

Topic	Your Best Life Now
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The tendency of modern Christians especially in KL affluent area is we focus on your best life now, you found the truth in Jesus Christ and then you preserve your life, you make sure you don't take too many risks, you stay in the good suburb, you earn good money and you don't take any adventures for the gospel because your best life supposed to be now. Now you have got Christ, you have got your job, you have got your retirement, you got your children, your best life is now and most of these people want to preserve their best life now. You can either live your life based on the fact that your best life now or something else. There are so many authors who write, 'the power of now', but I am going to tell you that this is not the way to live.

### 1. Your Best Life is Not Now

If your best life is now, then you are in big trouble. If all you have is now, then you are in deep-deep trouble. The bible tells us,

1 Corinthians 15:50-52 (ESV) **I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.**

There is a change coming. The divers of the Australian coast recently noted that the great barrier reef, two thirds of the reef have already been bleached white. The change is coming all over the world whether they are earthquake, natural disaster, global warning, there is a change that is coming and you need to be ready for the change. There is an incompatibility. Our bodies are incompatible with the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is going to come whether you like it or not, it is like a tsunami which is going to come and when it comes you have got to be in a state to be able to take it.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44 (ESV) **So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.**

What is now that we have in our body today is perishable, dishonor, weak, natural, it does not fit the world that is going to come. Scientists think that this world will continue forever, but it won't, so therefore even we look at the signs of global warning they are looking for new planets.

They just found seven earth like planets orbiting in a star nearby, maybe we can hitch a ride there, maybe we could have our life changed, start again without the global warming, will leave all the bad people around here and will go off and start a new world. Yes, if you can live 39 million light years away which is a long way. If you want to travel there you won't live long enough, even for the stars.

The world's greatest explorer, Sir Ranulph Fiennes, is the only fellow who actually has circumnavigate the globe, north pole to south pole. He is the only fellow who has actually been able to run, he had a heart attack and four months after his heart attack with bypass surgery he runs seven marathons in seven days in seven different continents. He belongs to the British SAS. He trains the army of Oman. He discovered lost cities. He actually walked across the entire continent of Antarctica in 93 days in 1993. In 1971 he ran a 156-kilometer marathon in the Sahara Desert. They asked him, "*what is your greatest ambition?*". He said, "*My greatest ambition is to have a younger body*" because he can't do the stuff that he wants. He wants to climb mountains. He wants to go to the greatest stars furthest, flung star in the universe, he has got that in his heart but his body cannot take the vision that is pounding inside his heart.

Emma Morano was the oldest woman in the world. She lives in Italy. Her age was 117. She eats three eggs a day for much of her life and lately a few years it has been two eggs a day, one raw and one cooked and she is still alive. She passed away about few hours ago and she was trapped in her apartment for the last 20 years, couldn't get out the frailty of her body.

Our bodies are mortal. Our hearts as it were immortal, we earn and yearn to live and experience more and more things.

Dr. Aubrey de Grey who has done a lot of research in aging says,

*"Ageing is a kind of uber disease that incorporates all the other diseases like Alzheimer's, breast cancer, cardiovascular disease that predominately affect the elderly"*

As you grow older it is our DNA that is get broken down, bit by bit by bit and sometimes you are not able to repair it and because you cannot repair it you will ultimately succumb to diseases. Aging is the ultimate disease, even if you didn't get any disease your body wears down, your muscles and your heart are replaced by collagen.

## **2. Your Best Life is Yet to come**

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed

There will be a change. This change is inevitable. It doesn't matter whether you are a Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, agnostic or an atheist, the dead will be raised. Every single person will be raised. There is a change coming that nobody can avoid and everybody will be changed, but the Corinthians asked the question

1 Corinthians 15:35 (ESV) **But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?”**

Well people have different ideas. If you go to Yorkshire in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, there was a village there called Wharram Percy. The people there actually believe in the resurrection of the dead and so what they do they farm bones there with a lot of straight edges, because they are all cut. They are cut because they are afraid that when these people will resurrect it will be like a living dead coming for you, so therefore they chop them to make sure that they will not be reconstituted. So people believe that you will come back in your same bodies but then again one of the greatest American skeptics called Robert Ingersoll Green wrote

*“We get atoms to support our bodies from what we eat. Now if a cannibal should eat a missionary and certain atoms belonging to the missionary should be used by the cannibal in his body, and the cannibal should then die while the atoms of the missionary form part of his flesh, to whom should these atoms belong to on the morning of the resurrection?”*

So he is arguing, this resurrection business is rubbish, it cannot be true. Now Paul answers this in three points in Corinthians. The first thing he says

1 Corinthians 15:36-38 (ESV) **You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. 38 But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.**

So therefore what you put inside the grave has little resemblance to what comes out. Don't you see a seed, there is some discontinuity and yet there is a continuity. Resurrection is like that there is a discontinuity where the seed completely does not look like the tree because

1 Corinthians 15:37 (ESV) **And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain**

So it does not matter about the atoms. The bible tells us that what is put in is a kernel, nothing, it is like a drop of nothing and then there is some continuity because the Bible says,

1 Corinthians 15:38 (ESV) **But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.**

So when you plant a mango seed, it will always come out as a mango tree. There is a continuity. It is same thing with the disciples who was walking on the road and they actually met Jesus, they didn't really recognize him at all, they spent three years with him, they don't even recognize him but when they broke the bread there was something familiar and they instantly recognize, so there is some discontinuity and there is some continuity involved in this.

The second point Paul makes is that God makes different bodies with respective glories

1 Corinthians 15:39-42 (ESV) For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. 40 There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. 42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable

Which means the glory, the beauty for which we see a peacock and the beauty of a sunset of a sun or a moon or the rings of Saturn, each one has a different glory. Each one of us has our own glory and the point Paul is making is that God makes each one with His own glory, so why is it so impossible for you to believe that the same God who makes the baby and the dog, the baby to cry and the dog to bark cannot make a human body which frail and will ultimately disintegrate and a spiritual body in the next phase. The difference between the caterpillar and the butterfly. God makes the caterpillar in its glory and the butterfly in its glory too, the same God makes both and you don't believe in resurrection it does not make sense.

We think that spiritual body is like a ghost, people walk right through you, people see right through you, no it is a physical body, it is full of glory and full of power, Jesus actually was able to go through walls and yet there is some continuity because you could recognize him in his voice and you could touch the scar at his side and on his nail torn hands.

Jesus is the prototype of the spiritual body.

1 Corinthians 15:45-49 (ESV) 45 Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

It is very simple, just as you were born in the likeness of Adam or your father, just as he lives and he dies, he is buried, he goes back into the dust, so Jesus comes from heaven, he is the man who gives you life and spirit, just as Jesus lived and died and rose again we shall be like him, there is a paradigm. When he rose that Easter morning he broke the mold. He started a new line of humanity.

There are people who will argue with you and say that the resurrection didn't occur. The entire weight of the Christian faith hangs on this one fact which is the resurrection of the Jesus Christ. 75% of New Testament scholars and they can be non-Christian scholars they only agree on four minimum facts.

1. He was buried in the tomb of Joseph Arimathea who is basically a member of Sanhedrin, the same Sanhedrin who condemned him to die.

2. The tomb is empty; nobody till now has found the tomb that is full of Jesus's bones as then as is now.
3. There are post-resurrection appearances to all the disciples. Paul writes to 500 disciples, man, individual appearances at different times.
4. The changed life of disciples who are so energized, so bold by this vision that breaks that mold that they too could follow and their lives are changed and we can see the history of the world, Christianity is the most, the widest held belief on the face of this earth.

On these four pillars rest resurrection. So anytime you have people who try to refute this, they have to answer these four things.

**DISCIPLES STOLE BODY:** Suppose you say that Jesus didn't rise from the dead, disciples stole his body. If they stole His body, then the problem is how are you going to account for the post resurrection appearances. If they stole his body, why would their lives be changed because they are actually keeping the rotten body. Only the resurrection can explain these four points.

**HALLUCINATIONS:** If you say that they were hallucinating. Can 500 people all have hallucination at the same time or different time? If that is the case, then all you have to do is go back to the empty tomb and find the rotting body of Jesus. So hallucination cannot explain these four points together.

**AUTHORITIES STOLE BODY:** If they stole the body, the tomb will be empty, the burial site will be there, but how do you pound for Jesus coming out and escaped. The authorities were there guarding the tomb. All the authorities have to do is to show the body again and there goes your faith.

**TWIN BROTHER:** What if Jesus had a twin brother, the twin brother. This theory actually came from Syria. The Syrian people believe that Jesus had twin brother and the twin brother comes in but the twin brother who comes in how would you explain him in terms of the post-resurrection appearances. They would certainly have some idea where this is a Jesus who is powerful and supernatural, can walk through walls and that is why you die for him. You won't have a younger brother come in that looks like Jesus, smells like Jesus, talks like Jesus and then dies few years later on and then their lives won't be changed.

**WRONG GRAVE:** What if you have Jesus where they went to the wrong grave. If they went to the wrong place, then how could you explain post resurrection experiences and how would you explain changed lives. So every one of these theories that people bring up cannot explain the four facts.

**RESUSCITATION THEORY:** Poor Jesus hammered on to the tree asphyxiated to die and make sure he dies the professional executioner shut the huge spear to his side and his blood pours out. He is exsanguinated basically and then he lives in the tomb for another three days and he recovers without cardioversion, without adrenalin, kick down the door, overpowers the Roman

guard and then he appears to all the disciples and they are impressed with this and want to be like Him.

At every turn you cannot account for all four things. There is only one theory that accounts for all four things that Jesus died, was buried and he rose again. So if that is the case we too shall die and rise again.

### **3. Your Best Life Is Only Possible When We Deal With The Problem Of Death**

The whole problem with Easter is the problem of death. We have to deal with death.

1 Corinthians 15:54-56 (ESV) **When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.**

This is the issue. We are not used to images of death. We do not talk about death. 200 years ago people use to paint about death, people were quite cool with death in those days. 200 years ago when you talk about death people think it is okay, you talk about sex, the thing is pornography, they lock you up. Today you talk about death they think it is pornography, you talk about sex they won't lock you up. They lock you up when you talk about death. When people die in a shooting they are so unused to death that they have to death counsellors.

From 1800 till now child mortality was 1 in 2, 1 in 2 children use to die before the age of 5 and because the child mortality rate has dropped so far down, you don't see the death. We struggle with this idea that we want to live and yet we are faced with a problem of death. The entire civilizations are actually built as a defense mechanism against the terror of death.

There is work done by Ernest Becker and Sigmund Freud. They say, whole generation is called Terror management because we are all terrified to die and because we are terrified to die we construct all sorts of things to inset ourselves that we deny death, we run away from death, we wouldn't talk about death.

We don't like to watch old people because old people remind you about death. Ernest Becker say, we deny death, we run away from death, we are afraid about it, we cover about death.

There was a lady called Sarah Winchester's who is wife of the man who invented the Winchester rifle, killed many people and she was very guilty because the husband had invented a gun that had self-loading that killed many people and so therefore when he died she went into shock and she saw a medium and the medium told her, you keep building rooms in your house, as long as they are building and building you will not die and she believed it. So she hired a whole bunch of people, millions of dollars and she build room after room after room until she reached the age of 85 years old and she died. The medium was wrong. They built 150 rooms, 2000 doors, 10,000 windows, 45 fire places and only 13 toilets.

She did that so that the evil spirits chasing her will be confused and they been trapped. So that is her way of denying death. That is one way we could do, we could deny death. The second way is that we can transcend death. Achilles, the great Greek hero on the shores outside the city of Troy, he was given a choice by a prophet, you stay and you fight and you die in glory and they will remember you forever. Your name will transcend history or you could go back to where you came from, marry a lovely girl, have many children, grow old and die happy. He chose to fight and today we actually have Brad Pitt acting as Achilles, he hasn't died, he lives on in our minds, we are talking about him, we don't talk about anybody else, we talk about Achilles.

Einstein says

*"Our death is not the end if we can live on in our children for they are us, our bodies are only wilted leaves on the tree of life"*

That is why we give our children a tough time to do well, you should be better than us, because that is how we can live through you which is an Einstein's idea and a lot of people think like that, but the bottom line was a very wise and famous movie maker. His name was Woody Allen. He said these words *"I don't want to live out my life in future generations I want to live in my apartment"*

So this idea of living your life through your children is actually ridiculous, it doesn't quite work. Perhaps you can think of death as your friend. Steve Jobs gave a speech to the University of Stanford graduating class in 2005 and he said

*Death is very likely the single best invention of Life. It is Life's change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new. Right now the new is you, but someday not too long from now, you will gradually become the old and be cleared away. Sorry to be so dramatic, but it is quite true.*

So his approach to death is out with the old, in with the new, there is no emotion involved in it. The reason why is that if you look at life before death and then your death, we don't remember anything before birth and beyond death. This thinking comes from Epicurus. He says,

*Death is not to be feared it is nonexistence. Fear of death is natural but not rational.*

Our hearts feel differently. He says that we are like the ends of a book, in between we are like characters in a novel, we only exist within beginning and the end and in between we don't care, we just live our lives. But the problem is not death. Bible very clearly says

**56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.**

That is the problem, we ran away from death because the problem isn't death, it is sin and the power of sin is the law. Every day we see images of tragedies. We live in a world where there is justice because if justice is not present in the afterlife then life does not make any sense at all. Deep in the heart of every person in this world there will be a desire for justice because this is



what we feel and we are created with. There is a time where we will face judgment, the problem isn't death, the problem is. This is what it says in revelation

Revelation 20:12-13 (ESV) **2 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done**

If we ask ourselves very honestly we each carriage the baggage of failure. If we were to die tomorrow would you be standing proud before God? We say this is a bad guy, he has killed many people but there are a lot of things I suspect that we are not very proud of doing to and that before the throne of God we too will fear judgment but Corinthians says,

1 Corinthians 15:54-56 (ESV) **"Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 (ESV) But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

There is a solution to death. We don't have to run away, death is not your friend, death is not your master, death cannot be ignored but death can be defeated. When we stare death in the face and all of us have to look at the other part of your life, you don't have to see death anymore, we see the one that swallowed up death.

John 3:14-15 (ESV) **And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life**

This passage is taken from Numbers 21 where people were killed by poisonous snakes and Moses put out one snake and you look at that snake. A look upon that source of ill and you will be cured and so it is with us. When we now look at the cross we don't see death anymore, we see the one who has swallowed up death. We can see the outline, we can see the nails, we can see the thorns, we can see the pain but death is completely swallowed up if only you have Jesus in your life.

### **How do we prepare for the best life now?**

Do not live as if your best life is now. Now is the best opportunity that you have and opportunity is to do this

1 Corinthians 15:58 (ESV) **Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.**

While you have breath don't retire. Every single thing that you do matters. If you are younger, it even matters more because you have more life to give to God. Every single factor here, the most important factor was the changed lives. People die for things that they believe to be true.



The disciples died for the truth, the truth was someone raised from the dead. The jihadist will die, a soldier will die for something he believes in and that we know that something must be really convicted. So the life of a disciple shows you that they died for a resurrection. If there is no resurrection they won't die. They wouldn't have died for a non-resurrection. Peter Berger writes of the secularized world. He is an American philosopher who works at Boston University. He wrote a beautiful essay entitled "a world without windows". We live in a secularized world that has got no windows.

Steve Jobs say these words

*Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything — all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure — these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart*

So for him death is just the end and so therefore it extenuates the need to enjoy my life, follow your heart and do whatever the hell you want to do, but that is like driving without windows.

In 1888 Alfred Noble woke up one day and he read his own obituary, which said Alfred Noble born in this year and died in 1888 and he read chief title dynamite king. Dynamite king killed thousands and millions of people up to this day and he didn't want to be identified and remembered for all eternity as a man who made the dynamite that killed millions and millions of people. So he immediately changed. The obituary was wrong because his brother had died. His name there was wrongly. That was the moment of transcendence in his life.

Everyone of us we may believe in Christ, we may not believe in Christ but there is a moment in your life where some tragedy or something will hit you and you have a moment of transcendence where God breaks through to your heart. You can put up walls but at some stage in life if God is merciful to you He will breakthrough that wall that will be the moment of transcendence.

Every single one of has a life sentence, some longer, some shorter you never know and the moment of transcendence comes to you when your doctor tells you, you got cancer, it does not have to be that. The important thing is that there is another page in our book, the empty one, that is the one that writes for all eternity. Alfred Nobel changed his life, he denoted his money for the noble prize and everywhere in the world they will talk every year, they will talk about a Nobel Prize where the best and brightest for peace, for medicine, for science, anything that will improve this world his name is now attached to that rather than dynamite king. So therefore for us, how do we live, we can live as we continue to live now protecting our life, our best life now or we can live looking to the hands of Jesus, the perfect body which we will bear one day and as we live our life now may be we too will too will need some nails through our hands and our feet, maybe we too may have to sit on the cross and suffer because the best is yet to come but

whatever it is even if you have to suffer and you stand up for your faith you know that whatever you do God will not owe you, He will do the right thing, your toil in Him is never in vain. Just as you are risen from the dead, we too have an image that we will be with our savior.