

The Metaphors of Christ - The Life

"Jesus said to him, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* (John 14:6)

When the word "life" is found in our English Bibles, the context can sometimes determine a difference between earthly and eternal existence. But the Greek text uses several different words to express different types of or contributions to life. Residents of heaven have no need for air, water, or food as earthly creatures do. So, the Spirit used several of these words to express precise meaning in scripture.

Paul, referring to the creation of all things to include plants, birds, fish, animals, and finally mankind, identifies Jesus as the cause of not only their existence but the life that is in them. *"For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."* (Colossians 1:16-17)

As we consider the extended context into Genesis 1, we note that the Septuagint a Greek version of the Jewish Scriptures produced in the third and second centuries B.C. uses the same words to describe the beginnings of plant, sea creatures, land animals, and finally mankind. Jesus, by His mighty power, is the creator and sustainer of all living creatures, including mankind. Our main consideration however is expressed by Jesus' prayer, *"...You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him."* (John 17:2)

In John 10:10-11 we can see the contrast between this physical existence and eternal life as Jesus says; *"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life (eternal life), and that they may have it more abundantly. "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life (physical existence) for the sheep."* Jesus gives up his ability to breathe so that people may have a vibrant life for eternity.

As Jesus was speaking to the sister of Lazarus, He declared His ability to create life; restore a full, vigorous and efficient life; and also fashion life which would last forever, *"Jesus said to her, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die (stop breathing), he shall live (have an eternal life). And whoever lives (born again to never die spiritually) and believes in Me shall never die (have eternal life). Do you believe this?"*"* (John 11:25-26)

Jesus defines the life giving influence that He provides to mankind in *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."* (John 6:63) Thayer defines this life giving influence as;

- Produce alive, beget or bear living young;
- Cause to live, make alive, give life; by spiritual power to arouse and invigorate; to restore to life; to give increase of life: thus of physical life; of the spirit, quickening as respects the spirit, endowed with new and greater powers of life;
- Metaphorically, of seeds quickened into life, i.e. germinating, springing up, growing...

From this we learn that "The Truth" is the word of God brought to us by Jesus, is the life giving power to cause eternal vibrant life in those that hear it. Paul says this in (Romans 1:16-17).

Jesus began to teach the new life to Nicodemus in *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."* (John 3:5-6) In the first case, the flesh dies. In the second case, the spirit is eternal and not subject to fleshly death. There is also a change of food necessary from the

physical to the spiritual kind. So as the Son of God once created physical food and the physical creatures to eat it, He now has brought the spiritual food of God's word to feed our spiritual existence. The fact that Jesus is Living Bread and gives Living Water is the subject of a future blog.

For now we are encouraged by the fact that we have the choice to be raised into a new spiritual life, (Romans 6:3-11). Jesus is the eternal being who humbled Himself to die for us and has provided us the words of life so that we might live forever through Him. *"For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will."* (John 5:21) He is life to Himself and life to those transformed by His words, by being obedient, to them.

Looking back at John 14:6 we can understand that Jesus shows us the "way" to "eternal life" by the words of "Truth" which He brought to us.

Are you in The Way, armed with The Truth, with the one who is himself The Life?