



Christmas Hope: The Life that Counts

1 Peter 3:13-4:11

The life that counts is gripped by the following realities:

- Jesus is the suffering Savior, the risen Lord, and the triumphant King who alone is worthy of all your love, all your life, and all your hope.
- Heaven will be eternally satisfying, Hell will be eternally horrifying, and every single person will go to one of these two destinations very soon.
- The purpose of your life on this earth is to proclaim the gospel while doing good.

Sermon Discussion Questions – December 13, 2020

1. Thinking back on last week's message and discussion, did you sense any personal growth in showing radical love, radical sympathy, and radical tenderness towards others last week? Where do you see the need to keep growing in these areas? Did you experience radical love from others in your church family?
2. What are your greatest dreams and life ambitions? What factors and considerations instinctively drive your decision-making (e.g., decisions about how to steward time, resources, and/or relationships)? In other words, what are you honoring as holy? Now, of those dreams and ambitions, which ones are perishable (i.e., which ones will not endure through eternity)? Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 and 1 Peter 1:23. In what ways would you like to stand more firmly and give more of yourself over to the work of the Lord (cf. John 6:29)?
3. When you think of someone making their life count for the sake of the gospel, does anyone specifically come to mind that you felt modeled this type of living well? What was it about his or her life that stood out to you? What did you notice about their joy, happiness, and closeness to Jesus?
4. Read Psalm 16:11, Isaiah 25:6-9, and Revelation 21:1-5. What do you imagine eternity with the Lord will be like? Do you long for our true, eternal home, or do you often find yourself distracted by the cares and attractions of this world? Read Colossians 3:1-4. In what practical ways can you remind yourself this week to "set your mind in things that are above..." rather than on the things of earth?
5. Read 1 Peter 4:5, Matthew 25:14-30, and 1 John 2:28. Looking ahead to the day when we all will stand before the Lord to give an account for the ways we aimed to make our life count for the sake of the gospel's spread, what do you want to be able to say to the Lord on that day? Is there a disconnect between what you'd want to say and how you're currently living? What might you need to do differently now in order to move toward that desired end?
6. Read Romans 5:6-8. Also read 1 Peter 3:18, which portrays Jesus as the suffering Savior who died for the sin of all mankind so that people might be restored to

relationship with God. Have you trusted in Jesus as Lord of your life in order that you might be reconciled to God? If not, what might be keeping you from surrendering your life fully to Him?

7. Read 1 Peter 4:7; Matthew 24:36-44 and 25:1-13, and Revelation 7:9-10 and 22:20. What might it look like to live daily as if Jesus will return at any moment (as He promised that He would!)?
8. Read Psalm 90:10-12, Ephesians 5:6-18, and Colossians 4:5-6. There are 168 hours in each week. In an average week, how do you spend those hours? When you consider the weekly spread of your time, what opportunities do you have for 'redeeming the time' by purposefully reallocating your time toward more redemptive activities?
9. Consider the grave certainty that Heaven will be eternally satisfying, Hell will be eternally horrifying, and every single person will go to one of these two destinations very soon. How might this sobering reality reshape your perception of nonbelievers in your midst? How might you adjust your approach to and interactions with them in light of this solemn truth?
10. The purpose of your life on this earth is to proclaim the gospel while doing good. Consider the spaces through which you will pass (whether in person or online) this coming week. In what new private and public ways might you live, share the message of Jesus with others, and do good for His glory – even at the 'risk' of suffering?
11. Read John 16:33. When you consider the possibility of suffering, what is your spontaneous reaction? Now read Matthew 5:3-11 and 1 Peter 3:14-15, which promise blessing to those who suffer for righteousness' sake. In what new ways do you want to take God at His word and 'risk' suffering for righteousness' sake? What steps might you take this week toward that end?
12. Making one's life count for the gospel can look many different ways. For example, one way might be showing greater intentionality and faithfulness where the Lord has currently placed you (e.g., in parenting, in reaching your neighbors, in your job). On the other hand, the Lord might be leading you to make a radical change in your life for the sake of the spread of the gospel. After this week's message, what specifically might the Lord be putting on your heart regarding ways (e.g., pursuing a different job, moving to a different area, or maybe even going overseas on mission) you might make your life count for the gospel? How might one discern the Lord's leading in these areas?
13. This Christmas season, are there any creative ways you can proclaim the good news to those around you? Are there specific individuals you can ask your group to pray for as you look for opportunities to share the gospel with them in the days ahead?