

# Sermon Outlines

## Life in St. John's Gospel

*"These were written . . . that believing ye might have life through his name."  
(John 20:31)*

Nature speaks with one voice - the voice of Life. Life is also the deepest, fullest manifestation of Christianity, and, conversely, Christianity is the deepest, fullest manifestation of life. It is a justification and a fulfilment of life, and, like life itself, is a gift of God to man.

In the New Testament there are many phrases which include the word "life." To quote only a few of these, we are told to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4); the Holy Spirit is called "the Spirit of life" (Rom. 8:2); and Christ is said to have been made a Priest "after the power of an endless life" (Heb. 7:16). Perhaps this emphasis on life is pre-eminently true of St. John's Gospel, as indicated by our text, which is part of the Book's conclusion or summing-up. We may therefore trace this principle of Divine Life step by step through the Gospel.

### *I. The Source of Life (1:4)*

1. The fount and starting point - "in him was life."
2. Man's light from God's life - "the life was the light of men."

### *II. The Beginning of Life - (4:14)*

1. The new birth - "ye must be born again."
2. The alternative - death: "perish" (3:15, 16); "shall not see life" (3:36).

### *III. The Indwelling of Life (4:14)*

1. Reception followed by realization - "the water that I shall give him . . . everlasting life."
2. Salvation followed by satisfaction - "shall never thirst."

### *IV. The Permanence of Life (5:24)*

1. Future as well as present and past.
  - a. "Shall not come into condemnation."
  - b. "Hath everlasting life."
  - c. "Hath passed out of death into life" (R.V.).
2. Eternal in duration because eternal in quality.

### *V. The Sustenance of Life (6:27, 33, 51)*

1. Physical life depends on absorption and assimilation of matter, making flesh and blood.
2. Spiritual life, similarly, is sustained by Christ, the Living Bread.

### *VI. The Abundance of Life (10:10)*

1. Not merely life, but as much life as possible - "have it more abundantly."
2. Not content with less or a difference of degree of warmth.
3. A double blessing - a soul saved from sin, and a heart secured for service.

### *VII. The Condition of Life (11:25; 12:25)*

1. "The resurrection" comes before "the life". Our life is through the death and rising again of Christ.
2. Relation between Christ's death and resurrection and ours (Cf. Rom. 6:10; 1 Cor. 15:22, 36; Eph. 2:1, 5).

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#### *VIII. The Outcome of Life (15:5, 6, 8)*

1. Abiding - a great word of St. John (Cf. 5:38; 14:16)
2. Fruitfulness (Cf. Gal. 5:22, 23)

#### *IX. The Glory of Life (17:2, 3)*

1. The means of eternal life - power of Christ (v. 2).
2. The essence of eternal life - knowledge of God (v. 3).

#### **Conclusion**

Two classes of people: "quick" and "dead" - alive and asleep. Which are we?

The spring of the life that is flowing  
Is hidden with Christ in God;  
Not yet the mystery knowing,  
I feel that the peace is growing,  
As a river grows deeps and broad.

. . . . W.H. Griffith Thomas, D.D.