

Finding the Fountain of Youth

John 1:40-42

For centuries now, the subject of how to live a long time remains a fascination with mankind.

How to stay young . . . how to live longer . . . how to defy aging . . . finding some secret . . . some loophole in life so that you can escape death.

People are interviewed who live into their hundreds – their diets, their habits, their perspectives on life are interviewed and studied – maybe there’s a clue here.

Christianity Today carried excerpts of interviews with some of these individuals who’ve lived into their 100’s. One woman was asked to give some of the benefits of living beyond 100 years of age and after thinking for a moment or two she said, “Well, there’s no more peer pressure.”

Another woman interviewed at the age of 120 was asked to describe her vision for the future, she said, “Very brief.”

In my research on this subject, I came across article after article and one interview after another. One reporter traveled to an Asian village where several people in their hundreds were living – he could find no clue, no secret, no unusual practice or diet.

One woman at the age of 112 said that her two secrets to living a long time were eating and sleeping.

I’m two for two on that one.

Then she said, “Make sure you have time to relax.” Okay, I’m two for three.

One woman was funny – and I couldn’t help but laugh when a reporter went to her home and asked her, “What is your secret to long life?” and she answered, “Minding my own business.”

Of all the people interviewed who passed their 100th birthday, nothing unusual has ever surfaced . . .

one person never ate bananas . . . another person ate a lot of fish . . . but no really secret formula surfaces.

I’ll never forget driving one day when my twin boys were in elementary school. They were evidently talking things over in the back seat and then one of them piped up and said, “Hey Dad, were you obedient to your mother and father?” I said, “Well, why do you ask?”

When a parent says that, they’re stalling . . . they don’t want to get cornered. I wondered, why in the world they would be asking me such a trick question.

Then he said, “Cause yesterday we learned, **“Honor your father and mother that you may live long on the earth.” (Exodus 20:12)**

It occurred to me that if I died anytime soon, they’d find out I was really disobedient.

By the way, that verse isn’t a magic formula, it’s a general principle; and children who obey their parents avoid a lot of trouble and danger and bad habits and in general, survive longer.

Now, just imagine digging in your back yard this week . . . it’s time to plant flowers for the coming season . . . you’re out in the back yard digging a hole in the ground for some flowers and as you overturn some sod, a small fountain of water shoots upward and inch or two from the ground.

You wonder, where in the world did that come from? And then, as you kneel there, some of the water trickles over to some fallen leaves and to your astonishment, the leaves turn from brown back to orange and then green again. The trickle of water spreads and almost immediately the grass turns green and fresh. It’s like spring all over again.

Some of the water seeps through your jeans as you kneel there and suddenly you notice that your knees don’t ache . . . you stand up – much more quickly

than normal – and you rush into the house and grab a cup.

You run back out, fill it up, drink it and immediately you feel your entire body feeling stronger – rejuvenated. You race back into the house and look in the mirror and your gray hair slowly turns dark brown . . . laugh lines – which is a nice way to refer to wrinkles – smooth out . . .

You have discovered the Fountain of Youth . . . in your own backyard . . . Eureka!

What are you going to do now . . . are you going to tell anybody? Who will you call to share this amazing discovery – who do you call first.

You call your pastor . . . obviously.

Wouldn't you gather your family around . . . wouldn't you give a sip immediately to your mother or father; race to the nursing home or Intensive care Unit and lift the cup to a grandparent . . . or a terribly ill friend.

Would you ever consider covering back up that fountain with dirt and never whispering a word to anyone?!

Listen, you have discovered the Fountain of eternal youth . . . everlasting life . . . immortality; never ending perfection in health and vitality and life . . . do you really believe that?

Does the church really believe that we've found it?

Are you telling anybody about the Fountain of Life? Are you giving a sip of the gospel truth to your children, your parents and grandparents and to your friends?

One survey conducted a number of years ago found that on any given Sunday morning, 1 out of every 4 people surveyed would willingly attend a church service if they were invited by a friend.

That represents 79 million more people!

And every study of evangelism effectiveness I've ever read reveals the same answers: 85% or more of all the people who believed the Gospel of Jesus Christ were told by someone they already knew and trusted. In your *New Testament Gospel by John, in the first chapter*, Jesus Christ is coming to the surface as the Living Water – the Anointed Messiah – the Fountain of everlasting life.

I want you to notice in *verse 40, One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Jesus, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means*

Christ). [And] He brought him to Jesus . . . (John 1:40-42)

We have found the Messiah (Verse 41)

The Greek word translated "found" was used by the Greeks for someone who found hidden treasure. It's actually the word from which we get the English word, eureka! (ευρηκαμεν)

Eureka! We have discovered the Anointed One – the Messiah.

And what does Andrew do? The text tells us that **he first found his own brother Simon**. You could translate this action to read, **"The first thing he did was find his own brother Simon."**

Simon, I have discovered the source of eternal life . . . you got to see Him for yourself.

Linguists point out the fact that this verb – ευρηκαμεν – eureka – includes a sense of great joy in the one who has made the discovery.ⁱ

Andrew is literally beside himself – "I have found Him!"

Oh, how we need people who just can't keep the Gospel to themselves. They have discovered the Fountain of Life and they can't keep it a secret!

If you do not consider the discovery of Christ all that significant - you will never consider sharing the news of Him all that significant either.

This past week we had a wonderful Bible conference in the evenings for our congregation . . . this place was filled Monday through Wednesday night . . . Erwin Lutzer spoke on Tuesday night.

As many of you are aware, Erwin Lutzer pastor's Moody Church; this year they are celebrating year the 150th anniversary as a church – from 1864 to 2014.

He gave me a copy of a beautiful hardbound book they produced in honor of this anniversary that recounts the history of the church.

The first chapter deals with D. L. Moody, the founder of the Illinois Street Church – renamed Moody Memorial Church sometime after his death.

The church began simply because Moody was like Andrew.

He had found the fountain of life and went everywhere telling anyone. In fact, his early days found him in the streets and back alleys of Chicago to gather poor children – hungry, thirsty, tattered, poor children called street urchins – to invite them to his Sunday school at Plymouth Street Church. He rented pews – in these days renting pews helped meet the budget – Moody rented several pews and filled them with dirty, tattered, sometimes rowdy children . . . the congregation didn't like it all that much either.

So Moody rented a saloon for Sundays and recruited teachers to help him.

He never referred to the children as street urchins, but always referred to them as his “scholars” . . .

One of his former students recalled that Saturday Moody knocked on their tenement house door and asked if there were any children living there. My mother said, “Yes, two children”. He invited both my sister and I to attend his Sunday school the next morning – and we agreed. He was the most energetic fellow you ever saw. He would play games with the boys – and he would go home either without a coat or with his coat so torn and tattered he could never use it again.

Many of these children were saved along with parents and other adults – who then wanted to attend the children’s Sunday school as well. Moody protested that they needed to join local churches, but they were never welcomed, and didn’t want to anyway.

So, in 1864 – 150 years ago – with more than 1,000 children, along with a number of adults, 27 year-old D. L. Moody planted a church. Outside the building they would occupy, Moody hung up two signs: One read, “Ever welcome to this house of God are strangers and the poor”; and the other sign read, “The seats are free”.

D. L. Moody had found the Messiah . . . and he never got over it . . . and simply couldn’t keep the Gospel of Jesus Christ to himself.

The One who searched for us, until we found Him – He searched for us until we found Him.

Today we are celebrating the sacrifice of our Lord, the Fountain of Youth . . . and everlasting life!

And by the way, like the seats in Moody’s church, water from the fountain of life is absolutely free.

I need to tell you that this verb form appears again in a most tragic sense. Andrew would rejoice, “I have found Him.”

But there will be no joy whatsoever when all of the unredeemed of all time one day stand before God the Son as they are judged and then condemned forever – why? They rejected what they knew of God and refused Him.

And John, the Apostle who recorded the joy of Andrew when he *found* the Messiah, writes in His Book of Revelation, just before all the unbelievers are

cast into the eternal lake of fire this sentence, “***Their names were not found in the Lamb’s Book of Life.***”

Their names were *not found*.

You believe the gospel and you have discovered – and drunk deeply – from Christ the Fountain of the water of Life . . .

- Jesus referred to himself in John chapter 4 as ***the gift of God – living water . . . (John 4:10)***
- He said, “***The water that I will give . . . is a spring of water welling up to eternal life.***” (John 4:14)

Anything less won’t satisfy . . . anything else won’t last.

In 1875, while Moody was preparing to celebrate the completion of their new church building, a woman by the name of Clara Williams several miles north of Chicago wrote these lyrics:

*All my life long I had panted for a drink from some
clear spring,
That I hoped would quench the burning of the thirst I
felt within;*

*Feeding on the husks around me till my strength was
almost gone,
Longed my soul for something better only still to
hunger one;*

*Poor I was, and sought for riches, something that
would satisfy,
But the dust I gathered round me only mocked my
soul’s sad cry;*

*Hallelujah I have found Him whom my soul so long
has craved;
Jesus satisfies my longings – thru His blood I now am
saved.*

The last stanza reads:

*Well of water, ever springing, Bread of life so rich
and free,
Untold wealth that never faileth, My Redeemer is to
me.ⁱⁱ*

© Copyright 2014 Stephen Davey
All rights reserved.

i Colin Brown, The Dictionary of New Testament Theology: Volume 3 (Zondervan, 1971), p. 529

ii *Satisfied* by Clara Tear Williams – 1858-1937