

Today I could be accused of false advertising - worship bulletin – “What you see is not what you get!” – too many funerals to write that sermon – inspiration other places, from the lives of the saints whose lives I have remembered this week.

“Testing the Spirits!” will have to wait – today, “Builders for Eternity.”

What inspiration I have drawn – lessons I have learned!

1 Life is good! From all these people, life is good!

Pessimists – hospital call – family of woman in next bed to our church member –

“I would not want to be raising children in this world!” how terrible are things
It’s never been easy to raise children - the world has always been a rough place,
life has never been easy.

But life is good! – Poem *The Desiderata* – legend found in an old cathedral
written by Max Ehrman

Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let
this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals,
and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Life is good! We must all do our part to make it a beautiful world!

– baby dedication service – commitment from parents to do their part
– commitment from congregation – stand and pray – do our
do our part to help make a world wherein all children grow up healthy & happy

It only takes on person to make it a beautiful world – to make life good for others!

– J.O. Williams story – bottles and tomatoes from bus on black kids
“Why don’t you hate all white people? white minster of the CC (DoC) Raleigh, N.C.
One person can make the differnce – make life good for others!

2 Life is better when we learn to love – care about others – serve, share, give!

– Albert Schweitzer - commencement address – “your destiny? serve - happiest.

Bill Shoop reminded us at Ima Lou Langley’s funeral –

There is no package smaller than a person all wrapped up in him/her self.”

It's true – woman in Cameron, MO nursing home – 70 years old – forced myself to visit
Constantly complaining, discontented, they wouldn't do this, or that!
Aids never came when she called – people were jealous –
Never thought about or talked about anyone but herself - nobody
Nobody on the staff wanted to see her – relieved when she moved!
Found the staff the same at the next nursing home!

But take a person who has discovered how to care, serve, give - that person has friends

One night an older African American woman was standing on the side of an Alabama highway trying to endure a lashing rainstorm. Her car had broken down and she desperately needed a ride. Soaking wet, she decided to flag down the next car. A young white man stopped to help her, generally unheard of in those conflict-filled 1960's. The man took her to safety, helped her get assistance and put her into a taxicab.

She seemed in a big hurry, but wrote down his address and thanked him. Seven days went by and a knock came on the man's door. To his surprise, a giant console color TV was delivered to his home. A special note was attached. It read: "Thank you so much for assisting me on the highway the other night. The rain drenched not only my clothes, but also my spirits. Then you came along. Because of you, I was able to make it to my dying husband's bedside before he passed away. God bless you for helping me and unselfishly serving others."

Sincerely, Mrs. Nat "King" Cole

Maybe not wealth in things and money,
but like George Bailey, friends & wonderful life!

Life is good – better when we learn how to love, give, serve, share!

3 - Life is short!
Many of you don't understand what I'm talking about! Just a cliché for old foggies!

I remember what it was like to be young – believe it or not!! Black and white world!!
– end of school would never come – spring time, windows open, birds chirping
longed to be outside, the school day never would never end!
– Christmas would never come! Weeks were eons long!
Christmas Eve – told parents – "I want to be in bed by 8 o'clock."
"Is it 8 o'clock yet?" "Is it 8 o'clock yet?" "Is it 8 o'clock yet?"

But somewhere that changed!!
Turned 30! Sarah came down aisle - surprise birthday party after church.
Turned 40 another surprise birthday party – black balloons, a wheel chair,

“Just for Men”

Now I know life is short!

My father kept saying – “Don’t grow up so fast!” I know what he meant!

When the kids are in diapers - “This will never end!” It does end!

Blink – they are in elementary school – blink - they are 13 - “This will never end!”

It does end! – graduating from high school, off to college, home again

Then you wonder, “Will they ever leave.”

Tom Geha – moved son’s things into to apt – “You live here now!”

Robert Frost knew it well! – “Nothing Gold Can Stay?” – Remember it?

Nature's first green is gold,

Her hardest hue to hold.

Her early leaf's a flower;

But only so an hour.

Then leaf subsides to leaf.

So Eden sank to grief,

So dawn goes down to day.

Nothing gold can stay.

Life is short – days pass away faster and faster! Time to wake up – seize the day!

Not talking about –

– “Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we may die.”

– Schlitz commercial –

“You only go ‘round once in life, so you better grab for all the gusto you can get.”

But using making the most of every day.

Griff Hamlin wrote about in one his little books.

“When I was young I was always in a hurry for spring to come, for summer to come, for the fall colors.” But now that I’m older I’m not in such a hurry!

Making the most of each day that I have – enjoying every season!

The apostle Paul knew the same thing –

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Then us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Romans 13:11-12

Life is short – too short to waste!

- I've heard it said, "We get another chance to do it again, to correct our mistakes."
I don't know about that – perhaps it is true!

I have discovered from many people that each day has its pleasures & problems,
opportunities & challenges.

But once the day is gone, it is gone! We can't get it back!

Therefore, it is important - crucial – imperative!! – that we make the most of it!

4 Life is short – but life has eternal dimensions - significance!

Some people disagree

- popular song in the 80's – "All we are is dust in the wind!"
- our Buddhist friends – compassion and impermanence!

Any sense of permanence is an illusion, everything is always in flux!

Even the self – there is no such thing as "I", "Me," "Myself" –

Matter of years we all change – cells die and are replaced,

we are not the same people we were a couple of years ago.

Once we accept the fact of impermanence – stop striving to hold onto things

we are enlightened, free to enjoy each day, each moment!

That may all be true! We may learn things from our Buddhist friends –

- western society too much striving for things, no question!

But something within says that I am real –

- even though I have changed in the past twenty years, I am the same person,
I am not the same person I was at 18! But I am the same person!

What we think and feel may change from year to year, from day to day,
but what we say and do has lasting effects, eternal results!

Isn't it strange how princes and kings,
and clowns that caper in sawdust rings,
and common people, like you and me,
are builders for eternity?

Each is given a list of rules;
a shapeless mass; a bag of tools.
And each must fashion, ere life is flown,
A stumbling block, or a Stepping-Stone.

- R. L. Sharpe

We are builders for eternity!

Through this toilsome world, alas!
Once and only once I pass;
If a kindness I may show,
If a good deed I may do
To a suffering fellow man,
Let me do it while I can.
No delay, for it is plain
I shall not pass this way again.

Unknown