**St Martins C3 – December 18, 2022**

**Light, Life, Love – God’s Life has come**

**Sermon Summary:**

When Jesus was born, the LIGHT of God, the LIFE of God and the LOVE of God were revealed in very unique ways. John the apostle picks up on these important themes in presenting the life of Jesus in his gospel. This morning we are exploring how John describes the LIFE of God that we received in Christ’s birth, life, death and resurrection. John mentions this GOD LIFE that came with the arrival of Jesus over 30 times in his gospel.

**Examples:** [**John 5:24**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%205%3A24&version=NIVUK)**, 6:35,** [**6:63**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%206%3A63&version=NIVUK)**, 14:6, 17:3, 20:31.**

The LIFE of God that came with the arrival of Jesus was a life that overcame, sickness, evil and suffering. It conquered sin and released forgiveness and righteousness. It condemned judgement and brought love. It brought reconciliation and peace. When we look at Jesus’ life, we see that everything that Jesus said and did was LIFE-GIVING. Jesus revealed this Heavenly Life, in the way He lived His life, in all the words He spoke, and in all the miracles He did. Then, not only did He model God’s life to us, He also explained how we could have this life for ourselves. (John 3:36)

When we fully embrace the truth that Jesus is God and entrust our lives to Him, we receive this life that Jesus brought.

Our challenge is living in a tension where we have access to the life God has for us, but we still live in a fallen world where we deal with the frustrations of the presence of evil, sickness and death.

Jesus encourages us to identify that which is opposing His life in this world. In John 10:10, we read: *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”* When Jesus was born on that first Christmas day, God’s life entered our world and brought with it the power to overcome evil and death.

There are times when God empowers us with the strength to live with the frustrations of our fallen world. Knowing when to fight for change and when to wait for God’s deliverance can be tricky to work out. This is where we need His wisdom and guidance. Some questions to prayerfully consider might be:

* *Am I living the life that God has for me?*
* *What might Satan be using to rob me of that life?*
* *Is God asking me to accept this as challenge to live with, or something that is not of Him which I am to oppose?*

Further on in John’s gospel, we read of Jesus using an analogy of a grape vine to describe how His life empowers the lives of those who continue to trust in Him. (John 15:5-8) At Christmas we celebrate the planting of God’s grape vine. Jesus is the main stem from which God’s life comes to bring nutrients to the branches which are His people, who will produce grapes, or God’s life-giving fruit. The point Jesus is making is that God’s life flows to us as we intentionally seek to live out His purposes in our everyday lives. Every day we can access God’s life and use that empowerment to bring God’s life to others. We can all make every conversation a life-giving conversation.

**Questions to discuss or ponder on:**

*What is eternal life?*

*What aspects of eternal life or “God Life” in the future can we expect to be experienced in this present world?*

*Have you found it hard to work out what to simply accept in life and what to fight for?*

*What helps you in that challenge?*

*How does living out the life God has called you to help you access more of God’s life?*

**Monday’s Devotion – Source of Life**

**John 1:2-4**

*He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.**In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.*

Imagine having an unlimited amount of energy. I had that in my younger days, but now what I want to achieve in my mind and what my body will actually do seem to be a bit different. Our energy levels are a finite resource.

Likewise, we may love to minister God’s life to other people, but the conversations may be challenging, so it is energizing for a while, but then we run out of steam. If only, there was a source of unlimited life that we could tap into.

The first thing that John reminds us of regarding the life that Jesus brings, is the fact that Jesus not only has some God life to share with us, He is actually the very source of that life. He is an unlimited source of that life, because all life starts with Him.

Take a moment and reflect on the truth and power of that today. The One who you are in relationship with, is the one who holds all life in His hands. There is no lack in Christ. He is the source of all life. We may run out of energy, but He never will. We can always return to the source of life to receive life. Therefore, let us be intentional about seeking out His life and being recharged with His life every day.

**Tuesday’s Devotion – Never ending life.**

**John 3:34-36**

*For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.*

Our brains struggle to comprehend eternity. I remember learning about something being infinite at school and struggling to get my head around the concept. Likewise, when we stop and think about our lives going on forever, we can’t really conceptualise that. However, this is exactly what Jesus promises those who put their trust in Him. A never ending eternal life with God Himself.

Yesterday we learnt that Jesus is the source of everything that produces life and today we learn that that life is an eternal life. So, what are the implication of those two things? These two attributes of God’s life give us full assurance that our futures are totally secure. We live with a sure and certain hope that there is no end to the empowerment that comes from being in a relationship with God. We also live with the assurance that there is no end to our experience of that relationship with God.

There is nothing in this life that compares to this. All our earthly relationships will come to an end at some point. Our family and friends that we rely on, at some point can’t be there for us. However, we have One that will always be there, whose love for us will never end.

**Wednesday’s Devotion – Life that overcomes death**

**John 11:25-26**

*Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?’*

**Colossians 2:15**

*And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*

In order for life to be powerful, eternal and sustaining it has to overcome its greatest enemy, death. Have a think about that one. What would be the point of Jesus bringing Heavens life to us, a life that lasts forever if death is going to rob that life away from us. God’s life isn’t much use if it doesn’t overcome death. But praise God, sin, evil and death didn’t win. Jesus triumphs over all of them through His death and resurrection.

There will be times in our lives when we become discouraged because sin, evil and death seem to be winning. That may be inwardly in our lives, externally in society around us, or in the grief of losing a loved one. However, we have a living hope. We trust in the One who is the resurrection and the life. The One who overcame sin and death. We may have trials for a time, but there is life in Christ. There is no sin, evil or death that Christ has not won over. Therefore, let our full confidence be in the only One who empowers us to overcome.

**Thursday’s Devotion – Sustaining life**

**John 6:35**

*Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.*

Jesus sustains us in the present as well as giving us a certain hope for the future. It would be easy for us to interpret Jesus’s words about eternal life as only pertaining to the future. However, all the teaching of the New Testament clearly explains that we have received God’s eternal life in the present and continue to hold on to that life after we physically die. What that means is that God’s life is in us now. The life that will sustain us in eternity is a life that we can access to sustain us in the present.

So, do we lean into that life enough? Are we aware of God’s sustaining eternal life indwelling us every day?

In this passage Jesus explains that His bread of life is for those who believe, much like the mana in the desert was for the nation of Israel. God’s miraculous mana sustained a whole nation for more than 40 years. Now a greater source of sustenance has come from God.

We have this wonderful privilege of daily discovering God’s sustaining power in and around our lives. Let us not neglect the opportunity we have to tap into that. Let us rely less on ourselves and more on His eternal sustaining life to empower us. Let us have an increasing awareness of His power and life which He has made available to us.

**Friday’s Devotion – Knowing God**

**John 17:3**

*Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

There is deep and rich meaning in John’s presentation of Jesus’ life in his gospel. This verse is part of Jesus’ prayer to His Father. John reveals a lot of detail as to what the relationship between Jesus and His Father looks like. It is a loving, yet purposeful relationship. This is evident in Jesus’ prayer, where He gives an account of His life to His Father. Jesus is modelling to us a relationship we can have with God.

Jesus reveals here that this relationship with God is what He means when He refers to us receiving eternal life. God’s life is not something we can possess outside of a relationship with Him. It is our identity with Him that gives us His life.

Occasionally, I attend functions related to Ginia’s work. The people I meet don’t identify me as a Pastor at St Martins C3, but Ginia’s (or the bosses) husband. My identity is linked to her and her role. I have a place in the situation based on who she is, not who I am. Any empowerment in the context is from the relational connection.

Likewise our relationship with God is what empowers the life we receive from Him. Let us lean into that relationship. Let us not rely on ourselves, but keep the communications lines open with our Father, so that we receive His Life and all that that life imparts to us.