

Dear fellow Redeemed by the blood of God's own Son,

Most of us like board games of some kind. America's first popular board game was created way back in 1860 by Milton Bradley.

Originally it was called "The Game of Life." The modern version is simply called, "Life," and reflects what most people would call life-experiences from college to retirement with jobs, marriage, and possibly children.

Foolish people actually think that life is a game with winners and losers, rich people and poor people. Jesus says that "one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." (Lk. 12:15) But who believes that in our day? To others the game of life is about being active. To them "life" is doing what they like to do whenever they want to do it. When it is no longer possible for them to have what they call a "quality-life," they wish "life" would come to an end.

Generally, humans define "life" according to their experiences. So, for many "life" does not have meaning all by itself, but requires an adjective to give it meaning, like "The good life," "The bad life," "The full life," and so on.

Those who say that life is not a game people play, but a gift, are closer to the truth. Those who breathe have surely been given life by God. But the life that merely "breathes" is not a gift that "keeps on giving" – it also takes! And there are tens of thousands who are breathing on our planet today, who would describe their lives as "a living hell"! In their ignorance, they cannot imagine a worse "life!"

People are so confused about "life." They don't know what it's really about. **BUT THE APOSTLE JOHN TELLS US WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT.**

## I.

It's all about Jesus Christ! Throughout His gospel and in the verses before us John writes about the "**signs**" Jesus did during His three-year ministry on earth. Already in chapter two John writes about our Lord's first miracle at the Wedding of Cana. This was only the beginning! His healing of all kinds of diseases, the blind, the

lame, the lepers; the raising of Lazarus and others from the dead – all of these signs were only some of the miracles Jesus did.

John tells us that **“Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book.”** In the last verse of His gospel John emphasizes this fact by adding, that if all the signs Jesus did were written one by one, **“I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.”** Imagine how excited the people were when Jesus of Nazareth, the famous healer and miracle-worker came to town! You can almost hear those who had seen Jesus saying to their friends: “You haven’t lived until you have seen a power-work done by this Miracle-Man!”

People act and speak similarly about “life” and living” in our day. They define their lives by the number of wonderful experiences they can have, as if life is a circus of the spectacular! The more exciting their lives are, the more they can cram into their earthly days, the more they feel they have lived! And others will often say about them when they die that they “lived life to the fullest.”

But notice what John says in verse 31. He says that **“these signs” are written that “you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”**

First, John tells us that “life” comes through believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He does not say that “life” comes by breathing, or by living, or by enjoying what we have to the fullest, or any such thing! Second, the “life” John speaks of stands all by itself – without adjectives of any kind – No thrills, spills, excitement, fullness, goodness or badness! Third, John does NOT say that we are to look for signs in our lives in order to find “life.” The **“signs”** John speaks of were not only Jesus’ miracles, but ALL that Jesus did or SAID that pointed to Him as the promised Christ, the Son of God. John says that the **“signs”** already recorded in His Gospel are for us to believe so that we may have **“life** in Jesus’ name.”

Life is all about Jesus! **“All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In**

**Him was** life, and the life was the light of men," as John writes in chapter one. God's Son already gave us life and breath and all things necessary for our earthly lives in the creation of all things. But "THE LIFE," is far different– as high above this life, as heaven is above the earth! This is THE life Jesus had "in Himself."

Because He has THE life in Himself, Jesus told His disciples in John 6, "**The** words that I speak, **they are spirit and** they are life." (John 6:64) But why did Jesus speak words that ARE LIFE, and have them recorded in the Holy Scriptures? Because man, sitting in the darkness of this fallen world, did not know what life is all about! Life is all about Jesus Christ,

## II.

because He is all about us! Over the years, I have heard people say stupid things in their darkness, like: "I will get back to church when life returns to normal." Or "I can't come to church until I get my life straightened out." The devil has persuaded them to think that LIFE is about THEM – their sins, their weaknesses, their worldly goals, and experiences. In their spiritual darkness they do not see THE LIGHT of LIFE. They cannot see that life is NOT about them, but Jesus because He is all about us!

Did He not come TO US – all the way from the eternal heavens? We did not come to Him. We could not, for we "**all have fallen short of the glory of God.**" (Rom. 3:23) But the eternal Son of God, the King of heaven, came into our human flesh as a lowly carpenter's son. He did not have to come into our world and breathe our sin-polluted air in order for Him to live. He already had LIFE.

But since He is life and He is all about us, He came FOR US. "**I have come that they might have life, and that they may it more abundantly,**" He says in John 10, "**I AM the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep.**" (10:10-11) Jesus did NOT come to live a perfect life in our places, so that he might teach us how to live in this world, as some believe. He came to live, suffer, and die in our places, for our sins, so that we might have THE LIFE – the life that He has "in Himself" – the eternal LIFE and glory that was HIS from eternity!

It's because LIFE is all about Jesus and He is all about us, that these words of Psalm 23 mean so much to us: **"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff they comfort me."** Will we "fear no evil" in the face of Death and dying because we have lived a full life on earth? NO! – Our comfort and peace will NOT be how we have lived, but the LIFE that Jesus lived in our places when He came TO us and died FOR us.

We will not hear the voice of a sympathetic stranger in these words, but the voice of our Shepherd-King! "Don't be afraid," He will say to us; "My own footprints are in this dark valley. I have already gone through it for you and conquered sin and death FOR YOU, so that you may have MY life, the LIFE that is in ME from eternity. Believe the signs and all that is recorded about ME and MY life for you, for these words "are spirit and they are LIFE! Trust ME, for I am coming for you."

Our Shepherd-Savior and King IS coming for us! As we close out another "Church-year," we repent of our sins and short-comings in the life we have lived this year. At the same time we give thanks that LIFE is all about Jesus, because He is all about us! Holy Scripture ends with the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, and these words of the Apostle John: **"He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."**