

## **The Word of Life - what we have, 1 of 3 – 15 okt.2022.**

Hi all,

Why did you get saved? Is the reason you got saved the same reason you walk with Him now? This series will think that through, and look at what we have, with the consequences and benefits.

My mom got saved when her husband, my dad, left the family when we 4 kids were ages 11, 9, 7, and 5. She was left trying to raise we four, keep the house, and earn a living - she turned to God in the midst of tragedy.

I got saved a few years later because I was looking for a father - and found my Father! I led my girlfriend and future wife to the Lord, she got saved in part to be able to cope with her dysfunctional family.

What was going on with you that you got saved at that particular time in your life?

### **In John 1:41-42 Andrew brought his brother Peter to meet Jesus**

"We have found the Messiah!" That was why he introduced his brother Peter to Jesus. To the first century Jewish man, Messiah meant He would kick out the Romans and restore Israel to her former glory. That's why they got 'saved'.

Perhaps Peter needed proof Jesus was Messiah, maybe he needed to see something as he thought on his brother's claims about Jesus. He didn't leave everything to follow Jesus at that time.

### **Wisdom**

But later, Luke 5:10 tells us Peter, James, and John were partners in a fishing business. We know from the events of Luke 5 they owned at least 2 fishing boats (v2). Jesus told them to launch into the deep and let down their nets - plural - and there was 1 net per boat. So Jesus' command was for 2 boats to be launched.

Peter wasn't a believer, so launched 1 boat and 1 net, and ended up ripping the net and nearly sinking the boat. A good lesson for us, that before the Lord does miracles in our lives, He will usually require us to do what is right in the natural to be able to contain what He is about to do. It's the same reason when feeding the 5,000 He first had them sit down in groups of 50s and 100s, so they could handle the miracle that was about to happen.

### **Back to the story**

When Peter saw the miraculous catch of fish, he fell on his knees before the Lord in v8, and told Jesus to leave him immediately because he was a sinner. Peter got saved upon seeing proof Jesus was who his brother Andrew claimed He was - how about you? Did you require proof as well? (I did. I watched 7 prayers being answered by the girl and her boyfriend who led me to the Lord, and then I gave my life to Him.)

Instead of leaving, Jesus invited Peter to become a fisher of men. Why do you think Peter followed Him? What was he looking for by giving up his business to follow this itinerant teacher? Same with James and John - poor Zebedee their dad, who was left with 2 boats, a whole lot of fish, and no workers! Why would his boys leave their business and their father to follow Jesus?

### **The teenager and future apostle John**

The apostle John is thought to have been the youngest of the disciples, about age 17 when he and his older brother, James, started walking with the Lord. We don't know much about him other than he and his brother were partners in a fishing business with Peter. We know he had a mother that was quite forward, asking Jesus that her sons sit with Him in His kingdom

in places of honor, one on His right and one on His left. (Matthew 20:21). We know he was the only apostle remained at the foot of the cross. And the only one who died of old age, somewhere around the year 100-110AD, after writing the gospel that carries his name, 3 letters, and The Revelation.

We don't know exactly why at the start, the apostle John 'got saved' and decided to leave fishing for a life with Jesus. Perhaps it was that claim of being Messiah, and that would mean a career move as his mother wanted - James to sit on one side of Jesus in His kingdom and John on the other side.

### **When we get saved it is often for selfish reasons**

Sometimes we need help, like maybe on the verge of suicide or dying of a destructive habit or relationship. But even if we get saved to keep ourselves out of hell or more lofty motives like knowing God is the greatest adventure, it is still for selfish reasons. So maybe the apostle John saw following his big brother and Peter, his business partners, to a life with Jesus as an escape from a career his father had picked for him. We don't know.

But later in life, some 60 years after the events of the gospels, he writes the gospel of John. His motives have changed. His reason for walking with the Lord has changed over time. He opens his gospel of John with these words:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and there isn't anything made that wasn't made by Him. **In Him was life, and that life** was the light of men." (1:1-5)

The 60 years between being a zealous 17 year old following his big brother and his friend to walk with Jesus had changed him. At the start of his gospel he stripped away every other reason for walking with the Father and Lord, to recognize this fact: **"In Him was life."**

About 10 years after he penned the gospel that bears his name, he wrote the first of 3 letters, which we know as I John. He again makes the point that Jesus is Life:

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have handled with our own hands, **the Word of Life. For the Life was revealed,** and we have seen it and bear witness to it, that **eternal life which was with the Father, has been revealed to us.**" I John 1:1-2

We don't know at what point John's relationship with Jesus changed from expecting Him to kick the Romans out of Israel, to recognizing the core truth: He is Life.

We are unique. There are two types of people walking the earth. Those who have God's life in their spirit, and those who don't. There are some who are close, as seen in Mark 12:28-34 in the scribe who answered Jesus discreetly: "You are not far from eternal life."

Let us move from getting saved for fear of hell, or because we needed in the midst of a tough situation, to understanding what we have - God's life in our spirit. How special, how unique - that He gave us His life. More on that next week and what it means in day to day life...until then, blessings,

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**The Word of Life, what we have. All have eternal life, 2 of 3 – 22 okt.2022.**

Hi all,

Last week I asked the question: Why did you get saved? And secondly, has the reason you walk with God now changed since you first believed?

### **When did the recognition you have life come for you?**

For Peter it came fairly quickly, for in John 6:68 after Jesus spoke some very difficult parables and many disciples stopped following Him, He asked if the 12 would leave Him too. Peter's response was a revelation of the core of why he was following Jesus:

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

Peter and John realized the truth Jesus stated in John 5:26: "The Father has life within Himself, and He has given to His son to have life in Himself."

### **What makes Christians unique is this fact: We have life.**

Being a Christian is not adhering to a philosophy, which is how most unbelievers see us. They often see us as having strong opinions about Jesus while giving up our intelligence to believe fables. Unfortunately many do seem to lay common sense and logic aside in the name of 'faith'.

Being 'born again' in our spirits means we have life. Often in the New Testament the life of God is coupled with the word 'eternal' or 'everlasting'. I would suggest we have heard 'eternal life' so often we've become numb to exactly what that means.

All human beings have eternal life, meaning we will live forever, because we are spirit beings. The same is true of the angels and former angels. When a person dies they will go to the kingdom they are a citizen of - either the kingdom of darkness which is ruled by a fallen cherub\* who doesn't want anything to do with God or His life. Or they go to the kingdom of life and light to be with the Father and Lord because they love life and light and the things of God. \*Ezekiel 28:16

But as far as we know, everyone has eternal life. God the Father is a (Holy) Spirit and lives forever, so whatever spirit beings He creates live forever. They continue to exist after this earth-body dies. Satan and his followers continued to exist though they rejected life and a place without life had to be prepared for them. (Revelation 12:8, Matthew 25:41).

When I look at old photos and watch old movies, I often think, 'All those people are still alive, I wonder where they are now?' In Matthew 22:31-32 Jesus said, "...God said, 'I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob', so God is the God of the living, not the dead."

### **Words of this life**

In Acts 5:17-20 the high priest had all the apostles arrested and thrown in prison. An angel releases them with the instruction in v20: "Go, and stand in the temple and speak to the people **all the words of this life.**"

This life - which life? - this life. How is our life different?

### **You have probably heard people say that before a person comes to the Lord they are spiritually dead**

But that isn't scriptural. Some believe before we come to the Lord our spirit man is dormant, or 'has the nature of Satan', or in some other way inert. But that's not scriptural either.

### **Ephesians 5:8: "Before you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. So live as children of light."**

We were darkness - we weren't dormant, we weren't inert, we weren't spiritually dead, we weren't spiritually asleep. We were spiritually alive, but that life was darkness. We existed in spiritual darkness. Our spirit man was alive in that darkness. If we were to have died without Jesus, we would have continued to live in that kingdom that rejected Him. But we changed kingdoms by giving our lives to Jesus.

Colossians 1:12-13 says the act of our spirit man being recreated by the Holy Spirit caused this to happen: "We give thanks to the Father who made us able to be partakers of the inheritance of the

saints in light, who has translated us out of the authority of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son."

We don't get saved all by ourselves. Jesus said in John 6:44 that no one comes to the Lord unless the Father draws them. Not a single person in the Old Testament or gospels before the resurrection was born again - yet they heard the Lord and Father, and had amazing spiritual experiences and miracles. They could function in the spirit realm and the realm of the Spirit of God. But they were not born again.

How many of us before we were born again, obeyed or were aware of a premonition, hunch, gut feeling, or knowing something before it happened? How did that happen but by the Father being gracious to you in the process of drawing you to Himself. The Father put in your un-born again spirit, information about something that was going to happen, or something that wouldn't work out that you knew 'in your gut' or 'had a hunch' about.

**If He couldn't deal with us about Jesus before we were saved, none of us could be saved -**

It is while in the midst of sin that He reaches out to us, to touch us, to communicate to our spirit about the Lord Jesus. Our spirit isn't dormant, for those formerly in the occult know full well their spirit functioned in that realm.

A doctor was a student of mine when I was the Director of a Bible school, and he told me he had been part of all the main religions, as well as New Age. He said he was looking for life in those religions. One day he realized each religion taught a sliver of truth that could be found in the person of Jesus Christ. By process of elimination, he realized all wisdom dwells in Jesus and believed in Him, and was immediately fulfilled in his heart.

**But what was he looking for when he was trying each religion? Life.**

Back in 1981 a group from our church made regular 'witnessing' trips to the red light district of Denver, Colorado. We would walk the streets talking to addicts, prostitutes, and people coming and going to the clubs and bars in that area of town. One day a prostitute listened to us and believed in Jesus, and her life was transformed. She mentioned in all those relationships and the way she earned her living, was all a search for something, and she found the answer in Jesus. What was she looking for in sexually based relationships? Life.

A friend of mine shared his life before Christ consisted of 4 packs of cigarettes a day in a fast paced hardened corporate career. He said he just thought if he had enough money, had enough things, that one day it would fill the emptiness and lack of purpose he felt in his heart. His wife, realizing their lives and marriage were empty, came to the Lord and led him to the Lord. At that point he quit smoking, left the corporate world to seek employment in church - anything to be around the things of and people of the Lord.

What had he been looking for when he was striving in the corporate world to be the best, the richest, the one with the most 'toys'? Life.

**They were looking for, in a word: Life**

When we read the gospels we see that what Jesus meant to the disciples when they first met Him, changed over time. To some, He was going to be the Messiah that kicked the Romans out of Israel. To Peter and Andrew, He was the Messiah that John the Baptist had talked about and they wanted to know more. To Matthew He was the one who called him out of the job of tax collector that was hated by everyone.

We experience a similar transformation in our walk with Him. When I was 16 and came to the Lord, it was in part because I needed a father because my own dad had left our family, and I was looking for purpose. But now, not too far from 50 years of walking with the Father and Lord, I'm focused on that Life that I have inside me.

Maybe you too came to the Lord due to a tragedy that turned your heart to something solid and sure. Maybe you were a truth seeker like the doctor I mentioned above, and eventually the Father led you to Him. Maybe you had given yourself to some habit to dull the pain of life - whether it was drugs, alcohol, sex or money. But over time why you got save has changed.

We have life. But what is it? That's for next week, until then,  
Blessings,  
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## **The Word of life which we have, 3 of 3, Honoring life – 29 okt.2022.**

Hi all,

There are several Greek words translated 'life' in the New Testament. For example, one is 'bios', which refers to physical life. It is the root of the words 'biology', and biography, which is the written (graph) life (bio) of someone. Another word translated life is 'anastrophe', which means a quality of life, a behavior of life.

But, when talking about God's quality of life, we see the word 'Zoe' used, often combined with 'aionios', which means 'age-long' or 'eternal.'

### **Zoe is the life that comes from God and is therefore self-existing and self-sustaining.**

To the world, we look like just another person and our lives look like 'bios', natural life. But residing in our spirit man we have the 'zoe aionios', life eternal - God's life. That life in our spirit which is self-sustaining and self-existent, is flowing out to and changing our soul - our mind, intellect, emotions - in a life-long process, flowing out to the world and people around us.

Because our true life is eternally self-existent and self-sustaining, we should cherish what we have deep in our souls. It is a mystery to those on the outside who think we live by mere philosophy or believe superstition.

### **The mystery of godliness**

In I Timothy 3:9 and 3:16 Paul talks of the 'holding the mystery of godliness in a clear conscience' and 'great is the mystery of godliness'. That mystery of godliness involves the fact eternal life, Zoe, has recreated our spirit-man. It is a mystery to those on the outside, to those not in the body of Christ.

To others we are foolish, but to those who believe, the cross is the power of God. The word 'mystery' or in the Greek, 'musterion', does not mean something which cannot be known. It means something revealed by revelation.

The word means something known after having been initiated into the mystery. In other words, it can only be known by revelation. For instance, before you were born again the Word of God made no sense to you. But once born again, which was your initiation into the kingdom, the mysteries of the kingdom of God were and continue to be revealed to you. Revelation knowledge is given by God to those who have been born into the family, adopted into the family of God. (Ephesians 1:3--5...)

Paul used this same root to describe how he lived. In Philippians 4:10-13 he thanks them for their financial support when he left there to go to Thessalonica (The end of Acts 16 and start of Acts 17). He tells them he wasn't coveting the gift, but was thankful for it. He made a statement that doesn't come across with the same dramatic tone that it does in the Greek, so allow me to write a Greek translation of v11-13:

"...I have learned this truth; I know how to be self-sufficient, independent of circumstances. I know how to be brought low, I know also how to abound. In everything and in all things I

have been initiated into the mystery of how to abound while being full or hungry. That is: In all things I have strength in the One strengthening me."

**Most people know the King James Version which says;**

'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me', and take it to mean if they can just tough it out, if they can just hang on, if they can just try a little harder, God will come through for them.

But that's not what it says. Paul is sharing his heart and life experience to the Philippians, and indeed his letter to them is his most intimate and revealing of all his letters. He shares how he has been initiated through a mystery, discovered in times of lack and times of abundance. That mystery is that eternal life in Christ makes him self-sufficient, independent of circumstances, for he can do all things through the one strengthening him.

It is through the initiation into the mystery of eternal life that we learn our lives in Christ are in fact independent of any circumstance swirling around us. Our life in Him is not dependent nor affected by circumstance. It is eternal life, Zoe life, the eternal life of God which is self-sustaining. That's Life.

**That is why towards the end of his life, the apostle John when writing his gospel and his first letter, of all the things he could have said of Jesus, chose to emphasize: "In Him was life, and that life is the light of men" and "for the life was manifested".**

Again, we need to realize that each one of us belong to a special 'club', as people who have been initiated into the mysteries of eternal life, the mysteries of godliness. When I was first saved I heard the term that the army of the Lord is the only army that shoots its wounded. That's so sad.

When I sit in one of our house church meetings across the living room from someone, I look at them and see the grace of God - a fellow initiate into the eternal life of God and its mysteries. I esteem them for the life they have in Him and what He has done in their lives. Jesus loves them equally as He loves me. We are equals.

In Galatians 2:9 Paul says that Peter, James, and John extended the hand of fellowship to Paul and Barnabas, when they 'perceived the grace in us'. These men had very different ministries, for the 3 were sent to the Jews while Paul and Barnabas were sent to Gentiles. Those differences could have divided them, but instead they esteemed one another for they perceived the grace in each other's lives.

We must realize what we have when we say 'eternal life' and live in a way that esteems, respects, and cherishes that life. We should do all we can to protect that life, to not grieve the Holy Spirit. To actually apply long suffering and making allowances one for another. Love fulfills God's law, and it is easier to walk in love if you realize fellow believers have the same eternal life you do - they've been initiated into the mysteries of God.

Of all that the Father has brought you through, from the start when you just wanted saved so you wouldn't go to hell or you needed rescued from some circumstance in your life, to now when you realize you have the life of God in your spirit, let us focus on that special fact. Let us focus on that unique truth among us, that in Jesus Christ is life, abundant life, the life that came from His Father, and He has given it to us. Wow, what amazing grace!

New subject next week, until then, blessings,  
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