

BLESS YOUR HEART

Title: Part 5 – "You Were Made for This"

Date: March 22, 2026

While everyone is saying "Hi" here in the house, welcome if you are joining us online or on our app! Thanks for spending some time with us. We want you to know we are FOR you! If there's anything we can pray for or any way we can serve you, let us know. AND if this message blesses you, consider sharing it with some friends.

Well, I cannot believe we're already at week five! If you are just jumping in with us we are wrapping up a collection of messages affectionately titled "Bless Your Heart." AND if you've been with us, you know we've been on quite a journey together. Has this blessed anyone in the house? I believe God has been doing something in our hearts, amen?

So, let me get us all back in the flow of where we have been really quick because I am so excited for today's message, all of these messages are on our app or website now if you want to catch up, BUT:

Week one, we talked about this amazing thing God does that so many Christians miss or have not been told because God doesn't just forgive your wicked heart—He replaces it with a good heart! That's the promise of Ezekiel 36:26. When you become a follower of Jesus He gives you a brand-new heart. You're a new creation. Why does that matter? Because you're not a sinner trying really hard to be good—you're a saint learning to live from who you already are!

Week two, we then talked about our desires. If you have a good heart now, then you can actually trust your deepest desires. Not your surface cravings, but your soul-level longings. Those are breadcrumbs God leaves to lead you to your calling.

Week three, we talked about your glory. You have something unique to offer the world. You're God's masterpiece—His poem—and it's time to stop hiding and start shining.

Then we came back last week and talked about the battle. Because you have a good heart, your heart is under attack, but you've been given armor to guard your heart, AND the best news is you are fighting FROM victory, not FOR victory. The war is already won.

And today—as we put a bow of this for now—we're going to talk about what all of this actually LOOKS like when you put it together. What does it mean to live fully alive from your good heart?

Because here's the thing: You can have all the theology in the world. You can know you have a good heart. You can understand your desires and your glory and your armor. But if

you don't actually LIVE it? It's just information. AND Jesus didn't die on a cross to give you more information. He died to give you LIFE. Abundant life. Fully alive life!

So today, I want to help you answer the question: What does that actually look like on a Wednesday afternoon when the kids are screaming, and the bills are due, and life feels overwhelming? Amen?

Let me read three passages that are going to shape what we talk about today. First, Jesus in John 10, verse 10. We have touched on this throughout this collection so don't tune this out, let this into your heart today, Jesus says to His followers and friends:

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

Now the Apostle Paul, writing to the church in Galatia says: (Galatians 5:1)

¹ It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Just as the Galatians were tempted to add works to faith (that was the burden and yoke of slavery), modern Christians are tempted to go back to behavior modification and sin management instead of *LIVING FROM* and *LEANING INTO* our new hearts. We try to earn approval we already have. AND we often return to the slavery of performance / shame / hiding instead of living fully alive.

Finally, Romans 8, verses 1 & 2, Paul then says this:

¹ So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. ² And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.

He says God gave you a new heart, He has put His Spirit inside you, He's freed you from your flesh and the power of sin. You are not who you used to be, so good! These verses will guide our conversation today; I want to preach a message I'm calling:

You Were Made for This

Tell 3 people "You were made for this!"

In Southern culture, when someone's struggling with something and you want to encourage them, you might say, "Well, bless your heart, *YOU DID YOUR BEST...*" Anyone ever heard that before? That was what people said after I got my SAT scores back! And

sometimes that's genuine. But a lot of times it's also code for: "You're trying so hard, but let's be honest, this isn't working out for you." *It's pity disguised as encouragement.*

But when GOD says, "Bless your heart" after giving you a new heart, after placing desires in you, after revealing your glory, after equipping you for battle—He's not saying, "You're trying your best." He's saying: "You were made for this! This isn't too big for you! This isn't beyond you! I designed you for this exact moment!"

Church if you don't hear anything else I say today, I pray you hear this, you weren't made to just survive! You weren't made to just get by! You weren't made to live a small, safe, cautious life where you hide who you are and apologize for existing! No! You were made to be FULLY ALIVE in Christ! That's what Jesus said He came to do!

I hope you have caught this message over the past 5 weeks... You aren't a "problem to be solved"; you are a "glory to be revealed." The Christian life isn't about becoming a "better person" through willpower; it's about allowing God to resuscitate your good and noble heart so you can live with the passion and strength you were designed for.

So today I want to show you what that actually looks like and how to get there. If you are ready say, "Let's go!" Let's start here. Because some of you are waiting to FEEL fully alive before you start living fully alive. And if that is what we are chasing—a feeling—then we are going to be waiting forever potentially. If you are taking notes write or type this down:

Choose to be fully alive.

We choose this because it is a decision, not a feeling.

So, let's define what we're even talking about. Because "fully alive in Christ" sounds great, but what does it actually mean? Well, let me tell you what it's NOT. Fully alive is NOT: CONSTANT HAPPINESS. Fully alive is NOT: the ABSENCE OF STRUGGLES or pain. The abundant life is NOT: EVERYTHING GOING RIGHT all the time. It is NOT: always FEELING "SPIRITUAL" or some emotional high. It is definitely NOT: NEVER HAVING A BAD DAY again.

If that's what you're waiting for, you're going to be disappointed. That's not life. That's a vacation commercial. That is heaven, when Jesus returns to earth and makes all things new.

When Jesus or the New Testament authors talk about the abundant life, or life to the full, or living fully alive from your good heart, being alive in Christ... they mean things like:

▷ **Know who you are.** You're not constantly questioning whether you're good enough or if God is disappointed in you. You wake up confident that you have a good heart, you're

God's beloved, and nothing can change that. Your identity is settled, so you're not performing for approval you already have.

They also mean:

▷ **Engage your passions.** You're not suppressing your desires or killing what makes you come alive. You're actually paying attention to what lights you up, what you long for, and you're pursuing those things as clues to your calling. You trust that God put those desires in your good heart for a reason.

Being alive in Christ means to:

▷ **Live from your glory.** You're not hiding who God made you to be or apologizing for your gifts. You know your unique personality, passions, gifts, and story—and you're offering it to the world without shame. You're being YOU, not some filtered, safe version that keeps everyone comfortable.

It's also a choice to:

▷ **Fight with hope.** You're not paralyzed by fear or crushed by every attack or temptation. You know the battle is real, but you also know the war is already won, so you fight with confidence instead of desperation. When the enemy comes at you, you stand firm on ground that's already been taken.

And then it means to:

▷ **Give from fullness.** You're not serving others out of guilt or obligation or trying to earn something. You're so full of God's love, so alive in who you are, that it naturally overflows to everyone around you. Your freedom becomes others permission; your aliveness wakes them up.

The abundant life means you're not going through the religious motions anymore. You're not faking it. You're not performing. You're not hiding...

- You know your heart is good, so you trust it.
- You know your desires are from God, so you follow them.
- You know your glory matters, so you offer it.
- You know the battle is real, so you fight it.

Put it all together, you could say:

Abundant life = A heart that is fully recovered, fully protected, and fully engaged with God.

Dallas Willard said, “The most important thing in your life is not what you do; it's who you become.” Fully alive isn't about accomplishing more—it's about BEING who God made you to be.

C.S. Lewis said, “Joy is the serious business of Heaven.” Not religious duty. Not drudgery. JOY! God isn't honored by your misery—He's honored by your aliveness.

Fully alive means you're doing what MAKES YOU GLAD while MEETING NEEDS that matter. **BUT here's what most people miss:** Fully alive doesn't just HAPPEN to you. You don't wake up one day and accidentally feel the abundant life. It's a choice. A decision. An act of will. Jesus came to give it, but we must choose to accept it.

Last month, when I was teaching everyone the little breath prayer “Lord, I'm listening. God I trust You,” I mentioned a monk named Brother Lawrence who lived in the 1600's in France. He worked in the monastery kitchen—literally washing dishes, peeling potatoes, scrubbing pots. Not exactly glamorous. AND for the first ten years, he HATED it. He felt dead inside. Going through the motions. Just existing.

BUT then he made a choice. He decided that instead of waiting to FEEL God's presence, he would PRACTICE God's presence—right there, in the kitchen, over dirty dishes.

He didn't wait for some mystical experience. He just started talking to God while he worked. Thanking Him for the potatoes. Worshiping Him while scrubbing pots. Choosing to be present with God in the mundane.

And you know what happened? The feeling followed the choice! Brother Lawrence became known throughout France for his joy. People would travel for days just to watch him wash dishes because his face GLOWED. He wrote later, *“The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were upon my knees.”*

He didn't wait to feel alive. He chose to live fully alive right where he was. And the feeling came. BUT most people are waiting for permission, or motivation, or the perfect moment.

So, here's the question: What's keeping you from choosing the abundant life? Let me guess a few:

“I'm too busy.” Are you? Or are you just busy with the wrong things. You've filled your life with obligations and distractions, and now there's no room for what actually matters.

Being fully alive doesn't require MORE time. It requires DIFFERENT priorities. You say but...

“I'm too tired.” Which may be true but are you pouring your life into things that DRAIN you instead of things that ENERGIZE you. Fully alive people aren't LESS tired. They're tired from the RIGHT things. Well...

“I don't know how.” But you will after today...

“What if I fail?” Then you fail. At least you'll fail while LIVING instead of dying slowly in safety. The world doesn't need more people playing it safe. It needs YOU—fully alive, fully YOU.

So, choose it. Stop waiting for permission. Stop waiting for the feeling. Just choose. THEN:

Build rhythms that sustain you.

Because freedom requires structure.

This is what I see happen over and over. People get excited for about three days, and then life happens, and they fall right back into old patterns. WHY? Because freedom without rhythms is just chaos. You need structure to sustain the life you're choosing.

AND this is where the flesh, our old sin nature will fight us hard. We think: “If I'm truly free, I don't need structure. I can just do whatever I want whenever I want.” But that's not freedom. That's impulsiveness. And impulsiveness leads to burnout.

Think about it: A river is powerful and life-giving because it has banks. If you remove the banks, you don't get more river, you get a swamp! Meaning boundaries create freedom. Rhythms create sustainability.

SO, let me give you some practical rhythms broken up daily, weekly and monthly. These aren't rules to be followed religiously. They're tools. Use what works, adjust what doesn't. Here's a couple based on the past 5-weeks to try:

DAILY (MORNING)

Center on identity, not tasks.

Most of us wake up and immediately start thinking about our to-do list. And that sets the tone for the whole day—you're defined by what you accomplish. BUT fully alive people start the day by remembering WHO they are, not what they have to do.

So, before you check your phone, before you check your e-mail, before you think about work, take 60 seconds and declare some things over your life like this out loud {you might want to grab your phones and just take a picture of this, so you have it}:

I have a new heart.

My core desires are good.

I carry a unique glory.

I am fully loved.

I am completely forgiven.

I am a new creation.

I will not hide anymore.

I will not apologize for being fully alive.

I will trust the heart God gave me.

I will live from my glory.

I will fight with hope.

I am free in Jesus' name!

That's it. One minute. But it changes the whole day. Then that evening...

DAILY (EVENING)

Reflect on where you felt alive and thank God.

Before you go to bed, ask: "When did I feel most like myself today? When did I feel most alive?" And then thank God for those moments. This trains you to notice when you're living from your heart versus when you're just going through the motions.

SO, that's a little daily rhythm then:

WEEKLY

Sabbath—cease striving.

One day a week, STOP. No work. No hustle. No productivity. Just rest. Be with God. Be with people you love. Do something that makes you feel alive. This isn't laziness. This is forcing yourself to remember that your worth isn't tied to your productivity.

Another thing you can do weekly is:

WEEKLY

Do something that's uniquely you.

Once a week, do something that expresses your unique glory. If you're CREATIVE, create something. If you're COMPASSIONATE, serve someone. If you love BEAUTY, go enjoy something beautiful. If you love LEARNING, study something just because it fascinates you.

One thing. Every week. That reminds you who you are in your heart. Then:

WEEKLY

Engage in community—be known.

Once a week, connect with safe friends of Jesus who know your story. Not surface-level. Real connection. Obviously, this is one of the amazing things about having a church family. But if you can't find time or space at church then text a trusted Christian friend, "Hey, I need to process something. Can we talk?" You could attend one of our men, women or student gatherings. You could grab coffee with an older believer in your family that you can tell anything to. But we need to be known because you can't engage fully in abundant life alone. You need people to celebrate and mourn with.

SO, weekly stop striving, do something that makes you come alive, and talk to someone who really knows you. What about monthly? Try these rhythms to create some stability:

MONTHLY

Solitude—extended time with God.

Once a month, get away for a few hours. No phone. No distractions. Just you and God. Journal. Pray. Listen. Recalibrate. Ask God: "How's my heart? What needs healing? Where am I settling for imposters instead of following my true desires?"

Also, once a month:

MONTHLY

Invest in what makes you come alive.

Do something that's JUST for you. Take that art class. Go on that hike in that place you've wanted to explore. Read that book you've been wanting to read. Not because it's productive. But because it wakes up your heart. Finally:

MONTHLY

Give your glory away.

Once a month, find a way to use your unique gifts, story, and passion to serve others. Volunteer. Mentor someone. Use your skills to help someone who needs it. Your glory

isn't for you. It's meant to flow THROUGH you to others to help them discover abundant life in Christ.

Are you with me? These aren't rules to be followed religiously. They're tools. Use what works, adjust what doesn't. BUT you need some kind of structure to sustain you. AND I would even argue you need to check in at least once yearly to make sure your heart is on track.

Maybe at the start of the year, or your birthday—ask things like: “Am I living from my glory, or am I hiding it? Am I becoming more myself, or am I shrinking?” Be honest. Adjust. Once a year, ask: “Is what I'm doing with my life actually aligned with who God made me to be?” If not, what needs to change? Take inventory: “What old wounds got triggered this year? What do I need to bring to Jesus for healing?” Don't just power through. Actually invite Jesus to heal you.

Alright, final point. But can we talk about something for a second? Dead fish handshakes. Anyone know what I'm talking about. You meet someone, you go to shake their hand, and they just... [DEMONSTRATE LIMP HANDSHAKE] give you nothing. No grip. No eye contact. Just wet noodle energy.

And it's weird, right? You walk away thinking, “What just happened? Did I do something wrong? Are they OK?”

Well, here's what I've noticed: A lot of Christians live their whole lives like a dead fish handshake. No energy. No presence. Just going through the religious motions. AND when people encounter that version of Christianity they walk away thinking, “Is that really what following Jesus looks like? Because if so... no thanks.”

BUT when they meet someone who's FULLY ALIVE in Jesus? Someone with a “firm handshake,” that's when they think, “Wait, I want whatever that is.” Amen? Which is why this final point matters so much:

Give your freedom away generously.

Because your abundant life in Christ helps to free others. It's like the ripple effect on water. When you come alive, others wake up!

Think about it: You discover your good heart → You stop performing for approval. You trust your desires → You stop hiding who you are. You offer your glory → You stop shrinking to make others comfortable. You fight with hope → You stop giving up when it gets hard or your fail. You live fully alive → You stop settling for less than what God intended.

AND THEN: Your kids see authentic faith, not religious performance! Your spouse gets the real you, not the defensive, shut-down version!. Your friends experience genuine connection, not surface-level small talk! Your coworkers see Jesus through your freedom, not through your burden! And the world gets what only you can offer, your unique glory!

Do you see it? When you come alive, you give other people permission to come alive too! Living from your good heart isn't selfish. It's actually the most generous thing you can do!

BUT what happens when you play small? Let's flip it. When you hide your glory:

- Your kids learn that being yourself is shameful.
- Your spouse feels lonely even though you're in the same room.
- Your friends never get to know the real you.
- The world misses out on what God put in you.

When you suppress your desires:

- You become resentful and bitter.
- You model a joyless faith.
- You fall prey to imposters offering quick comfort.
- People think following Jesus means being miserable.

When you stay small:

- You rob yourself of the life Jesus died to give you. AND...
- You rob others of the gift you were meant to be!

Listen to me church, some of you walked in here today barely hanging on. You came in exhausted, discouraged, wondering if this Christian life is even worth it. You've been trying so hard for so long to be who you thought you were supposed to be that you forgot who you actually are. You've been going through the religious motions, suppressing your desires, hiding your glory, apologizing for existing, playing small as if that is humility.

And you're TIRED. Because that's not LIFE. That's DEATH.

But I'm here to tell you that's not what Jesus died for! Jesus didn't go to the cross so you could spend your life in miserable obligation! He didn't rise from the grave so you could hide who you are! He didn't give you a new heart so you could keep living like your heart is wicked!

NO! He came that you might have life and have it ABUNDANTLY! He came to set you FREE! Not just forgiven. FREE!

- Free to be who He made you!
- Free to want what He placed in you!
- Free to offer what only you can give!
- Free to fight FROM victory instead of FOR it!
- Free to be fully alive!

And hear me, the world needs you to wake up! Your kids are waiting for you to stop performing and start being real. Your spouse is waiting for you to stop hiding and start connecting. Your friends are waiting for someone to give them permission to stop faking it. The broken people around you are waiting for someone who's actually experienced the freedom of Jesus, not just talked about it.

And that someone is YOU! You were made for this!

Not someday. Not when you get your act together. Not when you feel ready. TODAY! Right now!

SO, what are you waiting for? Is it FEAR? Then remember you're fighting from victory. The war is already won. Is it SHAME? Then remember there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. You have a good heart. Is it EXHAUSTION? Then remember you're not doing this in your own strength. Greater is He who is in you. Is it DOUBT? Then remember you are God's masterpiece and He doesn't make mistakes.

You were born for THIS! Not to survive... to THRIVE. Not to hide... to SHINE. Not to settle... to SOAR.

SO, as we close this out I want to make this super practical. Here's what I want you to do this week:

STEP 1: Choose one rhythm.

Pick one rhythm from what I shared today and commit to it for the next **30 DAYS**. Everyone say, "30 days!" Maybe it's the morning identity statements. Maybe it's the weekly Sabbath. Maybe it's the monthly solitude –OR– investing in something that makes you come alive. Pick just one and start there for, how many days? 30!

STEP 2: Give your glory away.

If you will begin to allow everything we have talked about on this 5-week journey into your heart and apply it, you will begin to see more and more evidence of the abundant life springing up in you. AND as you see that, as you experience that, give it away!

Do that thing you are good at for others. Don't shrink back when that still small voice says speak up. Volunteer for something you are passionate about. Use your good heart to love people who are hard to love. Follow your desires to serve in ways that make you come alive. Let people see the real you, not the filtered version. Fight for people the way God fights for you. Live so fully alive that people wonder what you have.

Because here's what happens when you give your glory away: Your kids don't just hear about Jesus—they see Jesus. Your spouse doesn't get a roommate who shares a bed—they get a partner who's fully present and alive. Your coworkers don't see another stressed-out, burnt-out Christian—they see someone who's actually experiencing the abundant life Jesus promised. AND the world doesn't get another religious person going through the motions—they get YOU. That's the ripple effect.

Finally, this week:

STEP 3: Tell someone.

Find one person this week—maybe today—and say, “I'm choosing to live more fully alive in Christ. Will you check in with me about this?” Don't skip this last step, I know you want to, but accountability makes it real. Amen?

Hey, I am excited to see what God does over the next 30 days. We've spent five weeks talking about your blessed heart. We've covered the theology. We've explored the implications. We've addressed the battles. Now it's time to LIVE IT!

- You have a good heart.
- You can trust your deepest desires.
- You have a unique glory.
- You've been given armor.
- The war is already won.

And you were made for this. Because when God says, “Bless your heart,” He's not being sarcastic. He's not pitying you. He's not condescending you. He's saying: “I gave you a blessed heart. I made it new. I made it good. I designed you for this. I put My Spirit in you for this. Now go live it. Go live the abundant life!”

Pray with me church.

[PRAYER TIME]

Father, thank You for these five weeks. Thank You for the truth that we have good hearts. Thank You that we can trust our true desires. Thank You that we have unique glory. Thank You that we're not defenseless against the enemy or our old sinful nature. Thank You that the war is already won.

And now, help us LIVE it.

- Give us courage to choose to be fully alive—not someday, but today.
- Give us wisdom to build rhythms that sustain us.
- Give us generosity to give our freedom away.
- Show us what it looks like to be fully alive in our marriages, our families, our work, our friendships, our church.

And most of all, remind us every single day that we were MADE for this.

Some of you are here and you've never placed your faith in Jesus. You've never experienced the new heart we've been talking about for five weeks. And if that's you, here's what you need to know:

Everything I've talked about today—the good heart, the trustworthy desires, the unique glory, the armor, the freedom to be fully alive—NONE of that is available to you apart from Jesus.

When He died on the cross, He paid for your sins. When He rose from the grave, He defeated death. And when you place your faith in Him, God performs a spiritual heart transplant.

He removes your heart of stone. He gives you a heart of flesh. He puts His Spirit in you. He makes you new. And THEN—and only then—can you live fully alive.

Jesus isn't offering you religion. He's offering you LIFE. Will you receive it? If so pray after me in your heart and mind...