

“In Him Was Life”
John 1:4-5
(Preached at Trinity, March 9, 2016)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Tonight we'll continue with these early verses in John's Gospel. **Verses 1-18** are referred to as the prologue. They provide the foundation for our understanding of the entire Gospel. We have to get these verses right before we can fully appreciate what is to come.
2. Paul introduces Christ in these opening verses as “the Word” who was with God and who was God. In these opening verses John describes several truths about Christ that we need to understand.
 - He is eternal – “In the beginning was the Word”
 - He is a person distinct from the Father – “The Word was with God”
 - He is God – “the Word was God”
 - He is Creator – “All things came into being through Him”
 - He is the source of all spiritual life – “In Him was life”
3. Jesus had no beginning. He was eternally before the Father. But John then tells us that Jesus was not inactive. He was involved in the work of creation.
John 1:3 NAU - "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."
4. Now as we come to **Verse 4** we again find John's words rich in meaning.
 - A. First of all, in the full context of **Verses 1-3** we find the deity of Christ displayed. In Him He has His own being. Theologically, we refer to this as Aseity or self-existence.
 - B. Our attention is also drawn to our own life. He possesses life. He gives life.
John 1:4 NAS - "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."
5. John uses a literary tool that we'll see several times as we go through this Gospel. He applies a double meaning to the text. On one hand it flows naturally from **Verse 3**. As Creator Jesus is the source of all life. "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."
 - A. Our minds are immediately drawn to physical life. Christ is the source of life.
 - B. But John has a double meaning here. There is another life that John wants us to see. There is spiritual life of which Christ is also the source.
6. John loves using this word - ζωή. Jesus spoke often of His life giving power
John 5:26 NAU - "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;"
John 6:35 NAU - "Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."
John 14:6 NAU - "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

7. All life finds its source in Christ our Creator.
John 1:3 NAU - "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."
 8. In the infinite wisdom of our Creator we were a masterful work, unique among all the creatures. David exclaimed:
Psalms 139:14-15 NAU - " I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, *And* skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth;"
 9. But sin has defiled God's wondrous work. God gave us glorious life, but sin has resulted in terrible death. Tonight I'll direct your attention to our physical death and spiritual death and then see that Christ brings fullness of life.
- I. First, we have the problem with physical death
- A. God created man with abundant life in the garden
Christ was the source of this life – "in Him was life"
 1. Adam's existence was filled with holiness and happiness in wonderful communion with God.
 2. God made a covenant with Adam.
Genesis 2:16-17 NAU - "The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."
 3. Adam stood as our covenant head, our representative. In other words when God made the covenant with Adam He was also making it with us. God threatened Adam with death if he broke God's covenant by eating the forbidden fruit
 4. Of course, Adam broke the covenant. This was the cause of physical death – Adam became mortal and in due time he died.
Genesis 5:4-5 NAU - "Then the days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years, and he had *other* sons and daughters. ⁵ So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died."
 5. This became the lot of all humanity. When Adam sinned as our representative we sinned in him. We share in his penalty of death. In Genesis 5 we find the expression, "And he died" 8 times
Romans 5:12 NAU - "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned--"
 6. We shared in Adam's sin and we share in his death.
We can see it all over us. The aging process slowly robs us of life and vitality. Disease eats away at the human flesh. It strikes all ages and all walks of life. Death will catch up to each and every one of us.

- B. This is where Christ comes in to conquer death - "In Him was life"
1. Through Christ we have everlasting life – life eternal. Through the resurrection death will be forever annihilated.
 2. This eternal life is one of John’s favorite themes
John 3:16 NAU - ""For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."
John 4:14 NAU - "but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."
John 6:40 NAU - "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."
John 6:47 NAU - "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life."
John 10:27-28 NAU - "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand."
 3. This is the glory of the resurrection. It is our hope. Jesus has provided for us resurrection life.
1 Corinthians 15:42-43 NAU - "² So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;
1 Corinthians 15:53-54 NAU - "For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory."
- II. A much more serious death fell upon man because of sin - Adam died spiritually.
- A. This death was even more devastating than physical death
1. Where physical death happened gradually spiritual death came upon Adam immediately – and remember, it affected us all.
 2. He no longer had the capacity to approach God. He was unable to properly understand God. His heart became corrupt and his entire nature became inclined towards sin.
Ephesians 2:1-3 NAU - "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."
1 Corinthians 2:14 NAS - "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."

- B. Fallen man is incapable of providing any remedy for sin. In our corruption we gladly continue in our sin
1. Man is incapable of doing anything to merit salvation
Romans 3:10-12 NAS - "as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; ¹¹ There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; ¹² All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one."
 2. We need to be raised from spiritual death to spiritual life
This is precisely what Christ has done – "In Him was life"
John here is speaking of the new life in the Gospel.
 3. Our only hope is to be given a new life. Jesus told Nicodemus he needed to be born from above.
John 3:3 NAU - "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."
- C. This new life enables us to see
1. We understand our guilt and just condemnation
 2. We glory in the Gospel of Christ and see Christ as altogether lovely.
 3. Faith and repentance flows from this new heart
- D. This new life changes everything
1. We desire righteousness – We desire to please Christ
 2. We live in hope. We live in joy. We live in love.
This is the fruit of the Holy Spirit now residing in us
 3. This is abundant life!
John 10:10 NAU - "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."
 4. Jesus Christ is the life-giver. "In Him was life."
John 11:25-26 NAS - "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Conclusion:

1. That is the question for you. Do you believe this? This is the essence of saving faith.
John 3:14-16 NAS - "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; ¹⁵ that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life. ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."
John 3:36 NAS - "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."
2. In Christ is life, abundant life, eternal life. Look unto Him and be ye saved.