

“That’s Life”
 1 John 5:1-6, 9-13
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Frank Sinatra is - - probably as good a guy as any to point out the unfairness of life.

He never learned to read music.

But that didn’t stop him from becoming a famous singer.

He reinvented himself as an actor in the 1950s after his singing career stalled.

Whatever you think of him as a person, he’s famous for singing about it:

His version of “That’s Life” makes the case:

“That’s life

That’s what people say.

You’re riding high in April, shot down in May”

“Each time I find myself layin’

Flat on my face

I just pick myself up and get - - back in the race.

That’s life”

Neither the song - - nor the original expression, “that’s life” - - give a very positive impression of life in general. / “Such is life” is how the French say it. / Life’s not fair.

Get over it.

In this view, the good things are NOT in life per-se - - but in how we deal with life.

We can have a great time - - if we just don’t expect too much.

There’s no doubt that there’s some wisdom in this outlook.

But for all the carefree bravado of the song - - there’s an undertone of pessimism.

Pessimism not about human resiliency - - but about life in general.

So then if someone asked you - - do you want ETERNAL life?

I could understand if you said - - no thanks.

90 or 95 years is probably about enough.

However - - what if you saw life differently?

What is life is all about true love - - rather than disappointment?

What if - - eternal life - - were the ultimate hope?

That's the outlook of the letter of 1 John - - at the end of the New Testament.

This Biblical letter about love - - ends with the promise of eternal life.

And for John - - life and love - - are connected.

Before we dig into the connection between love and life - -

- - let's think about this idea of eternity - - and things that are eternal.

At first glance - - "eternal" and "life" don't go together very well.

Life is all kinds of things - - but it's NOT eternal.

At least not as we experience it.

Life changes - - and ends - - and we eventually ALL die.

And if the old expression and the Sinatra song are at all correct . . .

. . . there may be challenges along the way before we die.

Eternal is something else.

Eternal is forever.

But what lasts forever?

These are the kinds of questions that led to the life long quest of a man named Arthur Stace. / Arthur Malcolm Stace was known as "Mr. Eternity". / He lived in Australia for 82 years, and died of a stroke in 1967.

He was a fairly average person - - a soldier - - struggled with alcoholism - - spent some time homeless - - converted to Christianity when he was 45 - - worked as a janitor and a social worker - - he was married to a woman who died a few years before he did.

The thing about this otherwise unremarkable life was - - his fascination with eternity.

He had heard the word in a sermon.

After that he couldn't stop thinking about it.

He was illiterate, but he learned to write out the word in script.

He bought chalk and started writing the word all over the streets and sidewalks.

Australian police tried to arrest him several times for vandalism.

But he kept writing it, and never was convicted of anything.

He wrote the word eternity - - in chalk.

That's his claim to fame.

Anyone ever write something in chalk on a sidewalk?

You know what happens after it rains - - right?

Eternity - - written in chalk dust.

Might be a good image for - - eternal life.

We KNOW that in the end - - we're dust - - and yet - - there is this promise.

The letter of 1 John ends - - with the promise of eternal life.

Let's look at what John wrote about it:

For John - - love is the center of what he wrote.

Love is like light in the darkness.

Love is the very heart and nature of God.

We are loved by God - - and in response we are called to radical love for others.

According to 1 John the greatest act of love is laying DOWN one's life.

We see this in Jesus death on the cross.

God's love is made known in that Jesus entered into our pain and sin.

Jesus walked along side us.

Jesus suffered - - just like we suffer. / And Jesus died - - just like we die.

According to John - - being willing to lay your down life - - is the ultimate act of love.

And that is what Jesus did.

And when love is perfected in us - - that is what we are called to be ready to do.

Not just anyone would lay down their life for another - - but it does happen.

According to 1 John - - this amazing love of God - - perfect love - - abides in US.

John encourages us to love God - - and let God's love for us - - in.

John says that when we do - - that love will be perfected in us.

Here's the amazing thing about all this:

For John it's all about love.

And the ultimate act of love is being willing to let your life go.

And THAT act - - ultimately leads to - - eternal LIFE.

The way to gain life eternal - - is to let go of our grip on life!

It sounds similar to a song by a group called "Passenger":

"You only need the light when it's burning low

Only miss the sun - - when it starts to snow

Only know you've been high - - when you're feeling low

Only hate the road - - when you're missing home

Only know you love her - - when you let her go."

Christopher Robin grows up - - and promises not to forget them.

Can you see Christopher Robin and Pooh looking back at the woods from a hill?

They bid farewell as - - Christopher prepares for adulthood.

That's life.

The book also contains that famous scene between Pooh and Piglet.

"Piglet sidled up to Pooh from behind.

Pooh!" he whispered.

"Yes Piglet?"

"Nothing" said Piglet, taking Pooh's paw.

"I just wanted to be sure of you."

According to 1 John there is one thing we can be sure of:

God's amazing - - amazing love for us.

That - - is life.