

## LIVE PASSIONATELY.

**TEXT:** Luke 5:18-20; 24-26 (NIV)

**THEME:** To live passionately for God, and for the life that God has given you to live.

Our text for today comes from **Luke 5: 18-20; 24-26**. If you knew you had one month to live, how would you live your life? Good question isn't it? I guess that if we took stock of our situation; we would realize what was important and remove the things or obstacles that hold us back in life.

There are four main points that I would like to look at today, [1] Do something drastic; [2] Expect the unexpected; [3] Create God space and [4] Keep a constant remainder. These will come up during the course of the sermon.

Our main theme today is passion. What are you thinking of when I say the word 'passion'. A healthy love life, perhaps? Or Mel Gibson's movie, 'The Passion', that I'm sure we've all seen since it came out a few years ago. In a nutshell, passion is something that we have a yearning for with a bit of enthusiasm thrown in as well. It is something that happens to us at one time or another during our lifetimes!

Today we want to put a bit of passion into our living; we want to live life passionately. When you come to think about it, nothing ever happens without passion. I guess this is what motivated the great musicians, Mozart etc, artists, architects, actors - dramatists etc. Passion pushes people of all kinds to seek, explore and discover new horizons, new cures, seek new adventures, all because they are filled with this feeling deep within them.

I'm hoping that over the duration of this series, you will be really passionate about living your life. Let's not just go through the motions of life, but be really passionate about our lives. After all, the life we live is the only ones that we'll ever live! So, let's make it really worthwhile.

I'd like to believe that most of us will rise to the occasion and reinvigorate our zest for life once more. Let me share this: a few years ago, I was watching Sixty Minutes [you may have seen this as well] it showed a girl from Sydney [?] suffering from anorexia and that if she didn't get immediate help, which was in the USA, then she would mentally switch off from food and would die soon.

Her story was bad, but what grabbed my attention was a young boy of 13 or 14 who lived at the same institution; he had the most sad, uninterested look I've ever seen on one so young. His father had rejected him, and he seemed to have lost all hope at

everything; such as loving relationships, friends, family, and life itself; his face haunted me for a long time after that. No matter what anyone was saying to him, he looked as though he didn't believe them and more that that; he didn't seem to care or know they were there at all.

So, can we lose our passion for life: we sure can? "So love the Lord God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and energy." Mark 12:30 (Msg). To avoid losing our passion for the Lord or our lives we can: **Do Something drastic**. In the gospel lesson I'm using for today, verse 19, states that, **When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.**

The crowd was keeping them from Jesus: so they did something drastic. They tore a hole in the roof! I don't know about you, but that is something very

drastic indeed. Back to the original question, if we knew we only had 30 days to live, what would or wouldn't we do in our lives, if we know that we will never, ever, pass this way again? We saw the short clips before this series; some people saying they would eat more donuts, travel, and read the Bible more, etc. that repeated question is certainly a wake up call to help us focus on living our lives without regrets when lying on our deathbeds.

If we were facing death in the face, with a few more days to live, what would make our last days a joy to be leaving this world? What would we change or what would we make better? One word that keeps cropping up is relationships. Pastor Tim uses this word a lot in his sermons and in his illustrations when he makes a point about living the Christian existence. Relationships are the whole reason why Jesus came to do his Father's will, so that God can have a relationship with each and every one of his

creation. Jesus was willing to die so that God can gain us for his kingdom.

When we are in a good relationship with God, well, who can hurt us? When we are in a good relationship with each other, we are free to say things that will uplift them and to do things to show that they are special in our lives. We can ask for forgiveness and give forgiveness to those who have sinned against us. This way we are left with no lingering haunting prospects that there is unfinished business which we will have to take to the grave with us. In fact you do what you have to do before your time is up.

So if we live in this attitude all the time what a pleasure it would be for all of us to be at peace with the world and all those around us. Most of us have more than a month to live so why don't we make an impact, to make a difference, to leave an eternal spiritual legacy that will last for years to come. We

struggle with too much clutter and overcrowding of things in our lives, that we don't find time to do the things we should really be doing.

The friends in our gospel story didn't let a crowd of people stop them from getting their friend to Jesus. These friends tore a hole in the roof, to bring their friend into Jesus' healing presence. This incident occurred a couple of thousand years ago, yet people in this very day and age, are still inspired by that Bible story. They knew that if the crowd stopped them they would never have a chance to get to Jesus while he was there. We only get one shot at life, we can't afford to let opportunities slip by us; because once we're gone, there's no coming back. So once we realize what is important in our lives, and remove the obstacles, we've done something drastic to change our circumstance.

The next point we move along to: is to **Expect the Unexpected**. Let's reflect first. When we first

became aware that we had lives to live, we prioritized it, and came up with a plan that would last our whole lives through. But things don't always go as planned. There is always something that will come into your life that means you need to make changes along the way, the ideal life plan is now somewhat interrupted.

The friends in the gospel story knew where Jesus would be, they planned to take their friend directly to him, but they didn't plan on the place, house being packed out so that they could get their friend to Jesus. When they encountered this they said, we tried, now let's give up and take our friend home. They simply changed their plans. Haven't we all had to do this at one time or another? These friends got creative and went through the roof!

Then Jesus did something unexpected, when he saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven". No one was expecting him to heal him! That was

totally unexpected. How many times have we prayed to God asking for one thing and then receiving something completely different? God knows what is best for us, and the best thing we could do is to thank him for it and for hearing and answering our prayer.

The final point I want to make is: Create God Space. Verse 19 tells us that, these men looked "... into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus." The point being that in the middle of the crowd they created a space that wasn't there so that their friend could meet Jesus. Reflect on your life, is it that crowded with things to do, most of them out of habit, or just a way to keep our minds busy, that we crowd God out of our lives?

When we get time to sit back and smell the roses, we suddenly think, what would happen if I was not here to do these things? Who would carry on? Would it matter? And if I died right now, what

would God say to me? The point is that we need to make time for God, to create a space for him and put him right in the middle of it. Isn't he the one we worship and not everything else?

We read in the book of Mark, it tells us that Jesus gets up early in the morning and goes to a solitary place. The disciples go look for him and when they find him they tell him that the people are looking for him. Instead of rushing and attending to their needs he tells the disciples, "Let's go somewhere else". Even Jesus had to create space so that he spent time alone with his heavenly Father. It didn't matter that he had to disappoint people; he made time and scheduled his Father into his life so that there was always communication between them.

Sometimes you may need to disappoint people because you can't always be running around attending to their needs and neglect the most important need of taking time out to be with God.

When you put God first, everything always takes care of itself, it always does.

The final point to make is to: Keep a Constant Reminder. In the gospel story the healed man is told to 'take up you mat, and go home'. Jesus didn't tell that man to take that mat and throw it into the rubbish bin, but to take it home, even though he wouldn't be ever using it again. But to keep it as a keepsake and reminder that he was healed by the great physician who performed a miracle in him.

We may have a constant reminder like that in our homes, and perhaps we don't. But collectively together, our constant reminders that we are God's own children are right here in church: the baptismal font and the altar. We are constantly reminded of our own baptism and Jesus sacrifice and death, every time we witness a baptism and partake of Holy Communion.

Let us pray: heavenly Father, help us to live a life that you want us to live, a life that will have no regrets that there is unfinished business left upon this earth when we die and come into your presence. Amen.