



THE MEANING OF LIFE

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”
(John 1 v 1-5)

These words start one of my favourite Bible Readings – often heard at Christmas, but not only then. The sense of continuity - of Jesus having pre-existed Creation and still alive today... He was the power through which all was made, especially life, the ‘life that is the light of mankind’ is an idea which overwhelms... and has been debated and discussed by philosophers and theologians since John first wrote it down in his scroll...

But what is the ‘life that is the light of mankind’? The word ‘life’ is used nearly 600 times in the NIV Bible and I don’t imagine there is proper scope for defining and teasing out all the layers of meaning and understanding and usage and tradition and inspiration in this month’s Twinspire. So I am limiting myself to a few aspects of the ‘abundant life’ we are called to, as we seek, serve and follow Jesus.

Life in all its fullness

New Year brings new calendars and diaries in our house. My kitchen organiser had lasted 16 months and I found a bargain at the end of December and spent a few days transferring the information over.



I love the new clean space of a new diary or calendar, and was aghast to realise that January was brimming over with meetings, stuff that needs to happen and appointments etc. This was before I’d even got back to work... and I did take a few hours to step back and work out what should take a priority, and where things could muddle on till February... or whenever... But I also realised that this overflowing calendar is actually one of the promises God made, and is evidence of his love for me and my family!

Jesus said - *I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.* (John 9 v 10) and I cannot think of a better illustration for this full life than that involved with the Church.. Not just dipping your

toes in on a Sunday morning service but completely immersed throughout the week – seeking individually in scripture and prayer... and seeking corporately in the work and fellowship of the body of Christ – serving and following and being part of the abundant life that is offered to us.

God’s family is vast – stretching back to the first people created all the way to us today – but it is not family like we know it – we are all His children – God has no grandchildren! Whether we are an ancient Israelite or someone in 21st century Polmont - God wants the same relationship with us. Through Jesus’ death on the cross we have access to his Holiness and friendship, and He will hear our prayers and reach out to us.

We are all adopted children in this family, so we have a place at His table and a room in His mansion. Our big brother Jesus has gone ahead to prepare the space God has allocated to us.

God’s family has no borders – and we should count it joy to reach out to other siblings in Mission (Christians in Scotland have been so blessed) or in Twinning (where we can share equally with each other), as we reach out to each other in acts of service and generosity.

But, in my mind, a housegroup is the best way to participate in this full life – joining in with others who are on the same path, sharing the blessings and the challenges, serving and being served, seeing each other as God sees us... by being part of His family through being together regularly and sharing the ups and downs of life. I’ve said it here before, the best times of youth ministry here in Polmont have been around the dining room table at the Manse. I count the members of our housegroup as some of my closest friends. It is through eating and talking and laughing together we appreciate each other’s gifts and are able to recognise and enable each other to go on to bigger things.



So, sibling, join us at God’s table – reach out to others with food and fun. Spend time together talking about what is happening in your life – God will bless you and draw you closer to Himself as you become closer to each other. Before you know it, you will have a better understanding of the full life he has promised you.

Find that slot in your calendar for something that will refresh you and overflow into the lives of those around you... if you can’t find a housegroup to suit, start one yourself - see Jerome for details!

Tracey