

# On the Right Side of the One

Psychē, Zōē, and the Order of Things

Sermon Study Guide

**John 12:25** *Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.*

## THE TWO GREEK WORDS

English uses one word — "life" — three times in John 12:25. The original Greek uses two distinct words:

	Psychē (ψυχή)	Zōē (ζωή)
Meaning	Soul, self, natural life	Life of God; eternal life
Origin	Received at birth	Received in Christ
Duration	Ends at death	Cannot be lost
Quality	Earthly — job, family, money, relationships	Divine — joy, peace, hope; starts NOW
Illustration	The surface of the ocean	The deep of the ocean

## SERMON OUTLINE

### I. The Problem in English

- John 12:25 sounds like a call to misery — but that contradicts John 14:27, 15:11, and 10:10
- The confusion disappears when we look at the original Greek

### II. Psychē — Your Natural Life

- Everything you receive at birth and release at death
- Your job, money, relationships, plans, pleasures
- Not evil — Jesus laid down His own psychē for us (John 10:11)
- The error to avoid: dualism (hating the earthly as if that equals holiness)
- Jesus' call: loosen your grip — hold psychē with an open hand

### III. Zōē — The Life of God

- Not just life that lasts longer — life of a different quality altogether
- The very life of God, shared with us, starting NOW (Dallas Willard)
- Joy no matter what is happening; peace that doesn't make sense
- The kingdom is not somewhere you go — it's breaking into the right now

### IV. Surface vs. Deep

- Psychē = the surface: tossed by every wind, every bad email, every diagnosis
- Zōē = the deep: still, anchored, unshakable — the storm cannot touch it
- The heartbreak: we keep trying to find in psychē what only zōē can give

### V. The Order of Things (Matt. 6:33)

- Issue is not psychē vs. zōē — it's the ORDER
- Zeros before the 1 → value stays at 1 (working hard, going nowhere)
- Zeros after the 1 → value explodes (everything multiplies)
- Put Christ first → your job, marriage, money, influence all mean more

### VI. The Life That Is Truly Life (1 Tim. 6:17–19)

- Paul: don't command the rich to lose wealth — command them to hope in God first
- God richly provides all things for our enjoyment (James 1:17)
- ontōs zōē — the real, authentic, for-real life
- The abundant life is kingdom life, not consumer life (Romans 14:17)

### VII. Jim Elliot — The Math in Real Life

- 1956: five missionaries speared in Ecuador; world called it a waste
- "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose"
- Elisabeth Elliot and Rachel Saint returned — warriors came to Christ
- Mincaye (who killed Nate Saint) became a preacher; baptized Nate's grandchildren
- That's not waste — that's multiplication. That's the One in front of the zeros.

**Central Truth:** *Eternal life is not a place you go — it is a Person you know. And He is available right now.*

*"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." — Jim Elliot*