

TEXT: John 13:31-35
THEME: Love fulfills the law of life
SUBJECT: Love
TITLE: The Law of Life

Fifth Sunday of Easter
19 May 2019
Messiah Moravian
Jerry Harris

Tom Shadyac seemed to have it all: a multimillion-dollar career directing Hollywood blockbusters like *Bruce Almighty* and *The Nutty Professor*, a 17,000-square-foot mansion, fancy cars, the luxury of flying in private jets, invitations to extravagant parties and more. It was a life many dream about.

Despite these many luxuries, Tom says something just didn't feel right. "I was standing in the house my culture had taught me was a measure of the good life. I was struck with one very clear, very strong feeling: I was no happier."

Tom says he had been feeling a sense of emptiness for quite a while when a traumatic bike accident in 2007 left him with excruciating post-concussion syndrome. After several months of what he describes as "torture," Tom began to welcome death.

"Facing my own death, brought an instant sense of clarity and purpose. If I was indeed, going to die, what did I want to say before I went? It became very simple and very clear. I wanted to tell people what I had come to know. And what I had come to know was that the world I was living in was a lie."

Five months after the accident, Tom began filming *I Am* to get to the bottom of two burning questions: What's wrong with our world, and what can we do about it? Tom says that part of what's wrong with our world - and the lie that he says he was living - is our culture's definition of success.

"We have a very extrinsic model of success. You have to have a certain job status, a certain amount of wealth. I think," Tom says, "true success is intrinsic. It's love. It's kindness. It's community."

Jesus commands us to love *just as* he loves. This is not an extrinsically, arbitrarily imposed law. Jesus commands us to love because love is the law of life, a law written into our hearts and minds and souls, into the very fabric of our being. To live according to any other law will destroy us and destroy creation itself.

As Tom journeyed on his quest to find out what would truly make him happy and help unearth what's wrong with our world, he made major changes in his lifestyle. Today, Tom lives in a modest mobile home, bikes to work and flies commercial airlines. He gave away much of his money.

“I started to wake up to certain hypocrisies in my life, and I started shifting things as I asked myself more and more questions,” Tom says. “The bike accident is what compelled me to share my journey.”

To find out why the world is the way it is, Tom explored the readings of scientists, philosophers, poets and others, spoke with Archbishop Desmond Tutu and researcher Rollin McCraty of the HeartMath Institute, among many others.

What he discovered revolves around three key concepts that are explored in *I Am*. First, it is scientifically proven that the entire human race is connected. Second, it is human nature to be cooperative rather than competitive. Third, if you don’t do what your heart wants you to do and follow your passion, it will destroy you.

“There is one fundamental law that all of nature obeys that humankind breaks every day. Now, this is a law that’s evolved over billions of years, and the law is this: Nothing in nature takes more than it needs.”

In our culture, however, humans often take more than they need. “We have a term for something in the body when it takes more than its share,” Tom says, “We call it cancer.”

Tom said he didn’t want to be a part of that cancer, he wanted to be a part of the healing. We have to lose this cancerous idea that we have to take everything we can.”

Tom is not saying you have to give up all your toys. He says he cannot judge anyone. His path is his path. “It’s a simple life,” he says. “I haven’t given up everything. I don’t want to overdramatize this. I simply met myself at my needs.” And he is happier than he has ever been.

Tom believes the healing of our culture lies in authenticity. Too many of us are living scripts written by our culture, scripts that demand sacrifices of what matters most to us in exchange for promises of success and happiness in the sweet by and by. Talk about “pie in the sky” religion.

To live authentically is to live by the law of life, the law of love. Love does not chase my neighbor up the ladder of success, taking more than it needs. Love knows reverence for the life of the neighbor. Love is loyal to the well being of the neighbor. Love is grateful for the existence of the neighbor. Love rejoices in the presence of the neighbor.

Happiness, peace and security are not found in taking more than we need but in community, in learning to love *just as* we are loved by God.