



ENTER God's presence

Relieve the troubles of my heart and free me from my anguish. Look on my affliction and distress and take away all my sins... Guard my life and rescue me; do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.

-Psalm 25:17-18, 20

Heavenly Father, thank you that we can find all our needs in you. Thank you for the freedom we receive through your Son Jesus. Help us now, as we gather around your word, to know even more deeply the freedom and fullness of life which you have given to us. Amen.



SHARE life together

1. **How have you seen Jesus at work in your life this week?**
2. **Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?**
3. **What person or thing would you find it most difficult to live without? Why?**
4. **What do people say is your most annoying habit?**

It's been said that "insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." That sounds a lot like addiction doesn't it - repeatedly doing something that self-reinforces patterns of behaviour, despite harmful consequences. We become addicted to ourselves and our wants or our prized purposes. We're slaves to the things that bother us and break our heart. We're in bondage to keeping our kids happy, or the device, or our work, our pride, our sense of entitlement or our feeling of being a victim. Addiction can happen to anyone...anytime. Deep down, all of us desire to live. We crave freedom to be truly alive, truly loved, truly accepted, truly secure and truly known. Jesus knows that desire for life and freedom; he also knows how easy it is to give our life over to things that steal, kill and destroy the very life we seek. But in Christ we are given a freedom and fullness of life beyond addiction that releases his best in us and releases us for his purposes in this world. He comes to bring the broken, stolen and dead parts of us back to life and restore in us a fullness of life that nothing on earth can match, and which nothing can take away. Today Jesus offers us true freedom and fullness of life beyond addiction

Week beginning:
Sunday 25th April 2021

Worship series:
Life Pulse



VERSE for the week

The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

John 10:10



REMEMBER this week



LISTEN attentively

Read John 10:1-10, 27-30

5. **What do you find challenging/confusing/comforting about this text?**
6. **Jesus says, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” What does fullness of life mean to you?**
7. **What things/people/situations are currently threatening to ‘steal, kill, or destroy’ the life you have in Jesus?**
8. **Jesus also promises that , ‘no one will snatch them out of my hand.’ (v28) what hope does that give you in the face of those things that seek to steal, kill, and destroy?**

What makes your life ‘full’? What is it in life that makes you feel significant? How do you measure success in life? How do you know when you have ‘made it’, or is there always something more to achieve? The way we answer these kinds of questions tells us something about what drives us, what motivates and energises us. Our lives, our passions, our motivations and desires are all part of what make us who we are, they are God’s gifts to us, part of what it means to be made in his image. When these things are turned toward and focussed on him, then we experience fullness of life, just as Jesus promises. However, when our passions and desires are misdirected then we are quickly robbed of the joy of the fullness of life we have in Jesus. For example, it is right and good to desire to love and care for your family and to expect to find a level of love and acceptance in return. However, if the first and most significant place we turn for love and acceptance is our family, more so than our relationship with God – our Heavenly Father, then what began as a right desire is misdirected and instead of being a blessing, becomes a burden.

9. **What ‘good’ things in your life have found ways to become burdens rather than blessings?**
10. **How does the world around us reinforce our misdirected passions and desires?**

Whether we use the term ‘fullness of life’ to describe it, or whether we opt for other familiar phrases like, ‘the pursuit of happiness’ or ‘self actualisation’ this is the addiction that plagues all of humanity. The overwhelming desire of our hearts is to be happy, to lead a life that brings us joy and fulfillment. A life in which we experience the greatest amount of pleasure and gratification and the minimal amount of pain and suffering. The crazy thing is that this kind of fullness of life is exactly what Jesus offers us, yet we are consistently persuaded to look for it in other places. While Jesus promises that nothing can snatch us from his hand, it is a different story when we freely chose to find significance and fulfilment in other places. This is the insanity of our situation. Jesus offers us what we need yet we continue to reject his offer and look in other places. This is the addiction which all humanity has in common, an addiction to sin. We keep coming back to it despite it’s negative consequences.

11. **Do you agree that our relationship to sin could be described as an addiction?**
12. **How does it make you feel to think about sin in that way?**



GROW deeper

Read Romans 6:15-18 and Galatians 5:13-26

One of the problems with an addiction is the irrational thinking behind it. Those who have experience more overt forms of addiction often express an understanding of the problem, sometimes even a desire to change, but also a complete inability to affect the needed change. This very much describes the problem of sin for a Christian. The apostle Paul captures the sentiment most effectively in Romans 7:19, “For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing.” The problem is that we have been led to believe that freedom comes from our ability to make choices. We believe that we can choose not to sin and therefore we can find freedom from sin by simply making the right choices.

Yet the reality of freedom is completely different. Our freedom is never determined by our choices, in fact most of our choices lead us away from true freedom in Christ and towards obligation and slavery to all sorts of other things. Our freedom comes from the choice that God made in his son Jesus to pay the price necessary to buy our freedom and restore us to fullness of life for all eternity.

13. In Romans 6:19 Paul says he uses the example of slavery because it was an example from every day life at the time. What example from life today might help unpack the transition from 'slaves to sin' to 'alive in Christ'?

14. The author of Galatians says, "walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." What does it mean to 'walk in the Spirit'?



LIVE purposefully

So often we get caught up in the things which the world tells us or even the things which we convince ourselves are necessary. Often these things are simply the desires of our flesh, trying to drown out the voice of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who is calling us to follow him into fullness of life. Your righteousness and freedom are not something you have to earn or achieve for yourself, you are free and righteous on account of Jesus who chose to lay down his life and redeem you. So what will you do with that freedom?

15. How does the knowledge of your freedom in Christ shift your thinking and decision making?

16. Who are the people you know that might be feeling trapped and need to hear Jesus message of freedom? How will you share the message with them?

17. How will you strive to 'walk in the spirit' more consistently this week? Share your ideas with the group and help each other with accountability before your next LifeGroup.



PRAY intentionally

- Praise God for freeing us from sin, death and the power of the devil. Thank Jesus for choosing our freedom and redemption by laying down his life on the cross for us. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you live daily in the freedom and fullness of life you have in Christ Jesus.
- Continue to pray for LifeWay Cambodia and Pastor Vibol as they continue to share the life of Jesus in strict Covid-19 lockdown conditions.
- Pray for the upcoming LifeWay call meeting on May 2nd, that God would help us as his church, to discern his will for pastoral leadership in the LifeWay Illawarra community.



BLESS one another

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross in the air as you say...

[Name], in Christ you have life abundantly. Amen.