

Acts

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Date: 29 April 1984

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- [0 : 00] As the Lord is pleased to help me, I will speak again in his name from the words found in the fifth chapter of the Acts, in verse 20.
- The twentieth verse in the fifth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Where the angel of the Lord said to the apostles, go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.
- It may seem strange that the message that the apostles were to speak is expressed in this way.
- Probably we would not have expected to find it praised like this, but to expect them to be commanded to preach the gospel, or the word of God, or simply Jesus Christ.
- But here it is expressed in this particular way. The words, all the words of this life. Now clearly the apostles understood very clearly what that life was.
- [1 : 32] They had no need to ask as to what they were to speak, but they went and spoke in the temple according to this expression, the words of this life.
- And as we are here for a little while this evening, and as the Lord may help me to speak, it is really just this subject expressed in this one all-important word, life.
- Those things of which we speak, those things which you'll hear, are concerned with life.
- Clearly the apostles here knew what it meant when the angels spoke of this life.
- It was a special life. There was a life which could be expressed in some way in the words that they were to use.
- [2 : 50] There was the reconciliation, the fact of it, and the word of reconciliation to speak. There is the truth of eternal salvation, and the word of salvation which goes forth concerning it.
- These matters are of such tremendous significance and importance, which is far beyond any emphasis I can possibly put upon it.
- It really is. For each and every one of us, a matter as to where we spend eternity, whether we do possess in our hearts this eternal life or not.
- And that life is communicated through the word, often through the word that is preached, the word that is read, the word in any case which is conveyed by the Holy Spirit to the heart in some way or another.
- But it really is. The difference between eternal life and eternal death, eternal suffering, misery and despair.
- [4 : 20] Now the word, the words of this life are brought before you. The subject really is very simple and plain.
- The Lord Jesus came to this earth and died to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. He laid down his life that sinners might live.
- He has eternal life to give. He has promised to give it to those who truly ask him. And thus the message really in the word, in the words of this life, is come to Jesus and he will give you life.

I hope that sounds very simple, because so it is.

And if that were all that I had to say, how very easy it would be. Were there no deceiving, destroying devil?

[5 : 35] Were there no enticing, deadening world around us? Were you all and I, as innocent and pure in our hearts, as Adam and Eve before they fell, how different it would be?

But oh, the unbelief and the prejudice and the ignorance and the folly of the human heart. There is such a tremendous barrier to the words of life.

So that one might almost feel overwhelmed by the immensity of the difficulty of simply coming to the Lord Jesus Christ that we might have life.

Almost, but not quite. Because God has his own unshakable purpose to fulfill.

He has said that the words of this life are to be preached. And therefore, there is a purpose in it. There is a purpose.

[6 : 52] In my preaching the word to you tonight, for half an hour or so only, the subject before us is life.

We may consider this first as regards its origin, and then as regards its nature, and then with respect to its possession.

The words of this life. Life proceeds from God himself. It is amazing as it really is to contemplate.

It is the very life of God that is before us in this word. Nothing less than that.

Now that was the marginal reference that I referred to as we read the third chapter of John. Jesus said, except to man be born.

[8 : 02] He said, you must be born again. Which is certainly one way of translating that word, but it does literally mean from above.

That life comes from heaven. It is the life of God in the soul of man. It is the divine nature that his people are partakers of.

And thus it comes, its source, is the Father himself, the everlasting God, is pleased to convey, to impart, to give, this life to those who are first dead in trespasses and sins.

How amazing that he should do so. That he should impart such life to the God who is in himself light and love should impart such a life to any of our souls.

Here surely is matter for everlasting praise if he has given us life who were once so utterly dead.

[9 : 29] God himself is the author of life. The psalmist spoke of his God in that way. He said, My prayer shall be unto him, unto the God of my life.

The God who controls and commands my life. The God who communicates of his own life to my needy soul which was made after the image and likeness of God himself.

about the channel of that life, the way in which it comes is through the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, concerning his sheep, I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly.

First we need that life and then we need a more abundant life, an increasing life and all the life that we have or can have and has come through the mediator.

It is the very life of the Lord Jesus Christ communicated. As the apostle says, when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.

[11 : 02] There is Christ your life. Paul could say, he is our life, my life and the life of all true believers.

Is he really your life? Does Christ live in you and communicate out of his abundant fullness of spiritual life to your needy soul?

For though this life is given and imparted to the people of God, it is not at all an independent life. It needs to be renewed, revived, and maintained in the soul.

We need, as I was saying recently, such a close, abiding union to Jesus Christ, so that his life flows into our branches, flows into our souls continually, for otherwise we have no life.

It is all from him. And so, as I've mentioned, he so often expressed himself in those words which do simply and yet in such wonderful ways express that truth, that all life is from him.

[12 : 28] I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. And then the conveyor of that life is the Spirit of God, the life which is eternally in the Father, which is in that fullness of life which is in the mediator according to his own purpose, and on account of the Savior's death.

That life is actually conveyed and communicated to the soul by the Spirit of God. As Paul says, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free, made me free from the law of sin and death.

Wonderful experience that is, for the Spirit of life to set us free from that sin and death which so roars in us, so exercises such a law over our lives by nature.

Well, there is the Spirit of life. These apostles well knew what a difference this meant, what a difference it meant when the Holy Spirit came, twice already, as we have read, we read in the earlier chapters, they had been filled with the Holy Spirit.

In the previous chapter we read, this was the second occasion, when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

[14 : 39] they must have been deeply conscious of life, that their souls were full of this life that the Holy Spirit gives.

I suppose that none of us could remember any experience quite of the same nature as that, that my dear friends, we have no life apart from that which is communicated by the Spirit of God.

The Holy Spirit is given in measure to all the children of God, and how we do need to seek more and more of that gracious influence and operation of the Spirit of God, that we may be more lively, more alive in our souls toward God, and how we do need to beware of anything which grieves and quenches the Spirit of God, for otherwise that life within will languish, or how we do need the Holy Ghost in our souls, in our lives.

He is the Spirit of life. And so the source of this life is God Himself. We shall never obtain any real spiritual life from any other source.

No means of themselves can ever provide it. It is God Himself. the blessed and holy Trinity, who is the source of this life.

[16 : 40] And thus it was the apostles knew what this life was by coming this way from the Father through the Son of God, whom they had known so well in His life and death.

And by the wonderful working of the Holy Spirit, they were alive. This is so much linked with the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as the apostle prayed for the Ephesians, that they might know what is the exceeding greatness of God's power in to us who believe.

He says, according to His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places far above all principalities and powers.

And then He says, and you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins, which not only means that it was the very same power of God which was needed to quicken those Ephesian believers into life, as that which was put forth when Christ was raised from the dead, but also that there was a great spiritual link between them, that the one followed the other, that it was because Jesus was raised from the dead, that they also had been raised from a death in trespasses and sins, as He goes on to say, that God who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us, together with Christ and raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in

Christ, this life comes to the soul because of the Savior's death and resurrection and how we do need to keep those events constantly before us.

[19 : 16] things. Well, in the second place here, there is the nature of this life.

What does it mean? All the words of this life. To some extent, that clearly refers to the outward life which the apostles were living and which stood out in such marked contrast to the life of those around.

How different it was from the life of these religious leaders, the high priest and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees, and this Sanhedrin, this council of the Jews, many of them very religious people, but how full of deceit and duplicity.

How ready they were to seek to put the apostles to death when all they had done would be to heal many of the people and to preach the truth.

The bitterness and envy and unbelief of their hearts stood out in such sharp contrast to this life which the apostles, by the grace of God, were living.

[20 : 44] But it was only because of their inward life that they could live this outward life which stood out so sharply and shone so brightly.

And so it is essentially an inward life that is expressed in their outward actions. The very kernel and center of this is inward.

Now this life is essentially spiritual. There's no doubt at all that this makes the difference.

There is such a thing as spiritual life. And how can that be explained? clearly, as we read of this matter in the word of God, again and again, this is what is meant.

There is a life in the soul of those that believe. Some of you may not be able to understand that at all. But one might as well try to explain to a corpse what physical life was and speak to that as to hope to be able to explain what real Christianity is to those who have no spiritual life.

[22 : 18] life. To understand what life is, you must be alive. You must experience it yourself, really to understand what it is.

The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him. Neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned, but without a spiritual understanding, the spiritual life, they are really meaningless.

But still, if you do not understand what spiritual life is, you can see the evidence of it. It does make a difference in others, as you cannot possibly deny.

And if you do not know what spiritual life is, then that is no excuse for you not seeking to know. For Jesus says in such wonderfully simple and gracious language, whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

But we may say that the spiritual life in some way is analogous to a natural life. We all know that we are actually physically alive.

[23 : 59] We can see very plainly or feel the evidence of it. There are those spiritual exercises which correspond to our natural evidences of life.

If you are alive spiritually, there will be some breathing. Your heart will again and again breathe out heavenward.

This life which is from heaven will lead to heaven. There will be a spiritual heartbeat. There will be the effect, the movement of your heart in these things.

Your affections and desires will be affected by spiritual things. Sometimes you may not be very conscious of that.

You may not be very lively, but there will certainly be times when your heart will beat. Christ's word. There will be an attraction in him which you will certainly feel.

[25 : 13] You know that you are alive naturally because you can feel things. You are sensitive. You have that nervous system which does respond and in other ways you have inner feelings and so it will be as regards to spiritual life.

There will be spiritual feeling and desire in your soul and there will be a spiritual appetite. The sign of a healthy body is that you do have an appetite, a desire from time to time for spiritual food, for your natural food and so in spiritual things there will be a hunger and a thirst after righteousness.

You will long to possess those things which will indeed satisfy your soul. And so in these and other ways, in the whole bend of your soul there will be the evidence of spiritual life if you are alive.

Now are you? this is a question simple enough but of such transcendent importance.

Are you alive to God? Is there that life in your soul which shows itself by these evidences of it?

[26 : 49] also this life is not only a spiritual life but it is a holy life. It comes from a holy God and in itself is absolutely and perfectly holy.

What an amazing thing it is that there should be a holy life in such a vile and sinful heart.

but so it is. John says concerning it that whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin for his seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin because he is born of God.

John has already said that if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us so clearly he is not saying that.

What he is saying is that there is in all those that are born of God a holy principle that forbids them to live in sin. When he says does not commit sin it is a continuous verb.

[28 : 04] It means he does not go on committing sin. He does not live in sin. He does not love it in the same way as he once does.

He cannot possibly continue in that way of sinning. He has this holy life within and how important it is that that holy life should develop and grow.

Dear friends, if you have life, you will love holiness. You will long to be holy because this very life is a holy life within and it is so completely contrary to the sin that is in you.

No wonder then that there will be that strife, that conflict between sin and holiness, that strange, mysterious strife between your soul and sin.

In this life also is everlasting life in its nature. We often read that, but we should often consider it, that it is so.

[29 : 21] To have this life really means to possess everlasting life. We read it several times in the chapter. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

And that really does mean exactly what it says. This life which comes from God himself, which does mean a partaking of the divine nature, is absolutely indestructible.

In its very nature, it is eternal or everlasting life. And Jesus said very plainly, My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any men pluck them out of my hands.

Now do consider this, beloved friends, do you possess eternal life, or do you not?

The word of God, very plainly and repeatedly declares this, that the life that the Savior gives, is everlasting life, that once you do really possess it, then nothing can ever destroy it.

[31 : 10] And if you never do possess it, if you never do come to the Savior and seek for that life, then you will be lost for all eternity without it.

Now do consider the plain, sure word of God, that the life he gives so freely, is everlasting life.

And then I must speak a little concerning the possession of this life, the effect of having this life within us. it is a life of faith.

That is so plainly and clearly a characteristic of it that it must be mentioned. These apostles were living a life of faith in the Savior.

They truly believed, not merely because they had the evidence of their eyes naturally, but because their hearts had so responded to his words of life.

[32 : 30] They were living a life of faith on that one who had been crucified for them, and risen again, and was even at the right hand of God on high.

He constantly spoke of him, him hath God highly exalted, exalted at his own right hand. They could say, we see Jesus made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor.

They saw him by faith, who was then invisible to their natural eye, was being exalted to heaven. Paul could say, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

We walk by faith, not by sight. It is a life of faith, as we read and as the Savior repeated it. he said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

[33 : 52] the just shall live by faith. That faith that is given to them is the principle by which they must live.

And as unbelief has such a deadening influence, so faith has such an enlivening effect upon the soul. And thus it is of such immense importance in the whole of spiritual life.

Everything else resolves upon the reality and the strength and the purity of our faith, indeed in the simplicity of our faith.

It is also a life of repentance. This occurs very plainly and repeatedly in these chapters. They said in this, as we read this morning, him has God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins in that order.

Faith and repentance are inseparably linked together. If you have faith in Jesus Christ, you certainly will repent of your sins.

[35 : 21] And so the apostles made this a very important point in their preaching. They said, repent and be converted for the remission of your sins.

Again and again, they went forth with that message, repent and believed the gospel. How it was the burden of the ministry of John the Baptist, it was the way in which Jesus himself began to preach, the way his apostles continued to preach, with such emphasis on this.

It was what the apostle Paul declared to be the great point of his preaching, repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Repentance is a turning from all sin to God, a turning away from our sin and a boring of it, a loathing of our sinfulness.

And my dear friends, if you have a holy life within, there is sure to be that effect of it, you will begin to hate the sin that is so offensive in the sight of God and so contrary to his holy law.

[36 : 58] I said begin because it is a continuing process. These apostles still had much cause to repent and certainly we do every day and every hour.

as long as we sin, there is cause to repent. We have surely to confess that sin is mixed with all that we do.

There is need for this repentance. The Savior is exhorted to give it. We cannot produce it. Our hearts can be as hard in regard to repentance as a stone that the Savior is exhorted for this purpose to give repentance to those who so need to live a life of repentance.

Do you confess your sin? Do you daily repent of sin and daily wash in Calvary's clothes?

God's may be sure that if the life of God is in your soul, then you will be led again and again to this gracious act and spirit of repentance.

[38 : 23] And then this is a life of love. Often I have said this before to you in effect, but how plain it is in the life of these early Christians, what love abounded.

They were one. Neither was there any among them that lacked, for as many as were possessed of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet, and distribution was made unto every man according as he had needs.

What love, influenced their whole lives, love to the Saviour, showed itself also in love one to another.

Jesus had said, By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, when ye have love one to another. Surely the people around them could not understand really what it was that so made these people give up all their possessions and sell them and give to all those that had need.

Such love was very rare, such an unselfish course of action that surely had ever been seen before in this way.

[39 : 48] And the cry of those who watched early Christians was, See how they love one another. This was the Saviour's command to his disciples, These things I command you, that ye love one another as I have loved you.

The love of Jesus was still being seen, it was coming out in the lives of his apostles. souls. So we might continue if there were time.

This life is a life of peace, a life of joy, a life of liberty, a life of humility, a life of obedience to the Saviour, of service to him.

But dear friends, are you living this life? life. The apostles clearly were.

They went and could speak the words of this life. They knew a good deal about it. It was their own experience. They did have this life within them and so they could tell of it.

[41 : 10] Are you living this life? There really is no other life worth living. very soon your earthly life will be over, will be spent and ended.

And if you have lived only to yourself, what a fruit will there be of all that?

That life, life without Christ, is utter failure, utter waste. it is a life thrown away, utterly pointless and useless and hopeless.

The Lord Jesus Christ has this life to give. He has promised to give to those who ask to seek that life.

Will you not seek it? love, love, love, the words of this life you hear, but are you living this life?

- [42 : 22] Will you live according to this pattern tomorrow and through the rest of the days of your earthly life? Is this the course that you're on?

Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life? Few there be that find it. There are so many hindrances, so many difficulties, but if the Lord gives you that life and sets you in the path of life, then you will follow on to life everlasting.

And are you concerned that others should live this life? Is it not desperately sad that so few appear to follow after this person, after this Savior, seek that life which he so freely gives?

Is it not so sad to see so many around us who show no evidence of living this life? May our hearts concern their prayer to God be that such may be saved, if it be the Lord's gracious will, and may we each be deeply concerned to walk out, to live this life.

Amen. hymn number 1073, tune St.

- [44 : 22] Mabin, 650. Holy Ghost, dispel our sadness, pierce the clouds of nature's night.

Come, thou source of joy and gladness, breathe thy life, and spread thy light. Come, thou best of all donations God can give or we implore.

Having thy sweet consolations, we on earth can wish no more. Hymn number 1073, Holy Ghost, dispel our sadness, pierce the clouds of nature's night.

Come, thou source of joy and gladness, breathe thy life, and spread thy light.

Come, thou best of all donations, God can give all we implore.

- [45 : 56] having thy sweet consolation, we on earth can wish no more.

O thou of the new creation, bid us now thy influence prove.

Make us of thy habitation shedder, brought the saviour's love.

Almighty, ever gracious God, we do beseech thee to impart that life where there is no life.

O, do graciously grant it, we pray, that souls may be born again here of thy spirit. Where there is life, O, do protect it, animate it, maintain it, and cause it to flourish in our souls.

- [47 : 36] O, do give us life. May the grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

Amen. Acts B409 Hymn 740 Lord, when I hear thy children talk, and I believe it is often true, how with delight thy ways they walk, and gladly thy commandments do.

In my own breast I look and read accounts so very different then, that had I not thy blood to plead, each sight would sink me to despair.

hymn 740. Lord, when I hear thy children talk, and I believe tis often true, how which are lost, the ways they walk, and gladly thy commandment stir.

in my arm breast I look and breathe in a town so very different there, that had I not thy blood supreme, each side was sink with their plans on plain and

- [50 : 35] Section of God and fall appear.

A lifeless love of yours shall share.

We love the power throughout all will.

I feel thy fainting still in truth.

My passion in that I give hope till doubt the way the dream of love promised the Lord and bless the poor.

[52 : 11] That while I make my secret love outwards I cross my eyes and see though I know nothing of my own.

My treasure is in the sin day.

My treasure is thy precious love fixer my heart and fall the rest.

O God unto thy holy hands my God give me the faith which thou lies first.

the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour the love of God our Father the fellowship and sweet communion of the Holy Spirit our Comforter be with us all.

[54 : 41] Amen. For the Holy Spirit of God to remember the love of God that is the love of God and the love of God and the love of God to believe and the love of God and the love of God and the love of God