their editorial board. A week later she emailed me and said they love the project and want to do it! Abingdon is putting together a business proposal and contract as I speak and they are going to publish the book! All because I let down my nets!

Folks, let down your nets! Cast your nets in the direction of God’s joy for you! You will be amazed at what God will do for you!

We only have one life! Life is too short to waste time being unhappy. Life is too short not to let down our nets and see what God has planned for our lives. Life is too short not to live with the joy of God in our hearts!

This is why I bought a Jeep Wrangler. Why would I buy a Jeep Wrangler? Because they’re fun! Life is too short not to drive what you want! For those who think it is weird that I drive a Wrangler I say, “Get over it!” To those who think that as a preacher I should drive a Buick or Oldsmobile, I ain’t that guy! I love driving around in my Jeep with Def Leppard blaring in my speakers!

The truth is I am just trying to pattern my life after Elaine Sutter. Elaine is a beloved member of our church who sings in a choir. If there is one person in this church who did not need to hear this sermon today it is Elaine. She should have slept in! A couple of weeks ago Elaine approached me and said, “Charley, I lived out your sermon the other day. I was putting gas in my car when this guy and his girlfriend drove up in this shiny new motorcycle! When they both got off the bike, I said, ‘That’s a beautiful motorcycle!’ The guy said, ‘Well, you want a ride?’ And I thought a moment and replied, ‘Well, sure!’” And Elaine got on the back of the motorcycle and let a complete stranger race her around St. Pete! The choir now calls Elaine “Motorcycle Mama!” Life is too short to be unhappy and Elaine knows it and lives it!

What is holding you back from an amazing life? Your thoughts? What you hear? What you think you can’t do! Don’t let it hold you back anymore! Remember, you are in control of one thing — your God-given life. Choose to be happy. Life is too short to waste time. Life is too short to be stressed out. Life is too short to be unhappy. Amen.

Today we conclude our three part series “Life is Too Short.” In the first message I talked about how life is too short to waste time. Live the dreams God has put on your heart. Experience his love. Be the person God made you to be. Life is too short not to do what you love and love what you do.

Last week the topic was stress and I got really fired up and stressed myself out! I needed the message more than you did! The message was life is too short to be stressed out, so we must build our lives on the only foundation that will keep us strong and steady in the midst of the storms of life – Jesus Christ. The storm may rage around us but Jesus keeps the storms from raging within us.

Today’s message is “Life is Too Short to be Unhappy.” I want to start my message with a good joke because I want you to be happy. I heard about 3 men who died on the same day and went to heaven. One was a Baptist, one was a Catholic, and the other was a United Methodist. Saint Peter met them at the gates and said, “I’m sorry guys, your rooms are not available yet.” Peter didn’t know what to do, and he decided to call Satan and see if he would keep them for a little while. Satan reluctantly agreed. A few hours later, Satan called back and said, “Peter, you’ve got to come get these guys. The Baptist man is saving everybody, the Catholic man is forgiving everybody, and the United Methodist has already raised enough money for air conditioning!”

And don’t you know that’s true! When our A/C for the sanctuary finally gave up the ghost, the Holy Ghost, a couple of years ago, it took about a week to raise money to buy a new one! We at Pasadena believe that life is too short and Florida is too hot to have worship without air conditioning!

Come to think of it, I may tear out all the seats in the sanctuary this week so that when you come back next week you won’t have anywhere to sit. I am sure we will raise enough money for new seating in a week! I’m going to write that down now!

Well, life is too short to be unhappy. And like last week I want us to begin by reading our text for this series, Psalm 39:4-7:

)LORD, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered— how fleeting my life is. You have made my life no longer than the width of my hand. My entire lifetime is just a moment to you; at best, each of us is but a breath.”

We are merely moving shadows, and all our busy rushing ends in nothing. We heap up wealth, not knowing who will spend it. And so, Lord, where do I put my hope? My only hope is in you. (NLT)

I believe one of the things that is clear in this Psalm is that our happiness is found in the Lord. Our hope and happiness is in God. Our joy is found in the abundant life God desires for us, if we choose to live it. That’s the key, isn’t it? We must choose to live it. God gives us free will. We can choose to be happy and hopeful in the Lord or we can choose not to be.

The sad truth is people actually choose not to be happy. Drive by a cemetery next week and look at all the tombstones. As you do, I want you to remember something: Every single day people die unhappy. Now, let me ask you, “Do you think they planned that?” Do you think they said to themselves, “I want to have an unhappy life.”? Did they wake up and think, “I want my life is bland, meaningless, and full of fear?” Heck no! Do you think God wanted them to live life like that? Heck no!

Yet every single day people die unhappy. Why? Because they choose to be unhappy. Now, it is usually not, “I will choose to be unhappy”! I will choose to live an unhappy life!” It’s more insidious than that. It’s the little choices that are made every day that add up to an unhappy life. Most people don’t realize that our daily choices accumulate. When we choose “bland, meaningless, fear, negativity, criticism,” day in and day
Here’s one for you? What do Albert Einstein, Oprah Winfrey, Walt Disney, Steve Jobs, Michael Jordan and the Beatles have in common? They are started off as complete failures but chose not to see themselves as failures:

-Einstein could not speak until he was four years old and his teachers said he wouldn’t amount to much.
-Walt Disney was fired from his newspaper for lacking imagination and having no original ideas.
-Oprah Winfrey was demoted from her job as news anchor because they said she wasn’t fit for television.
-Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team and locked himself in his room and cried.
-Steve Jobs, at 30 was left dejected and depressed after being removed from the company that he started.
-The Beatles were rejected by Decca Recording Studios because they didn’t like their sound and felt they had no future in show business.

Don’t Believe Everything You Hear!

Recently I read about a famous experiment with 4 monkeys. The scientists placed the monkeys in a room with a large pole in the center. At the top of the pole was a bunch of bananas. The first monkey hurried up the pole, so excited. He couldn’t wait to get the bananas. But just when he was about to reach for them, some poison was poured on him. He scurried down the pole as fast as he could. He didn’t want to have anything to do with those bananas!

After a few minutes, the second monkey went up. The same thing happened. Cold water was poured on him. He turned around and ran back down. Over the next hour, the other 2 monkeys went up. But, once again, they were doused with cold water and came running back down. This after day went by. Even though those monkeys loved bananas, they wouldn’t dare go up that pole. At that point, the researchers removed one monkey and brought a new monkey into the room.

This new monkey started going up the pole. When he did, the other 3 monkeys grabbed him, pulled him down, and wouldn’t let him go up. He tried again and again and again. They wouldn’t let him. Finally, he gave up and quit trying.

Researchers brought in another monkey and removed an original one. Same thing. When he went up, the 3 other monkeys grabbed him. Eventually, the room was filled with dozens of monkeys. None of them had ever seen an original. None of them had felt the dousing of water. But, not one of them would go up that pole. They didn’t feel they could.

Sometimes we’re like those monkeys. We want the bananas. We want a happy life. We want to live our dreams. We want to be successful. But our negative thinking will cause us to fail. Our negative thinking will cause us to live a negative life. But positive thinking will lead to a positive life. If you want to change your life you have to change your thoughts.

Don’t let them do that to you! Just because they are miserable does not mean you have to be miserable! They chose to see themselves as happy and get your bananas! Life is too short to be unhappy so don’t let the monkeys pull you down! Go get your bananas! Live your dreams! Live the abundant life God wants for you!

I heard an interesting story about a 6 year old boy who was given an assignment at school. He and his classmates had to write down what they wanted to be when they grew up. They had a man on television that was very funny. To this dream as a little boy. He knew he wanted to be on television making people laugh so he wrote it down. He came from a low-income family, wore hand-me-down clothes, plus he had a problem with stuttering.

The teacher started calling out the kids’ names out loud and reading what they had written down. But, when she came to his, she stopped and said, “Stevie, will you please come up here?” He walked to the front of the class so proud, thinking that she was going to encourage him, cheer him on. It was just the opposite.

She said, “Stevie, what did you write down?” He replied, “I wrote down that I want to be on television making people laugh.” She said, “Now Stevie do you know anybody on television?” He said, “No ma’am.” She said, “Stevie has anyone in your family ever been on television.” He said, “No ma’am.” She said, “Then you need to take this back and write down something more realistic.”

As a 6 year old boy, he was confused. Up to that point, nobody ever had told him what he couldn’t become. I am sure his teacher meant well but like those monkeys he was pulling him down.

That night Stevie told his father what had happened. He showed him the paper where he had written down he wanted to be on television. His father said, “Stevie put this in your top drawer! Every morning before you go to school, every night before you go to bed, you get this paper out and read it and thank God that one day you will be on television.”

He did that, day after day and year after year after year. So today, all these years later, Steve Harvey is on television 7 days a week making people laugh. He is the host of Family Feud and does other numerous things in show business making people laugh.

Don’t let the monkeys of life keep you from the abundant life God wants for you! Throw those monkey’s thinking will lead to a positive life. If you want to change...

Believe that You Can

One of my favorite gospel stories is when Jesus told Peter to launch out into the deep and cast his nets into the sea for a big catch. Peter didn’t believe he could catch anything. He said, “Jesus, we fished all night and we didn’t catch anything! It’s not going to happen! We are not going to catch anything!”

But at the last minute Peter changed his mind and let down his nets. And do you remember what happened? He caught so many fish that his net began to break.

Sometime we are a lot like Peter. God wants an amazing, abundant and joyous life for us, but we don’t believe it. We don’t think it can happen. But all we have to do is let down our nets and we can experience the life God wants for us!

What does it mean to let down our nets? It means to make room for God’s intention for us. It means to make room for God’s joy in our lives. It means to take a step toward where we find our joy and energy! Where is your joy? Cast your nets in that direction and you will find what God has in store for you! You will find that God will open doors that you could never open. You will meet people you never thought you could meet. He will take you and your life to places beyond your expectations.

So start letting down your nets? Start that business you’ve always wanted to. Start that ministry. Write that book and send it to the editor. Ask God for a husband or a wife. Who knows what you will catch?

I let down my net a little over a month ago and I can’t believe what I caught! Some of you know that I teach preaching to candidates for ministry and local pastors. I really enjoy it. I love preaching and I love to teach preaching. Go figure! Anyway, about two years ago I started to write a book on preaching based on my lecture notes. I didn’t think much of it. I really didn’t think a publisher would be interested in it so I put it aside. But something kept bringing back to my book. I believe it was God. So, I knew what I was doing. I knew that the book and send it to the editor. The senior editor what else I had written. That same day she emailed me and said they were really interested and she was going to present it to...