Life Is More Than You Think

What Sort of Life Do You Have?

When each of our children were born, I had the privilege of being in the delivery room each time and witnessing their births. All four times, the medical staff let me cut the umbilical cord. It struck me the moment was profound. No longer would there be a physical dependence between mother and child. From that point forward there was a growing independence developing between the two. Of course, psychologically, that independence may not be fully developed either on the child's end or with the mother but that is not the normal progression in life. That does not mean children stop depending on their parents right away but gradually children move off on their own and live their own lives. Our text for today, as we continue to do a deep dive into the Gospel of John, has a fascinating take on the tension between dependence and independence and we shall examine the ramifications of that tension for you. Here is our big idea today. With Christ living in and through you, live expectantly.

John 1: 2-4 says this. **This one way continually being in the beginning toward God. Through him all things came to be and apart from him not one thing came to be which has come to be. In him continuously has been life and the life has continually been the light of people.** I admit that the translation sounds a bit choppy, but it is rich in meaning and makes some crucial points that are foundational to Christianity. You may not agree with it but the Bible insists that every bit and part of the universe came to be through Jesus. There is no room here for a semi evolutionary development of life. It all has come to be, not because of random survival of the fittest processes but because Christ has intelligently put them together. Back in the late 1800s it became fashionable for certain Christian pastors and teachers to acquiesce to the academic wave of evolutionary propaganda promoting mechanical, atheistic processes for both the development of life itself as well as for the generation of individual species. Numerous theologians thought they were taking the high ground by teaching that God started off the universe but then evolution took over and everything else done was the result of unintelligent random events. The Bible makes it clear that such caving in to atheist pressure is nonsense. Jesus Christ is the maker of all things and everything that exists was specifically made by Him.

There is in Genesis a curious detail added to the description of God's creating work. It reads **the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.** (Genesis 2: 7 NIV) There are a oouple points to make here. First, notice that God physically put the first human being together, not by evolutionary processes but all at once. The second point is something much more profound. God breathed into the first human the breath of life and that instantly made him a living being. This is the only one of all the creatures God made that this specific step is mentioned. All other life God simply spoke, and they came into existence, breathing and alive. It is not said of anything else that God breathed into that creature the breath of life. And certainly nothing else winds up as a "living being" or to give a more precise translation, a "living soul". Human beings are unique among all the other creatures on earth because they are a living soul. The contrast between the nature of the humans and that of every other living creature is stark. Clearly, the Biblical insistence is that there is a clean break between humans and every other physical being. Ecclesiastes has a pertinent question it asks about the fate of animals and humans after they die. **Who knows if the spirit of man rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth?"** (Ecclesiastes 3: 21 NIV) Do humans continue to live after the body dies and does the animal in contrast simply die and that is it? Ecclesiastes does not admit to an answer here. But later in the book it is stated that at least people do continue to live after they die. **…and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.** (Ecclesiastes 12: 7 NIV) No mention is made of animals.

Let's return to our original passage in John. It says **In him continuously has been life and the life has continually been the light of people.** (John 1: 4) The Greek term used here is one of two words frequently translated life in the Bible. Here it is Zoe and the other word is Bios. Bios is never the word the Bible uses when it talks about eternal life. Bios is primarily life as a mechanism; physical, organic life. It describes the machinery or physical function in life. As long as a body is breathing or its brain is functioning, bios is present. Zoe, which is the Greek word found in our verse is the term when eternal life is discussed. Jesus Christ has always been zoe or life. That did not stop even when He was crucified. Psuche, sometimes translated life is actually the bringing together of body and spirit. Jesus' psuche or soul life stopped because the machine of His body or Bios ended. But He as zoe continued because despite His mechanical body life dying, His Spirit life or Zoe, which is eternal continued. Eternal life does not end just because the machine of your body no longer works. Zoe continues if you have eternal life, life that comes from Jesus. Jesus said

this about all those who believe in Him for salvation. **My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.** (John 10: 27-28 NIV) Life that comes from Jesus is eternal because He is eternal.

What is it that differentiates a Christian from those who are not? It isn't the fact that a Christian has a soul and others don't or even the specific kind of behaviors Chrisitan people practice. Plenty of non-Christian people are generous and honest and sometimes even more kind than Christians. It is one characteristic only that differentiates the Christian from all other people. Jesus made it clear what it is when He gave Nicodemus the instructions on what he needed to have if he were to be made right. **For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.** (John 3: 16 NIV) It is Jesus zoe or Jesus life that is missing from them and you don't just have it because you were conceived by two human beings. Christ life comes to you only through faith in Him for salvation and it is eternal life. This is God life running in and through you; God eternal life. When you are born again, you no longer are on a timeline. You live so to speak off the grid when it comes to time for you are now a part of eternity. The pressure is off regarding the tyranny of the now because Christ in His dealing with you has a forever approach to your life. Victory is assured but it is within the framework of eternity and sinlessness also is eternity based. You may not feel sinlessness now or victory now but you will because they are eternal life experiences. Eternity is your new home and all of that is there for you.

Jesus had an interesting comeback when confronted by the Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection, who clearly did not believe in eternal life either. **But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."** (Luke 20: 37-38 NIV) Notice that Jesus reveals that Moses understood this, that he recognized and accepted the eternal life of God and the fact that those who have it are no longer bound by the timeline. Yet even Moses, despite knowing about eternal life felt the sting of time and the disappointments in it. When it became clear that God would not let Moses go into Canaan in his timeline life and see the land the Lord was giving Israel, He tried His best to convince God to let him go. **At that time I pleaded with the Lord:..“Let me go over and see the good land beyond the Jordan — that fine hill country and Lebanon."** (Deuteronomy 3: 23, 25 NIV) It is easy to forget that our life in Christ is now rooted in eternity and no longer tied to the timeline. Moses did and so can you. We mistakenly pray with a timeline mindset rather than an eternal life mentality and it causes us endless amounts of frustration, disappointment and even depression. It is fascinating that because Moses was not bound to the timeline but rooted in eternal life, he did go into Canaan. When Jesus took three disciples up on a mountain in Israel to pray, his disciples were shocked by the sudden appearance of two great prophets they thought were long dead **Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.** (Luke 9: 30-31 NIV) Where was this mountain where Moses, alive and well, along with Elijah hung out and talked with Jesus? It was of course Canaan, the Promised Land.

Eternal life is not some place you go where everything is great. It is the life of Jesus Christ living in and through you and transforming you into a child of God. As the life of Christ works His way in you, you will begin to think like Jesus, act like Jesus and leave the scent of Jesus wherever you go. The only time you live completely within eternal life is when you pray. It is there that your thinking is fixed and aligned with Jesus and where the push of ego and self-will is tamed and comes under the authority of Christ. You can never pray too much for it is the life of Christ made incarnate in you. Why else did Paul insist you take this road in life? **Pray continually.** (1 Thessalonians 5: 17 NIV) Pray because you have eternal life, and the power and greatness of God lives in you and it shows up most often every time you pray. Eternal life is not built on a timeline and neither is praying. Assume your prayers are always answered by God and those answers come within and not outside of eternal life, outside of the life within Christ. Our big idea is something to embrace. With Christ living in and through you, live expectantly. Prayer enables you to do that.