

So I want to preface what I'm about to say with some Scripture. One question, though: is all Scripture God-breathed? [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#) states, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

So with that said, I'm going to read from [Mark 5:1-20](#).

"They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, 'What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!' For Jesus had said to him, 'Come out of this man, you impure spirit!'

Then Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?'

'My name is Legion,' he replied, 'for we are many.' And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, 'Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.' He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, 'Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.' So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis (the Ten Towns) how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed."

This story is also found in [Luke 8:26-39](#). But with that said, I'm not teaching on Spiritual warfare today. Not exactly, anyway. But I needed this passage to explain the first part of this teaching.



Awhile back, I saw a preview for a Christian movie while watching another Christian movie. The movie being advertised was called "Nefarious." It looked good but, to be honest, it dealt with demon possession and was rated "R" and as a "horror" film. With possession and that rating, it caused me extreme pause. I was truly hesitant to watch it. A few months back, I was talking with someone about it - it just came up in conversation - and he told me about it. He also gave me further information like the previews make it look worse than it truly is. Upon this further information, and discussing it with my wife, I decided to watch it.

For those hesitant, please make your own decision. I will tell you that, as I was told, 90% of the movie takes place in a cell block. The guy that's possessed faces the electric chair for murders not seen. And looking at online reviews, there is one scene that deals with corporal punishment via electric chair. Like I said, please make your own decision.

But I will tell you this: the movie, almost it's entirety, is a theological discussion on God, people, and the strategic motives of demons. Jesus is never referred to by name but instead only as "The Carpenter." Jesus' Name carries so much power that the demon can't even mutter it. And Bible verses are stated throughout the movie. Funny thing is, the Scripture used is solely used by the demon. And in my opinion, the actor who portrays the demon should win an Oscar. He's very convincing...and creepy.

Due to it's nature as well as it's rating, I can't recommend it. As I've mentioned, that's up to the individual whether they wish to watch it. All this to say, however, that I wish to discuss a particular scene in the movie that leads us to today's teaching.

The demon possessed man is sitting, shackled and in his orange jumpsuit, across the table from a psychiatrist, who's an atheist, and who's there to determine if this man is insane or sane. If he's determined as sane, he's able to be executed.

The discussion between the two has been going on for a little bit and then, when the psychiatrist - who's name is James - decides that the man's insane, he tried to walk away. However, the demon within the convicted man doesn't like this. So in his discussion with the psychiatrist, he calls James out about something the psychiatrist is doing in his personal life that's sinful. He confronts the psychiatrist; he then challenges him. The psychiatrist resists. And in the discussion, the demon actually gives James a way to deal with the sin. But the psychiatrist responds by saying, "I can't do that."

"No, James? Why not?"

"It's complicated."

The convicted laughs and says, "That's my boy, James! That's him right there."

"You don't understand."

"Oh, I think I do, James. I think I understand." He continues to confront James and James continues to defend his actions. At the peak of the discussion and when the psychiatrist is very riled up, he says, "Who, who are you to judge me? This is my life! I, I can live it the way I want!"

"Yes, James!!! I couldn't have said it better myself." It's a very intense scene; one of many.

So after watching the movie, we started to clean the house. Now I listen to all kinds of music - not rap or heavy metal - but I like music. It's my love language with God. Even secular music can do that with me. So, I pull out my Walmart-purchased Greatest Hit of Bon Jovi record and start playing it. On the first side I play, this song comes on: "It's My Life." (play the song)

Then that night, we sat down to read the Bible. We're reading in [Jeremiah Ch. 38, verses 1-13](#) and it made me think, "It's my life!" They didn't want to do what God was saying through Jeremiah. If they had just repented...

Two days later, we walk into Albertson's for a handful of groceries. And this is playing over the loudspeakers. Billy Joel's "It's My Life." "Okay, God. I get it." Then hints and shadows of this theme came up in Kevin's teachings; and Pastor's Clifford's, then Pete's Mens' Group. It even came up at Ignite. It's funny how God does things.

I got curious and started looking up how many songs have the theme "It's My Life." I found songs from Talk Talk in 1984, Dr. Alban in 1992, No Doubt in 2003, punk bands, rock bands, and others. But this theme didn't start in the '80's. The Animals did one in 1965 (play a snippet). How about this one? (Play "I Did It My Way" by Frank Sinatra) I think this theme traverses many generational genres.



So my question to each of you - and, really, to myself, as well: whose life is it, really? I think all of us want to yell out "Jesus." And that's cool. But let's be honest, it is really? Truth be told, I believe it's our life. To do with as we wish. And before anyone calls me a heretic, let me explain.

In Genesis, God created everything - including Adam and Eve. And He gave them free will. Because of this, He allowed them to choose if they would follow Him, or choose not to follow Him. He gave them their lives and how to choose what to do with them as they saw fit.

Of course, everyone knows that they made the wrong choice. They followed the YOLO advice: "You Only Live Once." They made the wrong decision. But that's one of the many gifts God gives us. To live our lives the way we want to. However, here are a couple of Scriptures that directly dispute the choice of "It's my life."

Sacrifice for God:

We read in [Matthew 22:36-40](#) about a man who comes up to Jesus and says, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

We know the words. I bet most of us can recite them in our sleep. But do we do that? Do we actually do that? Do we love our God with all that we are? Or do we love our truck more; our beer more; our TV more; our sleep more? Our job more? And the list goes on. Do we make time for Him? Do we allow Him to make our choices for us? To guide us? To let us know when we're wrong?

But it's my life! I should be able to do the things I want to do." or "I've got things I've got to do."

Sacrifice for others:

What about when dealing with others? Do we show love as He commands us? What if they've wronged us? What if they've hurt us? Now I'm not saying we should allow them to keep wronging or hurting us - I don't believe Jesus asks us to do that, but do we still love? Do we love them by forgiving them? [Matthew 5:38-48](#) says, "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.



Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you." He goes on. "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

"But it's my life! I should be able to hold a grudge."

Marriage:

I'm going to be honest, this next part's going to hurt. I had the pleasure of officiating my daughter's wedding this past year. It was an honor and a privilege. **Ephesians 5** is a common Biblical verse read during weddings. It's important. And considering God compares our relationship with us as husband and wife, I think it's vital.

This is from the New Living Translation (NLT): "And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything."

I'm going to interrupt here for a minute. Ladies, are you submitting to your husbands? That doesn't mean you bow to him and do everything he says. The world interprets it this way, but this is not what God means here. And we'll get to the guys in a minute. But wives, are you submitting? Are you allowing him to make the decisions in the relationship? Yes, you definitely have a voice. But who has the final say? Are you allowing him to decide bills? To make bad decisions? Are you allowing him to drive without critique or criticism? Are you letting him lead?

We're going to continue with the Scripture: "For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. In the same



way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. And we are members of his body."

This time, I'm interrupting for the guys. So guys, are you doing this? Are you worthy to be submitted to by your wives? What if your daughter was dating some one like you? Would you want her to submit to his authority? Are you sacrificing yourself for her? If not, are you being as Christ is to the church? It's a tall order, to be sure. But that's what we're called to do.

"As the Scriptures say, 'A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."

Couples, are we doing this? Are we dying to ourselves for each other? Or are we saying, "But it's my life?" God calls us to do this. He commands us to do this. Are we following His command?

"But it's my life! I want to do what I want to do."

Politics/the way we vote:

Is Jesus in everything? Is He in those secret corners of your mind and heart? Is He in your work? Is He with your spouse and your kids? How about this: is He in your politics? Now there's been some debate about politics. Some people interpret the First Amendment to read that there should be a separation of church and state. I'm not one of these people. However, my opinion is irrelevant. But let's think this through. IF the writers of the U.S. Constitution actually did write this, they were saying that God should be excluded from politics. Doesn't this whole book tell us that God doesn't want us to exclude Him from anything? He wants to be in everything. So, rationally, if the Constitution writers - believers in God, by the way as evidenced by the first verbiage of the Declaration of Independence: "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..." (there's the God reference) - so if these writers excluded God, ...well, that just doesn't make sense. "We have a God but He can't be included." Either they were wrong or our interpretation of it is wrong. **Revelation 3:20** (ESV) "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with



me." He wants in everything. He wants to walk with us, talk with us, be with us through thick and thin. And yes, even be in our politics.

Isaiah 52:12 (Legacy) "But you will not go out in haste, Nor will you go as those who flee; For Yahweh will go before you, And the God of Israel will be your rear guard." That means He's always with you.

Proverbs 3:6 "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." We should acknowledge Him in all our ways...except politics. Because man told us not to. Does that sound right?

But it's my life. And I can vote the way I feel."

These are but only four things He commands us to do. "But it's my life!" That's so true. It is. And we have the choice to keep it...or to give it to Him.

2 Timothy 3:1-4 (NKJ) "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!" How many of these things are reflected in "But it's my life!"?

Here are a few verses that we should all know; especially if we say "But it's my life!"

1 John 2:3-6 (CJB) "We know that we have come to know Him if we keep His commands. Whoever says, 'I know Him,' but does not do what He commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. But if anyone obeys His Word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in Him: Whoever claims to live in Him must live as Jesus did." We are definitely not perfect. But we try. And with His grace and mercy.

"But it's my life."

Matthew 16:25-26 (KJV) "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

"But it's my life."



John 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

"But it's..."

In **Revelation 3:15-16** (CJB), Jesus is talking to the church of Laodicea; He's talking to the church. "I know what you are doing: you are neither cold nor hot. How I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth."

"But..."

Matthew 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the Will of My Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your Name, and cast out demons in your Name, and do many mighty works in your Name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"

Who's life is it? Who does it belong to? It should be always Jesus'. As God's Word says in **Galatians 2:20** (ESV), "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me."

