

**“LOST”: More Than Must-See TV**  
**“See You in Another Life”**  
June 19/20, 2010

**Prelude – Jesus Messiah**  
**Feature – “Better Life”**

**DVD Clip - SEE YOU IN ANOTHER LIFE #1 (0.4 min)**

*Season 2 Disc 1 Ep 3 "Orientation"*

B: shot of feet running up stairs (after "previously on LOST")

E: Desmond: "See you in another life, yeah?" then runs off

**DVD Clip - SEE YOU IN ANOTHER LIFE #2 (1.7 min)**

*Season 2 Disc 1 Ep 3 "Orientation"*

B: Desmond: "You wanna shoot me - shoot me!"

E: Desmond: "See you in another life, yeah?" then runs off

**DVD Clip - SEE YOU IN ANOTHER LIFE #3 (0.5 min)**

*Season 2 Disc 6 Ep 24 "Live Together, Die Alone"*

B: Locke: "no, no ... none of this is real."

E: Desmond: "I'll see you in another life, brother" and turns away

“See you in another life” ... if you were a fan of the TV series “LOST” I’m sure you remember that phrase as being key to the story. We’ll come back to it in just a minute, but first I want to say ... good morning everyone ... and welcome to the second week of “LOST: *More Than Must-See TV*”; a series in which we’re using one of the most-watched television shows in history to illustrate biblical truth that matters in “real life.”

And we can do that with this goofy TV show because, as we discovered last week, the beautiful-but-dangerous-and-mysterious island on which the survivors of the crash of Oceanic Flight 815 find themselves serves as a metaphor for the beautiful, but dangerous and mysterious real world in which all of us live every day. LOST is a story that asks the question: *where are we?* What is the nature of this world in which we find ourselves?

- Are we in a place where we’re predestined to good or bad luck? Or do even our most mundane choices matter more than we know?
- How do we best know and understand this world – through science or faith?
- And how do we live with the fact that we have so many questions but not nearly as many answers?

**As one of the Biblical writers put it ...**

*God ... has ... set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. Ecclesiastes 3:10-11 (NIV)*

Since that’s true; since we live on a wonderful and strange Island called “Earth” with a bunch of stuff we’re probably never going to figure out – then what really matters?

Well, as we saw last week, the answer according to “LOST” is ... relationships and community. That’s the message that runs from the very first show through the very last. “If we can’t figure out how to *live together*,” Jack Shephard says, “we’re going to die alone.”

Amazingly, as we also saw last week ... that’s the same message that runs from beginning to end in the Bible. I won’t go back into all of that other than to quote the Apostle Paul who wrote ...

*Where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.*

In other words ... when all our deepest questions are no longer necessary, and the mysteries are no more ...

*These three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. 1  
Corinthians 13:12-13 (NIV)*

It’s about relationships and community. All the questions of life that we try to answer – as important and valuable as they are – dwarf in comparison. That’s the lesson we learned last week.

### “LOST” in the Real World

As for *this* week, in order for you to follow what we’re going to talk about, you need to understand three things in the basic storyline of LOST. OK? Here we go ...

After crash-landing on the Island ...

#### **#1. The survivors soon discover a mysterious hatch that goes down into a research station ...**

... in which there is a guy named Desmond Hume (we saw him in the videos) who has been pushing a button every 108 minutes for three years to keep a massive electro-magnetic force in check.

And, as we saw in the video, before arriving on the Island (by chance or destiny) and getting tricked into the button-pushing job, Desmond had very briefly met Jack years before (by chance – or destiny).

#### **#2. After discovering the hatch, the survivors also learned that there were others who came before them: members of the Dharma Initiative ...**

... who wanted to research the energy force and, therefore, built the station along with a hidden village with all the conveniences of modern civilization.

#### **#3. But, one day, one of the survivors decided they were *not* going to push the button any longer, which forced Desmond to go down to the energy core and turn the fail-safe key.**

OK, let’s review: A hatch leading to an underground station ... built by a research team that also built this little village ... and then a decision to *not* push the magic button any more which led the station manager, Desmond, to take emergency action.

Got all that? You don’t need to understand *why*, you don’t need to understand *how* ... it just is.

Ok, now this is where it gets either fascinating or weird depending on how you feel about science-fiction. Turning the key completely exposes Desmond to the energy force ... which causes him to get stuck in a time-warp bouncing back and forth between his present life on the Island and parts of his life that he has already lived.

And, eventually, in the life he's already lived, he begins to figure out what's happening to him. Let's watch as he discusses his suspicion with a friend.

**DVD Clip - LIVING MY LIFE OVER AGAIN (1.3 min)**

*Season 3 Disc 2 Ep 8 "Flashes Before Your Eyes"*

B: Professor: "You've looked better, Des ..."

E: Professor: "How wonderfully convenient."

So, Desmond's friend thinks he's crazy and Desmond still isn't sure himself until, a few days later, in his "life before the Island" experience, he decides that he finally wants to marry his longtime girlfriend, Penny ... and *this* happens.

Let's watch ...

**DVD Clip - YOU DON'T BUY THE RING (1.5 min)**

*Season 3 Disc 2 Ep 8 "Flashes Before Your Eyes"*

B: Desmond picks up ring and looks at it

E: Blackout and BOOM!

So, when Desmond says "see you in another life, brotha" he really does mean it ... but he doesn't *know* that he means it ... at least not at first, but then he becomes more and more aware of it. Because he is bouncing back and forth in time, he really does see you in another version of his life and yours.

Are you confused yet? Not a problem. Because, as mind-bending as the idea of time-travel might be ...

**The larger question that LOST raises repeatedly is *not* whether or not people can literally have "another life" by going back in time (though it does raise that). The larger question is whether or not we can have another life right now.**

Is there any way, right now, to overcome the messes we've made? Is there any way right now to be better than who and what we are?

As one critic put it: "The show was never about time-travel, smoke monsters, or polar bears. It was always about the characters. The central questions were always: Who are these people? How did they become so broken and lost? Will they ever be able to move past their flaws? Will they ever find redemption?"

And in that sense, once again, the Island serves as a metaphor for real life. "LOST" – for all of its complexities – speaks to the reality of every single one of us because a lot of us are just like the people on that Island.

For example ... some of us are like ...

**Jack (driven) ... who overcompensated for his inferiority complex by adopting a savior complex.**

**Kate (self-centered) ... who, quite frankly, used men and even another woman's child to prove her own self-worth.**

**Sayid (compromise) ... who chose to do the most heinous kinds of evil in order to save his own skin**

**Locke (doubt) ... who, like the Apostle Thomas, vacillated between belief and unbelief**

**Shannon (materialistic) ... who valued wealth, beauty and comfort more than anything else**

**Sawyer (revenge) ... who was so driven by hatred and a desire for revenge against one man that he lost the ability to truly love any man or woman**

**Hugo (depression) ... who was controlled by the belief that his life was cursed and "so, what's the use?"**

**Charlie (approval-addict) ... who was addicted to not just drugs, but to approval from others.**

**Ben (power) ... who continually lied and cheated in his quest for more and more power.**

Do any of these folks look and sound like anyone you know? Do any of them look and sound like *you*? I'll be honest with you: the truth about me is that I could be any one of them – and, sadly, sometimes I am.

*Their* stories, even though they are couched in the genre of tropical science-fiction, if there is such a thing, are *our* stories.

## **The Longing**

And one of the things I think "LOST" did really well was to illustrate the longing of all human beings to overcome our flaws; to move beyond what we've done and what we've become (in a negative sense) and to have "another life."

And there are so many great scenes in *lost* that illustrate this but I picked three that I think will give you a good idea of what I'm talking about. See if you can resonate with any of these emotions in your own life.

This first one happens after the survivors have finally been reached by a potential rescue party which, for the first three seasons of the show, has been the goal: to figure out a way to get off the Island and back to their former lives. But not everyone is sure that's such a good idea.

Let's watch.

### **DVD Clip - HOW THE WORLD WORKS (1.4 min)**

*Season 4 Disc 1 Ep 3 "The Economist"*

B: Kate: "What are you doing here with Locke?"

E: Sawyer: "Why don't we find out"? then music ends.

Sawyer has figured out that what he wants most is another life that's not ruled by revenge. And, of course, he wants Kate to do that life with him ... but she doesn't because, even though she's used Sawyer, she's really in love with Jack. And, it's a TV show - there's got to be a love triangle, right?

Ok, now this next scene happens after some of the survivors – six of them, to be exact – are rescued and get to go back home. Sawyer was not one of them, but Jack and Kate were. And back home, she's acquitted of the charges against her and they get engaged. But they break it off when Jack kind of goes off the deep end. You'll see what I mean.

Let's watch.

**DVD Clip - WE MADE A MISTAKE (2.2 min)**

*Season 3 Disc 6 Ep 23 "Through the Looking Glass - Part II"*

B: Jack looks up: "I've been flying a lot"

E: Kate gets into car

Jack has discovered what Sawyer discovered; that his life "back home" is no better than before the crash – in fact it's worse because now Kate won't have anything to do with him. So, he wants to go back to the Island because he hopes that, there, *he can find another life*.

And in season five that's what happens. Jack, Kate and the rest of the Oceanic Six figure out a way to go back. Unfortunately, when they get there it's the 1970s instead of 2007! The time travel thing is happening on the island. And so, it comes to Jack, being that it's 30 years before the crash, that it would be possible to undo everything that's happened – and going to happen 30 years later – by simply blowing up the center of the energy force.

So, listen to his reasoning of why he wants to do that.

**DVD Clip - WIPE IT CLEAN (1.3 min)**

*Season 5 Disc 4 Ep 15 "Follow the Leader"*

B: Kate sits up: "Are you OK?"

E: Jack: "Enough of it was" ... shot of Kate's face.

And he's right – enough of their life together was miserable. And Jack wanted a way to wipe it all clean.

Can you relate to that? The desire to "wipe it all clean" and get another life?

Maybe you don't want to blow up the Island you're on like Jack did, but I don't know a single person who, in honestly looking at their life, wouldn't say, "I wish I had not *done* that" or "I wish I had not *become* that" and "I wish I could wipe it clean. I wish I could have another life."

In fact, this desire is so prevalent among human beings that the Bible is full of stories about it. For example, the Book of Acts tells us about a time when the Apostle Paul and his partner Silas had been arrested, brutally beaten and then thrown into a Roman jail cell for preaching and teaching about Jesus of Nazareth.

*Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening. Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off!*

*The jailer woke up to see the prison doors wide open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword to kill himself.*

He did that because if you were a Roman soldier in charge of the jail and your prisoners escaped, you would be executed. So, he was just going to do it himself.

*But Paul shouted to him, “Stop! Don’t kill yourself! We are all here!” The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and [seeing that it was true] fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.*

And then, a most amazing thing happened.

### **The Bible says that ...**

*Then he brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”  
Acts 16:25-30 (NLT)*

Why was he asking *that*? I mean, no prisoner escaped so he wasn’t going to be executed. He surely wasn’t talking about being saved from execution.

I think what he was saying was, “This incident has caused my eyes to be opened and I see what I’ve done and I see what I’ve become. And I do not like what I see. Can I wipe it all clean? Could I have another life?”

Another example, this one from Jesus’ day:

*There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus.*

*“Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.”*

Sounds like a very humble and respectful way to begin a conversation, doesn’t it? But listen to Jesus’ response.

*Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.” John 3:1-3 (NLT)*

And, I’ve always wondered why this exchange took place like this. I mean, Nicodemus started out with a seemingly pleasant introduction and then Jesus abruptly changed the subject. Why?

I think Jesus was looking deep into his heart. “Nick,” he was saying, “you’re here (in the middle of the night) because on the outside you appear to have it all together. But on the inside, you wish you could wipe the slate clean.”

Two very different types of characters – one a rough and tough Roman jailer and one a morally-upstanding religious leader – both in need of and desiring “another life.”

## Not That Simple

Now, at this point, I could probably end this message by saying, “and that’s what Jesus offered to both of them and to all of us – another life – a *new* life (over and over, in fact) as we come to Him with what we’ve done and who we’ve become. He will wipe the slate clean, again and again.”

And there’s truth in that, but I think that sometimes we’ve heard that so much that it loses its meaning. And something that’s incredibly profound – “you really *can* have another life” – becomes a trite expression, even though it’s still kind of emotionally moving to think about it.

Let me show you a scene from one of the very first shows from Season One which illustrates what I’m talking about. Kate, as we heard in a previous clip, was a prisoner on her way to jail when the plane went down. The U.S. marshal, whom she was chained to, dies shortly after the crash, but not before revealing Kate’s identity to Jack.

And, listen to how Jack responds to that information.

### **DVD Clip - STARTING OVER (1.3 min)**

*Season 1 Disc 1 Ep 3 "Tabula Rasa"*

B: Jack sitting at shore as Kate walks up

E: Kate looks down

Beautiful, isn’t it? Very moving. It just touches on what we all long for – a chance to start over with a blank slate.

*But*, as the story moves forward, it turns out that it’s not that simple and, eventually, Jack demands the truth from her about what happened and then has to deal with it. *Another life – starting over – being saved – being born again – however you describe it ... is messy business.* It’s not simple on the Island and it’s not simple in real life.

Yes, Paul and Silas *do* say to the jailer “believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved” and, yes, Jesus *does* tell Nicodemus that he can be born again by responding to the wind of the Spirit of God and yes, those things are true for you and me as well.

But there’s more to it than that, and let me just put it like this:

**“Another life” requires that judgement, grace and mercy be offered and accepted.**

Judgement means what it sounds like: it becomes clear that we’re guilty and deserve to be punished for who we are and what we’ve done.

Then, mercy steps in and shockingly chooses *not* to give us the judgement we’ve earned and deserve. Then grace goes beyond mercy by shockingly choosing to treat us far better than we’ve earned or deserve.

That’s how it works. That’s how “another life” really happens. Not until sin is confessed and judgement

proclaimed does the offer of grace and mercy mean anything. And it's not easy for the one who offers it or the one who accepts it.

One of the greatest illustrations of this truth that I've ever seen happened in the final season of "LOST." Earlier I mentioned the character Ben Linus. Ben is so driven by his lust for power that he goes so far as to kill the Island's protector, the mysterious Jacob.

But judgement comes to Ben Linus. He's captured by one of Jacob's best friends who, as you might expect, is distraught over the death of Jacob. And so she sentences Ben Linus to death and even orders him to dig his own grave.

But something happens and watch and be listening for the shocking offer of grace and mercy.

### **DVD Clip - I'LL HAVE YOU (3.1 min)**

*Season 6 Ep 7 "Dr. Linus"*

B: Illiana watching as Ben runs for it

E: Ben begins walking out of jungle

For Ben to get "another life," he had to do the hard thing of admitting the truth about himself. And then, Jacob's friend had to suspend the rightful judgement that was due him (that's *mercy*) and then for her to say "I'll have you" ... to welcome him (which is *grace*). Incredibly difficult thing to do, but that's what it takes to get another life.

And I suppose, again, we could stop here and I could explain to you how that's exactly what Jesus does for us sinners. He suspends the rightful judgement that is due us (that's *mercy*) and then he says "I'll have you" ... and welcomes us (which is *grace*).

And that's true, but it would be oversimplifying things again.

So, think about what we just saw. Jacob's friend welcomed Ben in spite of who he was and what he had done. That's clear. But ... *welcomed him where?* Into her community.

I mean, she could have just said, "OK, deal. I won't kill you. Just go to Locke." But the shocking offer of grace – the "better than we deserve" part – is the offer of relationship and community.

**See, "Another life" requires a community in which that life can be developed and lived out if it's really going to be "another life".**

And that's important to note because, in the story of "LOST", if you follow the story from that point to the end, you see that Ben accepts her offer but then he still struggles to live in that new life that grace and mercy have given to him. He's still a selfish jerk. He is still greatly tempted by that lust for power.

But, over time what happens is, judgement, and then mercy and grace flow to him, from that community, and then his character begins to change. He doesn't magically go back into time and undo things, like Jack was trying to do, but instead, he starts living a new life. He becomes a new person because of relationship and community (which is something we see in the finale ... but that's for another message).



## Real Life Again

Of course, again, it's just a stupid TV show, right? So what about the "real life" question ... is there such a community of judgement (calling sin what it is), grace and mercy in which "getting another life" really is possible, maybe even the norm?

Well yes, there is, and as we close this message I want us to read about it together. It's printed in your outline if you want to follow along, or you can just listen as I read it.

Paul was writing to followers of Jesus in the first-century city of Ephesus and this is what he said:

*You were once dead because of your failures and sins. You followed the ways of this present world and its spiritual ruler. (This ruler continues to work in people who refuse to obey God).*

*All of us once lived among these people, and followed the desires of our corrupt nature. We did what our corrupt desires and thoughts wanted us to do. So, because of our nature, we deserved God's anger just like everyone else.*

What Paul is saying is: all of you people have been judged as "guilty sinners."

*But God is rich in mercy because of his great love for us. We were dead because of our failures, but he made us alive together with Christ. (It is God's kindness that saved you.) God has brought us back to life together with Christ Jesus and has given us a position in heaven with him. He did this through Christ Jesus out of his generosity to us in order to show his extremely rich kindness in the world to come. God saved you through faith as an act of kindness. You had nothing to do with it. Being saved is a gift from God. It's not the result of anything you've done, so no one can brag about it.*

*Ephesians 2:1-9 (GW)*

What Paul is saying is: You have received mercy from God. You've not the received punishment, because God's love has taken that for you. You have been saved from that.

**But here's the most amazing part to me. Paul writes...**

*Now through Christ Jesus you, who were once far away, have been brought near by the blood of Christ ... That is why you are no longer foreigners and outsiders but citizens together with God's people and members of God's family.*

*Ephesians 2:13,19-20 (GW)*

See, all of these people had not only been judged and received mercy. They had received grace – better than they deserved and better than they could earn – they had been called into relationship and community with God and with one another.

So, what is this community? It's called the church. It's called the church, and Jesus is the one who welcomes all of us with truth and with grace and with mercy.

As I was studying and preparing for this message, I came across this comment – I loved it. The person wrote: "LOST is a beautiful six-year sermon on being the church! Faith, assurance, flawed humanity, community,

redemption.”

And that’s who we are. And, that’s what Jesus offers us. And, this morning as we close this service, I’m going to ask the band to come up and we’re going to do a little thing that helps us reflect on this fact, that this is what we’ve been offered in God, in Christ. We’ve been judged – we’re guilty. But, God has shown mercy to us. God offers us grace and He says come and be part of my community. God could have said, just like in the show, “I’m not going to judge you. I’m not going to punish you.” But, God shows that shocking grace and says, “Come and be part of my community. Experience this grace.”

So, the band is going to do a song which is kind of a prayer actually, and as they’re singing, maybe you could even pray the words along with them. And, some of you may have heard this before and would say, “Yeah, I’ve had that Ben Linus moment where I realized the shocking grace of Jesus in my life.” But, you know, Paul wrote an interesting thing about that. He was writing to the church in Colossae, and similar to what he had said to the Ephesians, he said:

*But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don’t drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. Colossians 1:23 (NLT)*

In other words, don’t forget about that experience. Relive that daily. And what we do as a church to relive that experience is communion. We take this bread and we take this juice and it reminds us of the body and blood of Jesus that made this redemption possible, this grace and mercy possible.

Let’s pray.

**Feature – “Grace”**

**Worship – “Nothing But the Blood” /Communion**