

## **Week One - How Shall I Live Now?**

### **Assigned Reading: Chapter 1**

#### **John 10:10b**

**10** “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

#### **Ephesians 4:18, 22-24**

**18** “They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance . . . **22** You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self . . . **23** and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, **24** and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

#### **Brief Summary:**

“How will I know if I’m doing this right?” This is the question Kate Bowler poses at the end of this first chapter. It is a question born out of fear, bewilderment, and uncertainty.

How does a young, successful woman with everything going for her suddenly deal with a devastating cancer diagnosis? Up until this point, every project she took on and every aspect of her life was going just as she had envisioned it. The path looked clear.

Chapter one takes us on the first part of Kate’s journey as she confronts this personal crisis. We see her reaction to the diagnosis and her sometimes angry rejection of the facile answers to life’s problems provided by popular self-help books.

We join her on this journey as she stands at a crossroads in her life, uncertain of which way to go.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. A young doctor visits Kate on the second night of her hospital stay, following surgery. After her discussion with the doctor, Kate suddenly conceives of a “new definition of living” (8) that differs radically from the “moments of reckless joy” (10) she experienced before her diagnosis.
  - a. In what ways has the covid pandemic caused many of us to experience a similar kind of change in our view of the world and how to live?
2. Aware that she may have a short time to live, Kate despairs when she tries to identify “anything to do . . . that matters” (9). How is her despair exacerbated by her knowledge of modern self-help books preaching “best life now” and “prosperity gospel”? (13-18)
3. After her diagnosis, why is Kate no longer sure about how to live? Was she sure before the diagnosis? How so?

4. Kate describes herself before her diagnosis as an “earnest and clever” but “ignorant” young woman. In the hospital room at Duke, is she beginning to “see” how she has been “ignorant” about how to live (18)? How so?

5. In Ephesians, Paul calls for those “alienated from the life of God” to develop “a new self . . . in the likeness of God” (Ephesians 4:18-24) by imitating the way Jesus lived. How might this scripture passage help to shape, challenge, and inform Kate’s life and all our lives? How does this passage help to inform and shape our own Lenten journey?

6. John 10:10b: What “abundance” of life does this passage call Kate and all of us to understand and pursue? What diminishes or impoverishes the successful, happy, perfect life we try to construct? How does Kate’s journey and Christ’s teaching that he has come to give life intersect in the Lenten journey?

*Disclaimer: The views expressed in this book are the author’s opinions and beliefs. They do not represent the official viewpoint of Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church.*