developing life, and it's also a persevering life, a life that keeps going and going despite the knocks, despite the things that could knock you off track.

[23 : 26] You can lose a sense, my friend, of the life of Christ in your soul, but you will never lose Christ. You can lose a sense of his presence, of his power, but you will never actually lose himself.

The fire might go so, so low that it's barely visible at all, but the Lord knows it's still there, and he will yet fan the flame and bring it up.

Because it's a persevering life. You see, nothing can separate this life. Eternal life, once it begins, it's there forever. You cannot have a temporary eternal life.

Not even death can come along and snip it away. You can't cut it. Nothing can sever it. That's what the Bible tells us. That life, once it has begun, it develops and it perseveres.

It's forever. forever. And that's part of the glorious things because in this world, we don't have things that are forever. There are many things in life and they're special to us.

[24 : 44] Our families are special. But we know that this world is not forever. We're going to go. Nothing in this world lasts except one. And that is the union with Jesus.

it cannot be broken. Death itself cannot even break it. So it's no wonder that there's this huge or great appeal.

Whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor of the Lord. The Lord is always for you. The Lord is always near you.

He will never leave you. He will never forsake you. The Lord is always working everything for your good. Your life is part of that. In fact we're told that all things are for you.

We're told that in Corinthians as well. So it's a wonderful thing to know. To have the Lord. It means having everything. But you know at the very beginning of this chapter it warns us.

[25 : 48] At the beginning of the Proverbs in chapter one the Lord is saying look I want you to take this seriously. I want you to listen to what I say.

Verse 24 he says because I have called and you refuse to listen. Because I have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded.

Because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof. I will also laugh at your calamity. I will mock when terror strikes.

And then it says in verse 28 then they will call upon me but I will not answer. They will seek me diligently but will not find me because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord.

These are incredibly solemn words. And the Lord is saying that to us right at the very beginning. But then he goes on to appeal to us. Look, I'm calling to you.

[26 : 55] I'm reaching out. My hand is stretching out. I'm calling to you. Please accept this wisdom. Accept this life. Discover this life.

Discover this favor of the Lord. And then your life will be enriched. It will be blessed. It's life forevermore. I hope that everyone here today will choose this life.

Let us pray. O Lord our God, we give thanks for this word and we pray that we might be challenged by it.

That we may reflect as to where we stand in light of the word, the challenges of the word. It's personal. And we pray, Lord, that we may reach into our own souls and examine ourselves in the light of God's word.

Help us to believe the truth and to believe the one who is the truth. Guide us, each one, we pray and take away our sin in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.