

4 - LIFE, in the Kingdom of God

**I have come so that they might have life
and might have it abundantly. John 10:10b**

The Challenge

Yes, when we are born again we are “rescued from the dominion of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of God’s beloved Son” ([Col. 1:13](#), [Acts 26:18](#)), yet we continue to live in this dark world which is ruled by Satan. How does *that* work?

Well, God had a plan! [John 1:4-5](#) says of Jesus, “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” God made a way for us to live in His Light even now!

Zoe-Life

The English word “life” here, and in [John 3:16](#) and over 100 times in the NT, is from the Greek *zoe* ([Strong’s G2222](#)). *Zoe* speaks to the quality of life; life that is abundant, rich, full and overflowing. It is Life as humans were created to know it! (I use “Life” when speaking of *Zoe-Life*.)

Zoe-Life begins when we are born again, and lasts forever, but to our detriment we often emphasize “eternal” and miss the “now” part.

Life speaks of the wholeness that comes when our spirit is made alive ([Eph. 2:5](#), [Rom. 8:10](#)). Our communion with Creator God is restored, and for the first time since the fall of mankind our soul-hunger can be fulfilled.

THAT Life is the inheritance of the Children of Light ([Eph. 5:8](#)). It is the *Zoe-Life* of the Kingdom of God! If you believe that, it will transform you.

We become kingdom citizens by believing in Jesus ([John 1:12](#)), but to “believe” means more than mental assent. It implies to entrust oneself to the object of belief in a way that leads to action, and that implies choice. In fact, countless choices!

Rest

As described in Chapter 1, man has an incessant need to satisfy his soul hunger. Until we are born again there is no rest from that. We are like a dog chasing its tail.

It is only in the Kingdom of God that we find rest from our otherwise futile pursuit of soul-satisfaction, but we find it hard to believe that the life of surrender to Him would lead to that. We still think that our way can work but it never does.

Note the [Heb. 3:7-4:16](#) warning about unbelief and the hardening of hearts that rob us of the rest that could be ours. Do you hear that preached?

True Christianity

A “Christian” is one who has not only “believed in Jesus” enough to escape hell but has also switched kingdom loyalties.

We then believe that the most rewarding way to fulfill any spiritual, emotional or physical appetite or need is by obeying Jesus and following Him in all of life.

Christians who have Life, will obey Him out of our love for Him because of the Life He has given us at such great cost to Himself.

As we do that, He and the Father come and make their abode in us and disclose more and more of Jesus to us ([John 14:21-24](#)). As this happens, we find ourselves lifted into the [I Cor. 2:9](#), indescribable spiritual riches that He has for us.

As this Life takes root in us, we will increasingly “seek first God’s kingdom and His righteousness” ([Mt. 6:33](#), which will grow in us and overflow to others for their salvation and joy and to God’s glory.

This all flows naturally from a heart that is surrendered to His rule and finds its greatest joy in pleasing Him as it follows the leading of His Spirit.

And Then - -

As we diligently pursue Christ, the interests and appetites of the flesh will succumb to those of the Spirit. We will come to hate evil ([Rom. 12:9](#)) because it creates distance in our intimacy with God, more than out of fear of being punished for being “bad.”

And we will determine if we have had a “good day” or a “bad day” by how well we have walked by the Spirit rather than by how our fleshly expectations have been met.

By Faith

This Life of the Kingdom of God is surreal in a certain way. In fact, it is frequently called a mystery.

In [Col. 1:26-27](#), Paul calls it “the mystery that has been hidden from the ages and from the generations, but now has been revealed to his saints, to whom God desired to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Oh - I love it!

Our English word “mystery,” from the Greek *mustérion* ([Strong's 3466](#)), is used 28 times in the New Testament. The prophets of old knew that something better than their system of sacrifices was coming and they longed to see it ([Mt. 13:17](#)), but they couldn't imagine what it would be.

Many err today by trying to understand it intellectually and defining it theologically, thus the powerless religion of our day. Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you concealed these things from the wise and discerning and revealed them to little children” ([Mt. 11:25](#)).

The Life of the Kingdom is for all who believe in Jesus like a child and invite Him to indwell them and rule their life.

A Big Problem

One problem is that we try to understand the things of God with our human minds, but we can't.

Paul writes “But a natural person 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 discerned” (I Cor. 2:14 nasb).

Further, His ways are contrary to the instincts of the flesh. Jesus confirms that in [John 5:39-40](#): “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, and these are the ones testifying about me, and you are not willing to come to me so that you might have life.”

We are free to come or to refuse to come, and we face that question multiple times daily. As we grow, we learn that the life that we seek truly does follow coming to Him. Obedience is the axis upon which authentic spirituality and Kingdom Life turn.

Born Again

In [John 3:5-6](#) Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless someone would be born from water and the Spirit, he is not able to enter into the kingdom of God. What has been born from the flesh is flesh, and that which has been born from the Spirit is spirit.”

And in John 1:12, “But as many as received him, he gave to them the authority to become children of God, to those believing in his name.”

Consider the word “received” there. The Greek word there means to take initiative to accept, and emphasizes our initiative.

What we are to receive, is the abundant, overflowing, Zoe-Life of John 10:10.

Moving On

Many Christians live a dull life that is very much like the Law, living under the “should” and “should not” expectations of similarly joyless leaders.

There is little exuberance, and little that makes others want to be like them. How would you respond to my opinion that we too often give others, reason to not want to be like us?

There is much more to this and we'll consider it next in “48-Bit Color or Black and White.”