

Sermon Outline

“LIFE IN HIS NAME”: THE PURSUIT OF WHOLENESS AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

LIFE IN HIMSELF (JOHN 5:26)

I. Introduction

- A. How is Jesus able to make this offer of eternal life to begin with?
How is Jesus able to have such power over human beings?
How is Jesus able to make this audacious offer of eternal life to begin with?
On what basis does Jesus claim to be able to give eternal life?
- B. Jesus himself answers this question: “For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself” (v 26)

II. As With the Father, So Also the Son

- A. Notice the mirror-like relationship between the Father and the Son.
- B. We’ve encountered several of these “mirror” statements already.
 - 1. One part of the statement tells us what the Father is doing.
 - 2. The other part tells us how the Son does what the Father is doing.
- C. The entire discourse is governed by this idea of how the Son mirrors or images the Father.
 - John 5:17: “But Jesus answered them, ‘My *Father* is working until now, and *I am working*.’”
 - John 5:19: So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the *Father* does, that the *Son* does likewise.”
 - John 5:21: “For as the *Father* raises the dead and gives them life, so also the *Son* gives life to whom he will.”
- D. Now in verse 26, “For as the *Father* has life in himself, so he has granted the *Son* also to have life in himself.”
—What is true for the Father is true for the Son.

III. The Father Has Life in Himself

- A. What does it mean for the Father to have “life in himself”?
- B. For the Father to have “life in himself” means that the Father has inherent, intrinsic, uncreated, self-sustaining, self-replenishing, inexhaustible, infinite *life*.
- C. This truth is rooted in the Scriptures.
 - Genesis 2:7: “then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.”

- Deuteronomy 30:20: “loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”
 - Deuteronomy 32:39: “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.
 - 1 Samuel 2:6: “The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up.”
 - Job 33:4: “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.”
- D. *God* is the source of life.
1. The LORD God is the One who gives life to his people, because he is the One who has life in himself, the One with inherent life.

IV. The Son Has Life in Himself

- A. The Jewish scholars would have no qualms with what Jesus has said.
- B. What is striking is the next part of Jesus’ statement: “...so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.”
 1. God the Father has granted his Son to have inherent self-sustaining life as he does.
 2. God desires for his Son to be the Source of resurrection life for his people.
- C. You can see where this is heading.
 1. God wants the world to look to his Son, Jesus, for resurrection life and all that it contains.
 2. God wants his Son to be as worshiped as he himself is worshiped—that “all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father” (v 23).

V. The Grant That Has Always Been

- A. *When* did the Father ordain the Son to have life in himself?
- B. Some might argue that since the Father granted the Son to have intrinsic life, it must mean that there was a time when the Son did not have intrinsic life, or that the Son was not in existence.
- C. But we do not have to go that route.
 1. The Son is the Word of God who was with God from the beginning (Jn 1:1).
 2. The Word was the agent by whom God made “All things” (Jn 1:3).
 3. The Word of God is an intrinsic part of God’s own being.
 - a. God is the Source of all knowledge, wisdom, and rationality.
 - b. There was never a moment when God did *not* have his Word
 - c. Therefore, we conclude that the Son has always been around.
 - d. Like the Father, the Son never had a beginning. The Son was always there.

- D. This leads us to believe that the “grant” from the Father to the Son—the grant for the Son to have life in himself—is not an act in space and time, but an act that has always been.
 1. It was an act within God himself.
 2. D.A. Carson: “It is an eternal grant” (*Jesus the Son of God*, 69).
- E. Conclusion:
 1. God and his Word-Son have no beginning.
 2. The Word-Son has always been and will always be a part of God.
 3. When God granted the Son to have life in himself, that act was made within God himself.

VI. Awe

- A. *God wants us to be in awe at the glory, majesty, and beauty of the eternal Son of God.*
- B. We were made to desire beauty, to be awe-struck by glory and majesty.
- C. Beauty/glory is a power that can be used for good or for ill. Beauty can inspire us to greatness or bring out the worst in us.
- D. In our great struggle to worship God, and teach the world how to worship God, we must address the universal human craving for beauty.
- E. The beginning and the end of that discussion must be in God and in his Son.
 1. God and his Son are the Archetype, the Original Pattern, of all that is holy, true, orderly, beautiful, and glorious.
 2. God the Father is the Architect of all creation, the Fount of all notions of true beauty and glory.
 3. Before the creation, God’s ideas, thoughts, beliefs were a Person—the Word, the Son.
 4. The only-begotten Son of God is the most beautiful Art of the Father, precisely because he is the perfect reflection and projection of God himself, eternal as the Father himself is eternal, God as the Father himself is God.
 - Heb 1:3: “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.”
- F. The Son is the perfect projection of the Father, projected before all worlds. In the words of the Nicene Creed, the Son is:

God from God,
Light from Light,
true God from true God...
- G. The Father projects his Son in order that his Son might be adored, delighted in, pursued, obeyed, contemplated on, and worshiped as God, as the LORD.
- H. In obedience to God’s will, we need to stand in awe of the Son of God. We desperately need to be astonished and to be blown away by the Son of God himself!

VII. Wholeness

- A. But it is testimony to the sheer generosity of God’s love that he makes all creation to benefit from the glory of the Son.

- B. So God wants us to be in awe of the Son not only for the glory of the Son—but also for what that gazing on the Son would do *in* us. *God wants our adoration of the Son to satisfy our thirst for glory, our longing for beauty, our hunger for healing and wholeness.*
- C. The ultimate solution to worldliness is a single-minded, constant, and consistent gaze on the Son of God himself, a gaze that permeates every moment of our lives.
1. Whatever spiritual disciplines we impose on ourselves and others must serve only this end—to help us gaze upon the Lord, to help us fix our eyes on the Lord who kindly offers himself to be our strength.
 - Psalm 16:8: I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.
 - Isaiah 26:3: You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.
- D. It is not enough to nag the world for its sins and decadence. The Church (Christians) must show the world where true beauty and glory can be found—in the Lord Jesus Christ, everlasting Son of God.

VIII. Set the Lord Always Before You

This is God’s Word for us today and for every day of our lives: *Look to the Son. Keep the eyes of your heart on the Son for eternal life, for glory, for God.* Focus more on the Son than on yourself, your sins, or even your spiritual growth. (Spiritual growth is by an increasing self-forgetfulness and Christ-centeredness anyway.) And help one another to do the same. In order to grow as worshipers of God, our hearts must be increasingly captured by a glory that is far greater than anything this world can offer. Only the Son who has life in himself possesses such glory.

Questions for Reflection

1. Was there anything in particular about today’s sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything that you disagree with or found difficult to accept?
3. Identify the “mirror” statements describing the relationship between the Father and the Son. Pray over them. Ask God to increase your faith in the Son.
4. What does it mean to say that “the Father has life in himself”?
5. What does it mean for the Son to have “life in himself”?
6. When did the Father ordain the Son to have life in himself? How should we understand the “grant” from the Father to the Son?
7. Awe of the Son is a response the Father requires of the world. Discuss. Pray for a deeper awe of the Son.
8. What does God intend for our worshipful gaze on the Son to do in us and for us?