

Lucan: It's time to begin. Bro. David, will you please offer an opening prayer?

Zahakiel: Dear Father in Heaven, we come before you rejoicing for the blessings we have received in the days that have passed. May our eyes be opened, ever more widely, to appreciate the guidance and protection you place upon your people through the Holy Spirit and the ministry of your angels. May your rest now fall upon us as we experience the Sabbath blessing and fellowship together, for we do so in Yahshua's holy name. Amen.

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Lucan: Amen

daphna dee: Amen

Barb: Amen

Adriel777: Amen

Naraiel: Amen

Marie: Amen

Elyna: Amen

Lucan: In prophetic Scripture, the United States is represented as a beast with two lamb-like, or Christ-like horns. When the U.S. was first rising as a nation, a declaration of its independence was signed. In the opening words of this document, we find the following as the basis and justification for this new government:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

"Life" is an unalienable right; all are endowed with it by Yahweh, or they would not be alive. That much is certainly "self-evident." "Liberty" is also considered the right of birth for all; oppression and subjugation must come from an outside force. Left to themselves, all would have liberty; it is Yahweh that has given us free will, and seeks to restore us to the perfect and responsible use of it. But none are born with happiness.

"Life" is inherent, "liberty" is inherent, but it is only "the pursuit of happiness" that was considered the God-given lot of man. Yet this pursuit – the right to engage in this seeking after something outside of us, "happiness" – was considered to be a foundational, core right to be protected. The American declaration here stated something profoundly true; that all people, as much and as soon as they have life, also have the desire to become happy.

What does it mean to "pursue happiness?" Happiness here is more than an emotional state; none can feel happy at all times in this earth without being either naïve or emotionally damaged. Happiness encompasses peace, safety, comfort, joy, satisfaction, etc. Ultimately, all that unredeemed humanity does is in pursuit of this. Power is sought because some think it will make them happy to have control over others, or that to see their will made reality will bring satisfaction. Money is sought because it buys influence, or objects, or

comfort; and some think these will make them happy, or provide their heart's want. Some seek happiness in relationships, or in entertainment, or in fame and recognition. The alley-bound drug addict and the self-righteous religionist are both where they are for the same reason; they are vainly pursuing happiness.

Yet as every person who has truly come to know Christ has found, none of these things can ever have a lasting effect. None can make the heart clean, or satisfied. No one looks for what they already have. What men do to pursue happiness is only a means of forgetting their unhappiness. It is a distraction; a way to forget the problem itself. It is like crawling in the freezer while the house burns, because it is cold and there is no smoke inside. We may forget the problem, but by flame or frost we will die.

We are all granted life, yet Life is more than this:

"(For the life was manifested, and we have seen [it], and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us ;)... And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; [and] he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John 1:2; 5:11, 12)

We are all given free will and dignity, yet there is a Liberty more than this:

"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord [is], there [is] liberty." (2 Corinthians 3:17)

And again:

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." (Galatians 5:1)

What is this bondage that is at odds with liberty? Activism, politics, false religions, education; these all promise men liberty, and in relation to other men, they may end with more than they began. Yet "while they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." (2 Peter 2:19)

It is this bondage to corruption that enslaved every one of us from birth; no government can protect or provide liberty of spirit, or life eternal. Liberty in the flesh is not true liberty, no matter how much one may deceive themselves otherwise; life in the flesh is not true life. And for this reason, it is only "the pursuit of happiness" that men alone can ever hope to attain or protect. Not one can be truly happy while they do not have true life, or true liberty. Thus, the natural state is to seek to fill this void with a host of different idols. Even Christianity in every form but the true ends in the same lack of power, freedom, and happiness.

"They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Yahshua answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: [but] the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John 8:33-36)

This is true liberty, and true life. And, let us praise Yahweh that we have been made free indeed.

Adriel777: Amen

Lucan: Only in complete freedom from sin, through the freedom and power Christ provides to not commit it, do we have life and liberty. Only in putting away our idols, and resting in the true Sabbath of Yahweh, do we have happiness.

"Happy [is he] that [hath] the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope [is] in Yahweh his God." (Psalms 146:5)

If we would understand what it means to have an idol, or to be an idolater, we need look no further than our own lives before Christ – to our own "pursuit of happiness." In seeing who we were, we may see how to meet people where they are, even as Christ did.

"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:32)

And again:

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

This is one value of the New Moon, which is soon to be upon us; recalling the much we have been forgiven.

"Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, [the same] loveth little." (Luke 7:47)

If we would understand the sadness, the hopelessness, and the great need of those living around us in darkness, we need look no further than who we were without Christ. Thus we may identify with those in need even as Christ has done, and love them as He has loved us.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son [to be] the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another... We love him, because he first loved us." (1 John 4:10, 11, 19)

If we would "examine ourselves," and know whether Christ is in us, we need look no further than this: why do we do the things that we do, or say the things that we say? Is it the outworking of life and happiness within us, shining out? Or, is it to fill a lack that we have within us, covering the void with unfulfilling and temporary leaves? Is it the pursuit of happiness, or the sharing of it? Are we seeking bread as the hungry, or distributing it as those who are fed? Are we serving self, or serving others?

"And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give." (Matthew 10:7, 8)

When we do our secular work, is it to demonstrate the fidelity of Christ in every action, serving "as unto the Lord?" Is our motivation to gain money to sustain our own desires and know no want, or to bless others? Are our needs supplied by gold and paper, or by our Father in heaven? We know the promise, and the answer of faith - but the heart motive is what is to be examined, not the knowledge in the head.

When we speak with our friends and family, is it to win them from a life of sorrow that ends in destruction? We know that life; we have lived it, each and every one of us. If we are seeking their company instead for pleasure and comfort, are we not acting as though in the flesh, and "pursuing happiness" rather than sharing it?

Can we say we "love" if we know what it is to pursue happiness, know what it is to have that lack provided freely, and do not seek to show and share the same? If it is not so, it is because we have not believed our lack has been met; and we have something to examine.

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." (John 3:19-21)

When someone shuns or avoids examination, it is because a close look will reveal their lack. When someone has an idol, it is because they believe it can fulfill their lack. Condemnation comes because one who has a lack, and fills it with an idol, has stopped their pursuit of the thing they still, in truth, do not have. Condemnation comes because one who is sick, and refuses to acknowledge they are not in health, cannot be healed. If we think we are full, we will not eat. The result is that "ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." (John 5:40)

And if you will not have life, you will not have liberty from sin, as the sin remains hidden. And if you will not have life and liberty, you will not have happiness. You will have the pursuit of it, and the "life" will consist of vainly grasping after sand, hoping to forget that you are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Revelation 3:17)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every [branch] that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (John 15:1, 2)

We who abide in Christ must be purged, or trimmed; we must have any elements of character that do not spring forth from Christ removed. We must examine, confess, and forsake them.

Those who will not be purged, the Father takes away. Those who will be purged, Christ will spring forth from more abundantly, as the idols are removed and the true life takes the place of the false. Thus a forgetfulness of unhappiness is replaced with happiness itself. Thus a semblance of life is replaced with life itself, and eternal life at that.

Sin destroys, empties, and eventually kills. If it is in us, we do harm to ourselves and others, even if ignorant; if it is removed and replaced with the attributes of Christ, we do good to ourselves and others, and are blessed to do so knowingly.

"Behold, happy [is] the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty." (Job 5:17)

We may speak of the need for examination; let us dwell on the desire to be examined by Yahweh. We may speak of the need to be clean from sin for judgment; let us dwell on the benefit of being clean from sin for love.

Adriel777: Amen

Lucan: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye [are] the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:3-5)

We either are in relationship with Christ and bring forth His fruits naturally, or we can do nothing. We either have happiness through Christ in us, or we are vainly pursuing it elsewhere. We either seek out and overcome all known sin through His Word which makes us clean, or we are in bondage to sin, and the servants of corruption.

If we will serve Him, He will serve us. If we will abide in Him, He will abide in us; He will not leave us nor forsake us, and binds us to Himself through His power.

"If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast [them] into the fire, and they are burned." (John 15:6)

And why are the branches burned?

The sole purpose of the vine branch is its grapes. An apple tree with no apples, or a cherry tree with no cherries, can at least be chopped up and used to build something useful.

"And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, [or than] a branch which is among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will [men] take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for [any] work?" (Ezekiel 15:1-4)

Without Christ, we are nothing; without Christ, we can do nothing. We are not called to Christ because of our great abilities, or our talents, or what we have to offer Him; we are called for what He has to offer us, and because we acknowledge our need. We were not offered life because we had life, but because we knew we were in death, and cast ourselves on His life. We were not given freedom because we were never in bondage, but because we saw our bondage, and cried out to Him who alone was able to, and freely did, make us "free indeed."

"For thou [art] an holy people unto Yahweh thy God: Yahweh thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that [are] upon the face of the earth. Yahweh did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye [were] the fewest of all people: But because Yahweh loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath Yahweh brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." (Deut. 7:6-8) (LMK)

Pastor Chick: F

Zahakiel: Finished.

Adriel777: F

Elyna: F

daphna dee: F

Barb: F

Lucan: As CSDAs, small in number and influence in the world, these words are even more true of us than they ever were of Israel after the flesh. Fewer in number, weaker in influence, poorer in wealth as the world counts wealth; yet chosen to be called among the 144,000.

As a people and as individuals, our pursuit of happiness was not ended because we had it in ourselves to find it, or because our knowledge or talents or doctrines brought it to us. Yet all has been given to us in full nonetheless, and all that we might ask or think beyond is laid out freely before us in Christ.

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7)

For we who are redeemed, and who abide in Him, let us abide in Him truly; purging the dead works, and walking in the living Word. If we are yet in the "pursuit of happiness" elsewhere, let us confess it, repent of it, and buy what has been offered:

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for [that which is] not bread? and your labour for [that which] satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye [that which is] good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." (Isaiah 55:1, 2)

And again:

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." (Matthew 13:44)

And yet again:

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and [that] the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." (Rev. 3:18)

When the United States was formed, it considered it a self-evident function of government to protect life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Any nation that seeks to prevent such transactions as these is not built upon protecting the "pursuit of happiness," for it forbids the only possible means of attaining that very thing. Any kingdom or government that would limit the "selling" of the true gospel has repudiated this principle entirely.

The kingdom of heaven is composed of those who have pursued happiness and found that it can only be found in agape love. Few know what agape love is; it cannot be found in the world, else happiness would be found in the world.

Only as we are pruned can the Spirit, who is Christ, who is agape Love, bring forth fruit. Only as that fruit is revealed can men see Life, Liberty, and Happiness within us; for true happiness is the fruit of the Spirit, and nothing else.

"By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."
(John 13:35)

In seeing this love, the world will see their lack, and the powerlessness of all idols to fulfill it. It will be brought to either hate us for revealing this, or love us for revealing the Answer to this. Let us reveal that Answer plainly, searching out and forsaking everything that would tint or diminish our Light.

"Then spake Yahshua again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life... Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (John 8:12; Matthew 5:14-16)

Are there any comments on the study tonight?

Adriel777: Amen

Zahakiel: C

Lucan: Go ahead

Zahakiel: Thank you for this study. Here is an additional angle that may be worth considering... some of you may recall the old "Kent Hovind" Creationism videos that we had at the Church house in Guys, that we used to watch from time to time. It contained some useful information and, while I'm not sure that everything he goes over in his seminars is accurate, either the science or his approach, I do recall a couple statements that he made about the U.S. Government. He said, and I have not verified this, but I remember him saying it, that originally, the three elements of the statement with which you began mentioned "Life, liberty, and property." It was changed to "pursuit of happiness" afterwards, according to him, but perhaps it would have been more in line with inspiration if the original three had been retained. Looking at the Scriptures' instructions regarding each of these, they are all given by Yah, and then He additionally provides guidance through His commandments by which we may improve them...

Property, like life and liberty, are gifts of Yah according to His plan for His people, and the Law contains a number of provisions, such as the Jubilee year, to guarantee that a family never loses its assigned portion permanently. Property, life, and liberty, can all be lost through the effects of sin, and I am sure there are some spiritual implications of this, as the spiritual aspect of property would be our Heavenly Inheritance, something that connects the three, making everlasting life, liberty from sin, and reclaiming the inheritance of Adam, all One, all portions of the Plan of Salvation...

Happiness, as you point out, is a natural consequence of having these gifts from Yah, and sharing them with others. And it may be that this is why that third one is different from the other two. In any event... our message is to seek first the "Kingdom," which is the life, the liberty, and the inheritance, and all these other things, including the fruit of the Spirit (peace, joy, etc.) are added unto us. End.

Adriel777: Amen

Adriel777: C

Lucan: Go ahead

Adriel777: Yah brought to my mind the song "Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God" last Sabbath and I shared that He had with both my boys in reference to what is important in life... Please continue to keep my family in prayer. I was blessed also by this study. End.

Lucan: How did they receive that?

Adriel777: They were open to what I was saying. End.

Pastor Chick: C

Lucan: Go ahead

Pastor Chick: There is an article at Wikipedia explaining Jefferson's "life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness" and Locke's "property" concepts. END

Adriel777: (Thanks)

Adriel777: C

Lucan: Go ahead

Adriel777: I also am blessed in that frequently a verse I read during the week in a different study is used either in our study or the comments. It seems a "little" thing, but it brings me joy and as mentioned it happens frequently. I want to praise Yah openly tonight for that blessing. End 😊

Adriel777: Well in this case it was Seek Ye First. 😊 End.

Lucan: Ah, okay. Well, I think the property insights are interesting; I'm reminded of the "Sure Covenant" chapter about Jeremiah purchasing a plot of land as the inheritance... Pastor's mention of the Wikipedia article is where I sourced a bit of this, so, it does go into detail on that; it's good to know there's an application either way.

I'll certainly keep your family in prayer, Sis. Jody, and thanks for sharing that report... I read a quote in Desire of Ages recently; the idea has stuck, although the wording isn't precise. She said that the angels we are co-workers with for the salvation of souls manifest "almost impatient eagerness," I think it was, for our efforts... I expect that, as your sons hear your testimony that you've found "what is important in life" consistently, it will be a difficult testimony to ignore, particularly with such eager help to aid it.

Adriel777: 😊

Lucan: It is interesting how Yah leads His people; I'm always blessed to hear of similar concepts or inspiration between Sabbaths.

Adriel777: Amen

Lucan: I'm reminded of the Isaiah series David has been presenting, which began with something similar. Are there any other comments? If not, I'll ask Pastor to offer a closing prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in Heaven. We thank You for providing Life, Liberty, and Happiness as eternal gifts in Your Son. May our ongoing sanctification be exemplified by a perfect reflection of Your Son, who is the fullness of the Godhead bodily. We rejoice in Your Sabbath blessings for our benefits. In Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

Barb: Amen

Adriel777: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.

Lucan: Amen

Elyna: Amen

daphna dee: Amen