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Life and Light

John 1:4-5

Intro: As we make our way thru the prologue to John's gospel, we must keep in mind that in it, John is giving us a preview of the divine character, nature & purpose of the subject of his book – Jesus Christ. But, John is doing more than just describing the Lord's divine nature; he also alludes to His divine purpose. John will elaborate on the point that Jesus is the revelation of God the Father but in vs3, he also makes the point that Jesus has always been **actively revealing** the Father; not the least in Creation itself (**Rom 1:20**). This means as the Agent of Creation, Jesus began by revealing 2 important aspects of the Father in His Creation – His existence & His power. Paul then declares that these 2 aspects are sufficient condemn all men for their failure to bow down & worship God. So even before the incarnation of Jesus Christ, there was no excuse for failing to believe.

“If nature reveals the Father, why'd Jesus have to come?” Because nature's not enough! No one's ever come to obedient, saving faith in the God of Creation thru nature. Also, the revelation of God in nature is **general**. It's **not specific** in terms of God's plans & it's **not personal**. Because of this, Jesus was also active in revealing the Father thru the Scriptures. It's true that God has revealed His existence & power in nature but it's also true that that's all He's revealed there. Men may recognize the power of God but if they want to know His plans, they must turn their hearts to the Bible.

Most conclusively, Jesus has revealed the Father thru the incarnation & its only there that God can be known personally. God has spoken to men indirectly thru His Creation & directly thru the Scriptures, but there's a more wonderful truth than that. God has spoken to man personally thru Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Father's best & last word to lost men. So, if you want to know God's power, look to Creation. If you want to know God's plans, look to Scripture but if you want to know God's personality – look at His Son. When we look at Jesus we see God Himself & what we find is a God of infinite love & perfect holiness, who possesses a desire wonderful enough & a power adequate enough to save rebellious men & women from sin. We're not resigned to just knowing Christ as Savior, we can also & should also get

to know Him for who He is, our Creator & the express image of God the Father.

4-5- John introduces 2 of the greatest themes of his book: Jesus is the **life** of the world & the **light** of the world.

Life – Life is an important word in this book. John speaks quite often of life in respect to Jesus & the eternal life He offered & still offers to sinners. In fact, this theme of life begins & ends the book: here in **vs4** & then in **20:30-31**. Many of the most loved verses from John deal with the theme of life **3:16, 14:6 (source), 5:40, 10:28, 10:10**. The word “**life**” occurs **35** times in John & if we include the verb “**to live**” it brings the total to **50**.

But what's it mean that Jesus is the source of life or that He is the **life**? The initial answer to this takes us back to the opening chapters of Genesis & the role of Jesus Christ in giving life to all living things in the world. When we read **vs4** in light of **vs3**, we should immediately think of the **life** that went out from God to bring life to inanimate creation. We should understand 1st & foremost that our **physical life** comes from God the Father thru Jesus Christ (**Gen 2:7**).

What is God's breath? It's that which goes forth out of His mouth – His **Spirit** (Holy Spirit) & His spoken **Word**. In English, these terms seemed to be unrelated: breath, Spirit, word. But, in the Hebrew language, the word used for Spirit is the same word used for breath (**ruach**). More significantly, in Hebrew thought, the breath of God or the breath of a man is associated with their spoken word because breath is required for speech. When we bring these ideas together we see that **God brought forth life in man by speaking the word of life (Jesus) in such a way that the spirit of life (Holy Spirit) passed into man & caused him to breathe**. Thus is revealed the role of the Trinity in Creation.

Now, while John may intend to include the physical aspect of life in describing Jesus here, the word he actually uses is not **bios** (physical life) but rather **zoe** (spiritual life). The point John makes here is that just as Jesus is the **source** of **physical** life so also is He the **source** of the **spiritual life** we receive when we believe on Him. To fully appreciate the importance of the gift of spiritual life, we must 1st realize that without it we are spiritually **dead** (**Eph 2:1-6**). Before God made them (& us) **alive** they were totally **dead** in everything spiritual & in complete **rebellion** against Him.

What a condition! In our natural state, we can do nothing to improve ourselves spiritually – no more than a dead man can improve on his own condition. Apart from Jesus Christ, no man has ever breathed 1 breath towards God, nor had 1 spiritual heartbeat. Man is spiritually **dead** in sin & needs to be brought to new life. That's why we must be born again. Being born again means receiving a new life from God thru the Lord Jesus Christ by placing your faith in Him.

Because we were **dead** in sin, God sent Jesus to give us new life. Because we were **guilty** of sin, God sent Jesus to be the payment for our sins by bearing them in His own body as He hung on the cross.

There are 2 more aspects of the life that comes from Jesus: **1)** the life the God gives thru Jesus is not just earthly life or the type of life that can be lost; its **eternal life!** It can never be lost & it will never end. The spiritual life we receive from God the moment we believe in Jesus is the same life we'll be living with God in eternity a million yrs from now. What is eternal life? Its life without end, the life of God! If it could be **lost** or could **end** – it wouldn't be **eternal** life. If it could be lost at the end of a million yrs then it wouldn't be eternal life – it would be 1 million yrs life. If God promised it to last 1 million yrs, then it couldn't be lost before that expiration date. But God doesn't offer us 1 million yrs life, he only offers eternal life & as such, it is truly eternal; everlasting. John even reiterates this truth in his 1st epistle: ***And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son***" (1 John 5:11).

But, there's another aspect of the life Jesus gives. Not only has God given us **eternal life** (which no one can take away), He's also given us a life that's meant to be **abundant** even in our present situation (John 10:10). This may be the most misunderstood aspect of the life Jesus gives. Sadly, while all true Christians have eternal life, not all of them experience abundant life. This is not what God intends for us. Instead of living a miserable existence & always complaining, Christians are meant to live lives of such joy & wonder that their lives are blessings to others. Part of the problem is our definition of abundant life. Too many Christians think that means having everything they want but our sad experience in sin should remind us that having everything we want isn't the answer because it never happens & it can never satisfy. The best picture of what abundant life looks like comes to us from the 1st few verses of **Ps 23**.

These verses teach us that **abundant life** is ours simply **because God cares for us**. We all were once lost sheep & even now we sometimes wander away from God's fold. But we are still His & we know that the **abundant life** is ours whenever we leave our wandering & lie down in the company of our Great Shepherd. **Abundant life** has nothing to do with how much you have; but it has everything to do with how much of you the Shepherd has. Did you know that a sheep will not eat or drink while lying down? When David says our Shepherd makes us lie down in green pastures, it means He is able **to satisfy us so completely that we cannot possibly desire anything more!** We experience the joys of abundant life when we finally find Jesus to be the bread of life that satisfies all our hunger & the water of life that quenches our deepest thirst. Do you have eternal life? Are you enjoying the abundant life that Jesus gives?

Light – **What's it mean that Jesus is the light of men?** **First**, this title reveals Jesus as the One who knows the Father & who makes Him known. Light is the universal picture of the **illumination of the mind thru understanding**. Before Jesus came into the world, it was in **darkness**. The world didn't know God. Jesus came & His light shone before men. Men then had the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus. God's pictured as light thru-out the Bible. ***The LORD is my light & my salvation***" (Ps 27:1). ***With you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light*** (Ps 36:9). ***He wraps himself in light as with a garment*** (Ps 104:1-2). ***God is light; in him there is no darkness at all*** (1 Jn 1:5). **God is light** so Jesus is light because He is the image of the invisible God. It is in Jesus that we see & know the Father.

Second, this verse teaches that by coming into the world, Jesus **exposed the works of darkness** & the darkness didn't like it! Before Christ came, a man could think well of himself simply by comparison to others: "**Look at that jerk! I'm glad I'm not that bad.**" But, when Jesus came & stood on this earth in perfect purity, then the standard of righteousness that God demands was revealed & quite naturally, no one could measure up. The imperfection & impurity of the world of men was exposed for all to see. The line of separation between **God's expectation** & **man's ability** was drawn & the conscience of men was forced to acknowledge it. Christ's coming was a judgment! The brilliant light of His righteousness reveals just how profoundly dismal the world's darkness truly is. So, what to do?

You can hate Him for it. Many did back then & many still do today. They strive to rid themselves of His presence in their lives. You can strive to do that too or you can just do what God wants you to do – recognize that not only are you a sinner but even the good things you do fail to measure up to God’s standard of perfection. Because of that, they’ll never get you to heaven. But God has the goodness that you need & He’s promised to give it to whoever believes on Jesus & accepts Him as Savior. If you will do this, God will remove your sin & accept you as His child forever. You can decide to resist the light but John’s telling you right here that it is a fight you cannot win.

Third, the **light is victorious!** *Comprehend*- the Greek word for this has 2 possible meanings: **1) to seize, apprehend** or **understand**; used by King James’ translators. **2) to overtake** (as in pursuit) or **to overcome**; used of a wrestler when he has taken down his opponent. Both translations are right. The darkness did **not understand** the light & it did **not overcome** it. The same is true of ordinary light: a small candle can dispel a room full of darkness & the candle will not be dimmed by the darkness. Light & darkness are opposites, but they’re not opposites of equal power. Light is stronger than darkness; darkness can never prevail over light. The idea that good & evil are in a never-ending struggle in the cosmos is wrong. Now that Jesus has come into the world, “**the darkness is passing away & the true light is already shining**” (1 John 2:8). The spiritual darkness of this world tries to overcome the light but it’s impossible. The light of God is irresistible – it cannot be eclipsed! The same is true for all those who walk in the light!

In **John 9:5** Jesus says, “**As long as I am in the World, I am the light of the world.**” But He’s not in the world anymore. Yet, in **vs5**, John uses the present tense when he says **the light shines in the darkness**. What up? Jesus gives the answer in Matt 5:14, when He turned to those who believed on Him & said, “**You are the light of the world.**” Jesus is no longer the direct light of the world; His light shines into the world by believers. Christ shines today thru Christians. Not that we shine in our own right but we are kindled lights, mere reflections of the light of His righteousness. We are the light of the world today only because Jesus is our light & we reflect Him.

Does the world see Christ in you? They won’t find Him in the media, culture or pastimes of the world. They’ll only see Him, find Him in us: as we look to Jesus as He increasingly becomes our light & is reflected in our lives to

others.

Is Jesus your light? If so, He'll do for you **what light** always **does** when it comes from the Father. **1) puts confusion to flight**: Jesus will dispel the darkness & bring spiritual order to your life. **2) is revealing**: it penetrates the darkness in our hearts & shows us what's still there (**brings repentance**). **3) gives guidance**: in the midst of darkness, Christ's light will guide us to liberty. Is Jesus your light? He wants to be – will you accept His light into your life today? 😊