

Life Worth Living | Week Five

Living and Dying with Hope

Gather

GATHER Take a few minutes to reconnect with one another. As you begin, remember some of our practices for good groups:

- Start and end on time.
- Listen more than you talk.
- Make room for everyone.
- Resist the temptation to fix, advise, or solve.
- What is shared in the group stays in the group.

As you reflect on the past week, where did you notice love expressed through practical care, personal transformation, or efforts to change something larger than yourself? What reminded you of the goodness of being alive?

This Week: What Do We Believe About Life and Death?

This week we consider the relationship between our bodies, souls, and mortality. Different philosophies and religious traditions offer different ways of understanding death, and those views shape the way we approach life, loss, and love. Even as Christians, these other lenses often shape how we see life and death, whether we recognize it or not. Which ones do you think you drift towards?

- Socrates and Neoplatonic Thought (p. 208): The mortal body is needy and limiting; death can be viewed as release for the soul. The aim is to be freed from what holds us back.
- Buddhist Traditions (p. 210): Life is impermanent, and clinging to what cannot last leads to suffering. Practicing nonattachment means learning to love without grasping, not ceasing to care for others.
- Martin Hägglund: Death is the end of our lives. Because our time and relationships are finite, what we choose to care for matters deeply here and now.
- Paul and Christian Resurrection Hope (p. 217): In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul speaks of the perishable putting on imperishability. Christian hope is not simply the soul escaping the body, but a mysterious, transformed bodily resurrection. As Patrick reminds us, we do not know exactly what that looks like.

Mourning with Hope

The promise of resurrection does not make death painless or grief unnecessary. We can mourn honestly while holding onto hope that death is not the final word. This is a distinctive emphasis of Christian faith, even as the resurrection remains a mystery.

“It’s not that we care for others because we know they will die. It’s that we work to preserve them (Not to mention ourselves) from dying because we love them. The goodness of living is prior to the negativity of death. And the life truly worth living is above all a celebration of that goodness through love. It drives our fear and makes hope the primary mode of relating to life and death. “ (p. 219)

The authors suggest that we work to preserve the lives of those we love, and our own lives, not simply because death threatens them but because their living is good. Love comes first.

Patrick offers a related thought in the video: What is worth dying for is what is worth loving.

Discuss Together

1. Which perspective on our bodies, souls, and mortality resonates with you? Which is most difficult to embrace?
2. Does believing in resurrection change how we face loss, aging, or our own death? What does it mean to mourn with hope?
3. How does the belief that life is good, and worth preserving, shape the way we care for others?
4. What or whom do you love enough to give yourself for? What does that tell you about a life worth living?

Closing Prayer

God of life and resurrection, thank you for the people and moments that make life precious. Meet us in our grief, steady us when the future is uncertain, and teach us to love deeply without fear. Help us live today with gratitude, courage, and hope. Amen.