

That You May Have Life In His Name

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Our journey through the book of Romans last year was in an effort to bring about theological unity around the gospel of Jesus, with hope that as we continue to grow in our faith, we would also grow together with unity and maturity in Christ. This year, we are taking a long look at Jesus through the gospel of John, looking at what Jesus did and what Jesus said and why John wrote his gospel about the life of Christ.

I want us to begin this year and this sermon series with a specific goal in mind – that in all of our gatherings, in all of our community groups, in the expression of who we are as a church and who we are as people – with our life in Christ in mind. What does it mean to believe in Jesus and how does that give us life?

Bishop Steven Neil - “The central message of the gospels is not the teaching of Jesus, but Jesus himself”

Matthew writes his gospel presenting Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament, fulfilling prophecy, fulfilling the law, and presents Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel.

Mark writes his gospel presenting Jesus as the Son of Man who would suffer and die for his people and the journey of Jesus towards the Cross

Luke in writing his gospel and the book of Acts does so with great detail so that people would know with certainty that Jesus is the Savior of the world.

John writes his gospel with this in mind: *“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”*
John 20:30-31

Do you believe (trust) that Jesus is the Christ? Do you believe (trust in) Jesus is the Messiah?
Do you believe (trust) that Jesus is the Son of God?

Do you know that by believing (trusting) in Jesus the Christ, the Son of God – that you have life in his name?

People - including you and me - are constantly looking for life, for what will satisfy, for what brings meaning and we live among many difficult things which can lure us away towards false comforts, or digital distractions that keep us from truly seeking God first, or cultural norms that captivate our hearts and time. Even good things in life - we can often make them great things or even ultimate things — but only one is Ultimate – and you were made by Him and for Him, known by Him, redeemed by Him. Do you... know Him? Do you have life in His name?

In order to more fully appreciate the idea of life in Christ – let’s remember that we were dead in sin and living in darkness. If you do not believe that Jesus is the Christ - the Messiah and you do not believe Jesus is the Son of God – you still are dead in sin and living in darkness.

To have life in Jesus is to be redeemed by Jesus, forgiven by the work of Jesus, made alive by Jesus. In other words – to have life in His name is to have Jesus. He is the gift. He is the goal. He is the reward.

The goal today is to put this truth before you: that believing Jesus / trusting Jesus - you may have life in His name.

Look at this theme with me throughout John’s gospel:

John 1:4

In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 3:16-17

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

John 5:24

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

John 6:35

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

John 6:47-48

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life.

John 6:63

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

John 11:25-27

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life.[d] Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

John 14:6-7

*Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”
Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

John 17:1-3

*When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, **2** since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. **3** And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*

John 20:30-31

“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

To have life in His name means we have Jesus. If we have life in His name, then we also have:

Peace in His name.

Healing in His name

Hope in His name

Kindness in His name

His name

Compassion in

Purpose in His name

Self-control in His name

Joy in His name

Mercy in His name

Justice in His name

Confidence in His name

Power to obey in His name.

Grace in His name.

Justification in His name.

Assurance of salvation in His name.

Unconditional love in His name.

Total acceptance in His name.

Eternal significance in His name.

Truth and wisdom in His name.

Authority over evil in His name.

Victory over temptation in His name.

Forgiveness from our failures in His name.

If we have life in His name – we have Jesus.

John Piper - “The gospel of Jesus and his many precious blessings are not ultimately what makes the good news good, but means of seeing and savoring the Savior himself. Forgiveness is good because it opens the way to enjoying God himself. Justification is good because it wins access to the presence and pleasure of God himself. Eternal life is good because it becomes the everlasting enjoyment of Jesus. All God’s good gifts are loving to the degree that they lead us to God himself. This is the love of God: doing everything necessary, most painfully in the death of his Son, to enthrall us with what is most deeply and durably satisfying—namely, himself.”

What captivates your heart?

What is competing for your attention?

What is distracting you from God?

What good things in your life have become ultimate things instead?

Where is the gap between God’s best for you and the way you are living?

27 years ago – a friend and pastor asked me a simple question that changed my life.

“Is Christ a part of your life or is He your life?”

I realized in that moment there was so much more of Jesus for me to know, much more of His presence than I ever knew, much more to life on earth than I had experienced, and certainly far greater hope for eternity with Him than I had ever considered.

Philippians 3:7-14 “But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”