

“The Alternative To Boredom: THE Life”

John 14:5-6

*Someone once said that the most terrifying thing in life is to do anything for the last time.

--I've always wanted to know how you can tell if it is the last time?

*Maybe you could come up with something specific like Lady Gaga, “Love is the most terrifying thing in life.”

I think there is something more terrifying than roller coasters, parachuting, or any other thrill-inducing experience that you might have

I think one of the most terrifying things in the world is boredom. It is doing the same things over and over again, with the same people, in the same places, in the same old ways. Sameness results in boredom. Dullness. Weariness. Tedium. Doldrums. “Dead calm.”

Boredom is tedious dullness. I read a recent article that said reality shows are so popular because they inject a “what-would-it-be-like” into our boring lives.

“What-would-it-be-like” to live in the swamps and bayous of Louisiana? How would I survive? Well, you don't have to worry about trying it. We have “Swamp People.”

“What-would-it-be-like” to live off the land in the Great Smoky Mountains, or the Blue Ridge, or the Adirondacks? You don't have to experience that. We've got “Mountain Men.”

“What-would-it-be-like” to drive a semi-truck across a frozen lake in Alaska? Don't worry about it. Just tune in to “Ice Road Truckers.”

“What-would-it-be-like” to find an old movie poster in a garage sale and find out it is worth \$10,000? Just tune in to “Pawn Stars.”

Reality TV lets us go to places we would never go to, and do things we'll never do, and see things we'll never see, because we can just flip the switch and dream about it with the same people in the same places in the same old ways. Without doing anything.

Do you live with the hope that someone, something, some new experience will invade your life and give it new excitement and purpose?

Would you say that your life is thrilling? If you can't say that you are thrilled with your everyday life, then you are bored.

And what is boredom? The fear that the next day will be the same as today.

What would it take to make your life thrilling? And I don't mean roller-coaster ride thrilling. I don't mean wrestling-an-alligator thrilling. I'm not talking about doing a figure eight in a semi trailer on a frozen lake.

Jesus says that He is the LIFE! And I can't help but feel that the majority of humanity on planet earth, and way too many that claim to follow this Giver of Abundant Life, are missing out on what He had in mind.

Listen, Jesus came to provide an experience of ENTHUSIASM and not EXCITEMENT, and there is a world of difference in the two.

*Our media is all about stirring up "emotion." "The stock market SOARED/PLUNGED," and these are emotional words. Imagine getting into an elevator with two buttons: "Soar" or "Plunge?"

The word for "excitement" means "to arouse, to arouse to feeling," and in the KJV days of 1611ad, it was used of "device," and was a word from "cite" meaning "to put into motion" (to "incite" a riot is to put a crowd into motion)

But this word in the N.T. is always presented in a negative context, which tells us that "excitement" isn't what we are to be pursuing

*Acts 17:29 "Therefore, since we are God's offspring, we should not **think** that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone..."—basically, don't get excited about gold, silver, material things*

*Matt. 9:4 "Knowing their **thoughts** (excitements), Jesus said, "Why do you entertain evil (unprofitable, unproductive) thoughts in your hearts?"*

*Matt. 12:25 "Jesus knew their **thoughts** (excitements) and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined..."*

*Heb. 4:12 "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the **thoughts** and attitudes of the heart."*

So "excitements," those things that stir us up to keep us from living a boring life, are not the things to provide an abundant life

There is another thought we need to consider: ENTHUSIASM

"Enthusiasm" is "en" and "theos" which means "in God," and is spiritual/faith based, and means "to be inspired"

Listen, "excitement" is that sharp, sudden experience built on a momentary event, but enthusiasm persists in the midst of the mundane, the usual, the ordinary

And we'll never know fullness of life until we learn to win the battle of the boring

Jesus calls us into an enthusiastic quality of life in fellowship with Him, and then He gave us a commission that would banish boredom from our lives forever...an abundant life

Jesus Christ came to make life thrilling, and the key word to describe this new life Jesus came to impart is JOY!

It is an enthusiasm/joy that is independent of people, places, positions, and pleasantries, and Jesus is the only lasting antidote to boredom

Before we see how to resolve this major problem, let's see four things about how boredom operates:

- 1.** Boredom is symptomatic, that is, it tells us something deeper is wrong, and it is the opposite of everything God created us to know and experience
--when life deteriorates to "sameness," we have missed the "many splendored thing"
- 2.** Boredom is self-inflicted. It comes from accepting the fact that the life we have is all there is, maybe all we deserve; it is a self-inflicted spiritual sickness
--it is being introverted on a person who has not become very interesting: ourselves
--if we don't enjoy ourselves and our life, who will?

--boredom is settling for sameness because we refuse to take responsibility for ourselves

3. Boredom is seeking to find meaning in the relationships/responsibilities of life, rather than bringing meaning and purpose to them.

--the most attractive and interesting person, place, thing in our life will become boring unless we bring vitality and vigor to our relationship with him/her...it might be a spouse, a new job, a new church, whatever

--the reason people become boring is that we expect them to do/be something to make life exciting for us, and when we don't, we think, "Well, a new mate, new job, new church will bring excitement to our boring life."

--what we don't get is we are taking the problem with us: US!

--no job, or person, or church is meant to be our ultimate meaning

4. Boredom is the trapped feeling of having no place to go, no new worlds to conquer

See, when your purpose in life is to get ahead, what do you do when you arrive?

If financial security is your thing, how much is enough?

If recognition is the lust of your life, how many people will it take to satisfy that?

It's disheartening to meet people who have what we've been pressing to acquire, and find out they are bored!

Remember this: There are no heights we can climb, no achievements we can acquire, no recognition we can be given, no friends we can make that will cure boredom

The Lord made it this way; He alone is meant to be our reason for living

Paul discovered this; I believe one of the reasons he persecuted the church prior to his conversion was that he was bored

Don't agree? Look at his confession in Phil. 3: he had achieved all that could be acquired to make his life significant: circumcised on the eighth day (he was an "eighth-dayer),

Hebrew of Hebrews, tribe of Benjamin, distinguished Pharisee, member of the powerful Sanhedrin

--what else was there? What other honors? What new worlds to conquer?

Then he witnessed the stoning of Stephen, whose passion for Christ made him radiant with joy...even as he was being stoned

--after his conversion, he came to the place of saying the only words that can finally banish boredom..."For me to live is Christ."

For Paul, he found that life really became meaningful when he quit chasing "excitements" and, possessed by the Holy Spirit, became "enthusiastic" "IN CHRIST"

Paul found in Jesus what he called "the fullness of life"—and so can we!

--True "life" in Jesus is the thrilling, enthusiastic alternative to boredom, and I'll give you four ways that it happens:

1. It begins with an intimate relationship with Jesus Himself

--don't get confused with religion, church membership, both of which can be boring without a relationship with Jesus

What is it that people get bored with? Jesus? No. Church? No. It is themselves, even though they like to put it on everything and everyone else

I've known my share of bored church members and bored preachers that want to mislead you into thinking that more theology, more rituals, more committees, more creative approaches will cure your boredom

The experience of joy is the sure test that we have begun this new life in Jesus

John 15:11 "These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

--we will drift back into boredom unless we experience a freshness for each day's needs and opportunities

God created us so that life will become boring without consistent companionship from Him

Solomon discovered that; he battled boredom when he finally confronted the vanity of his life

His definition is a good explanation of boredom, "All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with the seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said, 'See, this is new?' It has been already, in the ages before us." —Eccl. 1:8-10

--and his experience with boredom finally forced him to realize in Eccl. 3:14 that "God has made it so, in order that men should fear Him."

2. It leads us to become a celebrant.

--because His joy is in us, we can celebrate ourselves, others, the wonders of life

--a celebrant is one whom Jesus has liberated to take sheer delight in being a very special, loved, forgiven, accepted, cherished person, and who can enjoy the person he/she is

--you can't be bored if you are fascinated with what Christ is doing with the potential of your life

**Jehu, 2 Kings 9-10, he took the throne from Ahab and destroyed his influences, was fiercely committed, actively obedient (though sometimes he needed direction), but you don't read his story and not sense the enthusiasm; he set about to destroy the Baals, and chases after two evil kings, Joram and Ahaziah*

--while track down Joram, Joram is keeping a close eye out, and sees someone coming, so he sends riders out, but the riders don't come back. He still can't figure out who it is, and says, "The driving is like that of Jehu...he drives like a madman." On this pilgrimage to right the wrongs of Ahab, he meets Jehonadab, who was also zealous for the Lord. Jehu asks if Jehonadab is with him, and he assures him he is. Then Jehu says, "Give me your hand." So he did, and Jehu helped him up into the chariot. Jehu said, "Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord." Then he had him ride along in his chariot! In the midst of battle, this guy is celebrating!

3. It leads us to celebrate people.

Boredom usually comes from expecting people to excite us rather than helping people discover what an exciting miracle they are

--to celebrate someone is to admire, affirm, listen, express delight over their uniqueness

--people aren't a means to an end, but ends to be enjoyed for themselves

4. It leads to realizing His primary purpose in my life.

It is an undeniable part of His plan that we will be bored until we are involved with Him in His central purpose

*I'm giving you an opportunity in CE/Youth to get out of the boredom/routine of life!
Your welcome!

He created us to know and love Him; once we do, other people become our purpose and our passion

--people are where the action is for the Lord; He lived, died, was resurrected that all might know His love and forgiveness, might experience eternal life now in abundance and forever in heaven

--there is nothing to be equaled with helping someone find a soul-satisfying relationship with Jesus; no hobby can match it; no job can rival its satisfaction; no sport can equal its excitement

I'm ready to say that it's the law of the kingdom of God that we are destined to boredom if we don't discover the adventure of caring about people

It means to become involved in a stretching challenge to alleviate the causes of human hopelessness and suffering

See, boredom comes from living in our own strength within the confines of our own capacities

There must be some area or relationship in our lives by which we are attempting the humanly impossible

*Robert Browning was right: “A man’s reach much exceed his grasp, or what’s a heaven for?”

What are you reaching for that exceeds your grasp? What are you attempting that can’t be pulled off without a mighty intervention and invasion of the Holy Spirit’s power?

You can easily discover what needs doing or saying if you just listen to your complaints about people, church, or government

So what are you going to do about it? That silences a lot of fruitless and futile theorizing

To become involved in the solution of a problem heals the boredom that no new job, new spouse, new environment will ever cure—and Jesus can make that happen.

Here’s another opportunity to seal the deal...and you won’t get it by watching “Survivor.”