



Fix these Words on Your Hearts and Minds
(Dt 11:18)

A Series of Newsletter Article on Biblical Words

Pastor Don Hougard

Benediction Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, WI

2012

April — Hope

May — Faith

June — Love

July/August — Take Heart

September — Submit

October — Righteousness

November - Peace

December - Glory

January - Life

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)



Throughout the Bible there are several terms, which are very important to our Christian faith. They are terms which are used several times throughout the Scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments. These terms are key to understanding our Christian faith. In my newsletter articles in the next number of months, I would like to look at some of these important biblical words.

I am going to start with the great triad of the Bible: faith, hope, and love. This month I will begin with the word **"Hope"** because it fits so well with the Easter season.

When we think of hope, we often think of a "wish." If you buy a lottery ticket, you hope that you will win. There is no basis of that hope. You just wish that your numbers will be drawn. People will sometimes say, "We can only hope." It is as if they doubt that anything good will come, but as long as they are alive, time isn't up yet. It is similar to a game. If our favorite team still has some time on the clock, we figure that there is still hope, even though they are not very good. The kind of hope that this world has is based on our feelings and wishes.

This is similar to how the Greeks viewed hope in New Testament times. Hope for the Greeks was a comfort in distress, but it was also deceptive and uncertain. There was no basis for it. It was simply the wish that things would get better or that good things would come.

The biblical understanding of hope is far different from either our or the Greek understanding of the word. The biblical concept of hope is also the expectation of good things to come, but it is not a wish or illusion. It is certain because it is grounded in God. To hope is to trust in God.¹ In the Old Testament God is the hope of Israel (Jer 17:13) Even when Jerusalem was lying in ruins and the people were taken into exile, God told His people that He had plans to give them hope and a future. (Jer 29:11) During that devastating time, Jeremiah was able to make this confession of hope, "Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's unfailing love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail." (Lam 3:21-22) The unfailing love (mercy) of God is a term that we will look at in the future. That was the basis of Israel's hope, even when all seemed lost. God has loved them with a love that did not fail despite their sins and all the powers that were against them. It was God's unfailing love for them in the past, that gave them hope and confidence in their future.

What could be more devastating than the death of our Savior on the cross? When Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the people were filled with hope. Then He was rejected, killed, and laid in a grave. Their hope in Christ was dashed, but we know that He rose from the dead. Our Christian hope is especially based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Peter writes that we have a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Pt 1:3) If Christ had not risen, our hope would be false, but because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Christian hope is certain and true. (1 Cor 15:19,20). The New Testament speaks of hope in Christ through the forgiveness of sins, in any time of trial, and especially the hope of everlasting life. (cf Rom 5 & 8)

We live in a world which is full of fear and false hope. What a blessing it is that we do not live like those who have no hope, for we believe that Jesus died and rose again for us, and that in Him we have a sure inheritance. (1 Thess 4:13ff) May God enlighten each of our eyes to see this hope that we have in Christ, (Eph 1:18) that we may live our lives confidently and at peace in Him.

¹*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, pages 229-230

“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” (Hebrews 11:1)



In his letter to the Romans Paul makes it absolutely clear that we are saved by faith apart from observing the law. (Rom 3:28) John writes that he wrote his Gospel so that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing we may have life in His name. (Jn 20:31) **Faith** is one of the most important concepts of the Bible because we are saved through faith in Christ. This month I would like to look at the biblical concept of faith.

As I studied this word in the Bible, I found it interesting that while the word believe occurs in the Old Testament, the word never occurs as a noun. There is no Hebrew word for faith. The synonyms for faith in the Old Testament are hope or trust in God and the fear of God. The classic verse in the Old Testament for faith is Genesis 15:6, “Abram believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness.” Here we have the true essence of faith. God makes a promise, and we believe it. God promised Abraham a son in his old age. Despite all the obstacles to this promise, Abraham believed it. Psalm 106:12 also describes faith when it says about Israel at the Red Sea, “Then they believed his promises and sang his praise.” Although the words faith and believe are seldom used in the Old Testament, it is clear that they mean to trust the promises that God makes to us.

The word is used many times in the New Testament. When Jesus saw the faith of the man who was lowered through the roof to be healed, He said, “Take heart son, your sins are forgiven.” (Mt 9:2) Jesus told several people that their faith had healed (saved) them. (Mt 9:22, Mk 10:52, Lk 7:50, Lk 17:19, Lk 18:42) The New Testament makes it clear that our faith is in Jesus.

When you put this all together, we believe that all of God’s promises are fulfilled in Christ. Paul writes, “No matter how many promises God has made they are ‘yes’ in Christ.” (2 Cor 1:20) Faith is holding on to God’s love in our Savior Jesus Christ. It is trusting that we have the forgiveness of sins in Him and through Him we are God’s children whom he loves and for whom He has an eternal inheritance. Faith is trusting that we will receive God’s love through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul sums this up in Romans 3 when He writes, “This righteousness of God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” (Rom 3:22,23) As with Abraham it appears as if God’s promises are impossible to fulfill. We see sin, temptation, suffering, trouble, and even death in our lives. Yet, when we look to Christ, we find salvation. We trust in Him as Abraham trusted in the Lord’s promises, and God credits us with the righteousness of Christ. Throughout the Bible and yet today it is faith in God’s Word that saves. May God grant each one of us that precious gift of faith through His Spirit.

"These three remain, faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor 13:13)



In our English language, we use the word "**love**" very loosely. We can love pepperoni pizza or our job. In each of these cases it means to like something very much. Other times it refers to a deep feeling of affection, such as when a young man tells his girlfriend that he loves her. There is also the love which is faithful and sacrifices for the good of someone else. This is the love a husband and wife pledge each other or that we give to our children. There are many uses of the one word for us, but in the biblical languages, there are several words, which all have a distinct meaning for love

In the Hebrew Old Testament there are three main words that mean love. The most common is *ahab*. This word means to have affection for someone or something and is similar to our word "love." It describes Abraham's love for his son Isaac (Gn 22:2) and Isaac's love for tasty meat (Gn 27:4) or Jacob's love for Rachel (Gn 29:20) It also describe the love that we are to have for our neighbor (Lev 19:18) or God's love of His people (Is 43:4). A second word *racham* means to have compassion or mercy. It is the kind of love that a mother has for her baby. (Is 49:15), that a father has toward his children (Ps 103:13) or the compassion that we have for those who are helpless. God has such compassion for us (Is 14:1). The most important word is *chesed*. This is often translated as "unfailing love" or "mercy." It is God's love that will not let go of us, even when we wander from him. It is often linked with God's faithfulness. Some examples are Ex 20:6, Ps 103:8, and the verse which occurs several times, "O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; his mercy endures forever." (Ps 118:29)

The Greek New Testament also has a few words for love. The word *philia* denotes a brotherly or friendly affection. (Matt. 10:37; Lk. 12:4; 14:12; Jn. 11:3,36) The word "philadelphia" means "brotherly love." The most important word for love is *agape*. It is used over 250 times. Here are some examples:

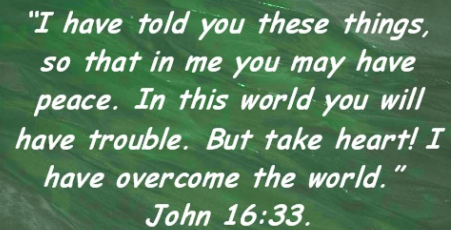
Mt 5:43,44 - "Love your neighbor, Love your enemies"	Mt. 22:36-40 - "Love the Lord...love your neighbor."
Jn 3:16 - "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son"	
Jn 13:34; 15:12 - "new commandment...love one another.."	
Jn 15:13 - "Greater love..than that he lay down his life."	
Rom 5:8 - "God demonstrates His own love...While we were still sinners Christ died for us."	
Rom 13:10 - "love is the fulfillment of the law"	I Cor 13:1-13 - "...the greatest of these is love"
Gal. 5:22 - "fruit of the Spirit is love..."	Eph 5:25 - "Husbands love your wives"
I Jn 4:8,16 - "God is love"	

This love is more than a feeling. It always accompanies action. It is faithful and sacrificial. It is how God the Father loves His Son. It this love for us that caused God to send His beloved Son for our salvation. Those who have received God's love cannot help but love each other. Christ's love for His church and His church's love for Him is to be reflected in the way that husbands and wives love each other. This Christian love flows from the heart to loving deeds. It is this love that will last forever. One day our faith and hope will be fulfilled when we are in heaven, but love will remain for eternity. We will live in God's love and our perfect love for each other.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Don Hougard

Be not o'er-mastered by thy pain,
But cling to God, thou shalt not fall;
The floods sweep over thee in vain,
Thou yet shalt rise above them all;
For when thy trial seems hard to bear,
Lo! God thy King, hath granted all thy prayer:
Be thou content. (Paul Gerhardt)



*"I have told you these things,
so that in me you may have
peace. In this world you will
have trouble. But take heart! I
have overcome the world."
John 16:33.*

This month I would like to look at a word that occurs about a dozen times in the New Testament. It is the word that means to **"Take heart"** and to "be of good courage." I find this to be one of the most comforting words in the entire Bible. Here are a few of the times when this word is used in the New Testament.

- -In Matthew 9:2 Jesus told the man who was lowered on the mat through the roof, *"Take heart son, your sins are forgiven."*
- In Matthew 9:22 Jesus told the woman who was suffering from hemorrhaging and touched His garment to be healed, *"Take heart, daughter, your faith has healed you."*
- In Matthew 14:27 the disciples were afraid when they saw Jesus walking on the water toward them, but He said, *"Take heart, it is I, don't be afraid,"*
- One of my favorite verses of the Bible is John 16:33 when Jesus told His disciples, *"In this world you will have trouble, but take heart! I have overcome the world."*
- In Acts 23:11 Paul was put into prison for his own safety after a riot broke out in Jerusalem. That night the Lord stood by Paul and said, *"Take heart! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."*
- In 2 Corinthians 5:6,8 Paul gives us courage when we are frustrated over the aging process and fear death, *"Therefore we always take heart and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We take heart, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord."*
- In Hebrews 13:6 we are encouraged to keep our lives free from the love of money and to be content where it says, *"So we take heart saying, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?'"*

There are many things in this world that could cause us to despair. We struggle with sin, temptation, sickness, trouble, persecution, worry, weakness, grief, and death.

As Christians we are able to take heart in the face of such trouble. We can live confident lives because in Christ we have the forgiveness of sins. He is always near as our helper. He has filled our hearts with His Spirit. He has overcome the world and assured us of the gift of eternal life through His own resurrection.

The thing that I have always appreciated about the hymns of Paul Gerhardt is this confidence which those hymns exhibit in Christ in the midst of all of the trials of this life. In fact, he wrote an entire hymn entitled, "Be Thou Content," which could also be a translation from the German "Gib dich zufrieden," as "Take heart." One of the verses of that hymn is printed above.

While other people worry and grieve the smallest things in life, God enables us to take heart in every situation because we are certain that nothing can ever separate us from God's love in Jesus Christ our Lord. What a precious gift of God it is that we can "take heart" in every situation!



“Wives submit to your husbands.” Ephesians 5:22

That verse probably got your attention! Submission is not a popular concept in the 21st century. Yet, it is an important biblical attitude. This month I would like to look at the Biblical word for “submission.” The Greek word *hypotasso* means “to subject oneself voluntarily.” Here are some examples: (The primary sections are in Eph. 5:21ff, Tit. 2:9ff, and 1 Pet. 3:1ff)

Romans 13:1 – Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities. (1 Pt 2:13, Tit. 3:1)

Colossians 3:18 – Wives, submit to your husbands. (1 Pt 3:1; Eph 5:22; Tit. 2:5)

1 Peter 2:18 – Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect. (Tit.2:9)

1 Peter 5:5 – Young men, be submissive to those who are older.

Ephesians 5:21 – Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

At first this sounds foreign to us. Who would willingly submit themselves to other people? But then we remember that this was the attitude of our Lord. Paul writes in Philippians 2:5ff, “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place...” Christ submitted Himself to the will of His Father, but He also submitted Himself to the will of Mary and Joseph. Luke writes in Luke 2:51, “He went down to Nazareth with them and was submissive to them.”

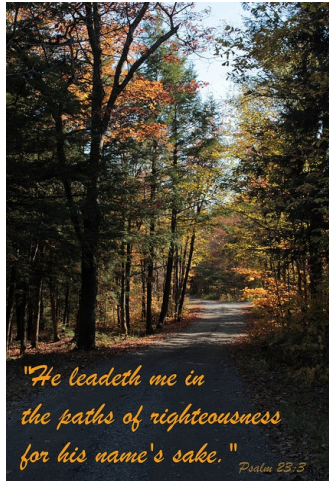
Christ lived a life of submission on this earth. He submitted to the will of His Heavenly Father and His earthly parents. He submitted Himself to God’s Law and the laws of man. By doing so, He saved us from our rebellion against God’s will. His perfect obedience rescues us from our sin. He humbled Himself under God’s mighty hand, and His Heavenly Father raised Him up.

As Christians our attitude is to imitate the humility of Jesus. When we serve others, we are serving the Lord. Paul also calls on husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church (Eph 5:25) and masters to treat their servants well (Eph 6:9) There is a mutual respect and love when we serve the good of each other. But even when others treat us harshly, Peter writes that it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. When we do so, we are like Jesus, whose innocent wounds have healed us from our sins. (1 Pet. 2:19ff) In the end God will also raise us up with His mighty hand.

It takes faith to humbly submit ourselves to each other and to our Lord, but in doing so we are following the footsteps of our Savior As Christians, we commend our lives to the will of God, and we find that our submission to Him and His will, is not foolishness, but that God’s power and mercy always raise up those who walk in His ways. Submission is counter cultural, but it is the Lord’s blessed path for our lives.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Don Hougard



This righteousness of God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. (Romans 3:21)

Because we celebrate the Reformation of the church this month, I would like to look at the Biblical words for **righteousness**. It was when Martin Luther finally understood the meaning of the word “righteousness” that he found comfort and peace in the Gospel of Christ.

The Hebrew word for righteousness is צֶדֶק (*tsedeq*) and appears over 500 times in the Old Testament. The Greek word is δικαίος (*dikaïos*) and appears over 200 times in the New Testament. It is one of the most important words of the Bible. The root word for the Hebrew means “straight,” and means someone who walks a straight path. It is also contrasted with the wicked for which the root word means someone who departs from the path or gets lost.

Psalms 145:17 declares, “The Lord is righteous in all His ways and loving toward all he has made.” That is a good definition of righteousness. It is to be loving and good in all that we do. Job described his righteous works this way, “I put on righteousness as my clothing; justice was my robe and my turban. I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy; I took up the case of the stranger. I broke the fangs of the wicked and snatched the victims from their teeth.” (Job 29:14-17) In Psalm 37:21 it states that the righteous lend freely. In Amos the unrighteous take advantage of the poor, take bribes, and deprive the poor of justice in the courts. (Amos 5:11-13) In Jeremiah 22:3 God says, “Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.” In all of these verses we see that the righteous love their neighbor.

However, there is another aspect to righteousness in the Old Testament. It is also coupled with God’s salvation and deliverance. Psalm 143:1 prays, “In your faithfulness and righteousness, come to my relief.” Isaiah 41:10 promises, “Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

The New Testament continues these thoughts. Jesus spoke to the moral aspect of righteousness when he said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets... For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Mt 5:17,20) In Romans 3 Paul writes, “There is no one righteous, not even one... There no one will be declared righteous through the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.” (Rom 3:10,20) None of us is perfectly righteous, but the promise of Romans 3:21 is that God gives us His righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus was the only perfectly righteous person who ever lived, but He offered His righteous life in our place on the cross, so that He could clothe us with His saving righteousness. In 1 Corinthians 5:29 Paul writes, “God made Him who has no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” By faith we have been clothed with the righteousness of Christ and we live in this righteousness by our good works in Christ. (Eph 4:24) We are never perfect in this world, so we look forward to the time when Christ will return and bring us to the home of righteousness. (2 Pet 3:13)

May God give each one of us joy in God’s gift of righteousness through Jesus Christ our Savior and enable us to walk the straight path of His ways until His calls us to the place of His perfect righteousness.

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:27 NIV)



November can be a depressing month. The days are getting darker; it gets progressively colder; the trees are bare; and we often get our first snow. It is also the season of the church year in which we remember those whom we have lost and the end of the world. It all seems very depressing, so it is good to look at the biblical word for "peace" in this month.

Many of us probably know the Hebrew word for peace, "shalom." Here are some of the places where it and its Greek counterpart "eirene" are used:

Numbers 6:26 the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace."

Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Luke 2:14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to men."

John 16:33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

John 20:19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" (Cf. verses 21,26)

Romans 1:7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. (All of Paul's letters begin with the same greeting.)

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Ephesians 2:14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,

Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 13:20 May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,

Peace in the Bible is not something external. It is a matter of the heart. On the one hand biblical peace is the attitude of our hearts toward other people, even those who have wronged us. In Christ there is peace between God and man, and in Christ we live in peace rather than in hatred and hostility toward other people. We sin against each other and fail each other. There should be disappointment and hatred, but in Christ there is forgiveness and peace. Christ has reconciled us with God, and in Christ desires that we live in peace with all people.

Biblical peace is also the attitude of the heart despite all of the threats around us. Everything in life might seem to be falling apart. There might even be good reason to fear for our own lives; yet, Christ gives us a peace of heart. The disciples in the upper room were a good example of this. They were afraid that they would be martyred because they followed Jesus. He came and said, "Peace be with you." In the end, they were all martyred; however they were able to find peace in the wounds of their risen Savior. Those wounds assured them that nothing could ever separate them from God's love.

May God grant us His blessed peace of heart and mind to know that we are reconciled with God and our brothers and sisters in Christ, and to know that there is no trouble that can ever separate us from God's wonderful love in our Savior Jesus Christ.

Glory to God in the highest." (Luke 2:14)



The Christmas and Epiphany seasons are times when we are often confronted with the **glory** of God. When Jesus was born, the angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest." John writes, "the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the Only Begotten, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (Jn 1:14) John ends the story of Jesus' first miracle when He changed water into wine with these words, "He thus revealed His glory, and His disciples put their faith in Him." (Jn 2:11) Isaiah prophesied this part of the Lord's ministry when he wrote, "See darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and His glory appears over you." (Is 60:1,2)

The Hebrew word for glory is *Kabod* in the Old Testament, and the Greek word in the New Testament is *doxa* (δόξα) from which we get our word "doxology." The Hebrew word literally means "heavy." At that time money was weighed. To be weighty meant to have power, wealth, and honor. God lives in His divine glory. In the book of Revelation there are many songs in which the angels and saints in heaven are giving God the glory that is due His name. For instance in Revelation 7:12 they sing, "Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be for our God for ever and ever. Amen!" To give God glory is to acknowledge the honor that belongs to Him.

It is impossible for sinful man to see the glory of God. When God came to the people of Israel in the desert, he concealed His glory in a dense cloud. (Ex 19:9) Moses once told God, "Now show me your glory." God answered, "You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live. (Ex 33:18,20) When the prophet Isaiah saw God's glory, he cried out, "Woe is me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD almighty." (Is 6:5) Then one of the angels took away his sin, so that he would be worthy to stand in God's presence.

That is where Jesus comes into the picture. God's glory was concealed in the flesh of the Christ Child in Mary's womb. In Christ God's glory came to earth. Every now and then Jesus would give a glimpse of that glory through His miracles. Ironically, Jesus' hour of glory on this earth was when he was raised up, not on a throne, but on the cross. (Jn 7:39; 12:23) By atoning for our sins with His innocent suffering and death, He won eternal life in God's glory for all who know Him as Savior. (Jn 17:1-5) Jesus was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. (Rm 6:4) and ascended to the right hand of glory. (Acts 7:55)

As sinful people we fall short of God's glory, but we are justified by God's grace in Christ. (Rm 3:23,24) As Christians we also have our crosses to bear in this life, but we share in Christ's cross, that we may also have a share in His glory. We know that our present sufferings cannot even begin to compare with the glory that will be revealed in us." (Rom 8:17,18) Already now the good works in our lives give God glory. (Mt 5:16; 1 Cor 10:31) Our bodies that will be sown in dishonor will be raised in glory (1 Cor 15:43), and for eternity we will live in the glory of God. (Rv 21:23)

Here we see the marvelous love of God. We made ourselves unworthy of the glory of God, but through faith in His Son, our Savior, God invites us, "Come." (Rv 22:17) He invites us to repent of our sins, trust in His grace through His Son, and be partakers of His eternal glory.

When we think of such marvelous love, we cannot help but sing with the angels on Christmas, "Glory to God in the highest!"



“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

This month I would like to look at the biblical words for “**life**” because “Life Sunday” falls in January. The two most common words for life in the Bible are חַיִּי (chai) in the Hebrew and ζωή (zoe) in the Greek.

Throughout the Bible it is clear that God is the author (Acts 3:15) and the giver of life. Life began as a gift of God when he breathed the breath of life into Adam’s nostrils, and he became a living being. (Gen 2:7) It was sin that brought mortality. (Gen 2:19) It has also shortened our lives on earth. (Gen 6:3) and made them bitter (Gen 2:17) It was through sin that death began its reign since the time of Adam. (Rom 5:14,17)

Even in this fallen world, natural life is a gift of God from the time when we are conceived, (Job 10:12) However, this life is fleeting and meaningless unless God redeems it. (Eccl. 6:12)

That is why God’s gift of life in Christ is such a special gift. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. John uses the word “life” many times in His Gospel. He begins by telling us that in Christ was life. (Jn 1:4) In the section on the Good shepherd Jesus tells us that he came so that we may have life, and have it to the full. (Jn 1:10) He is the Bread of Life, (Jn 6:35), the resurrection and the life, (Jn 11:25), and the way, the truth, and the life. (Jn 14:6). It is through faith in Him that we cross over from death to life. (Jn 5:24) He has destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light. (2 Tim 1:10)

Christ destroyed him who holds the power over death. (Heb 2:14) He did this by bearing all of our in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; By his wounds you have been healed. (1 Pt 2:24) But the grave could not hold him. He rose on the 3rd day as the firstfruits of all who have fallen asleep. (1 Cor 15:20)

Through baptism in His name (Rm 6:1-6) we die to sin and are raised to a new life in Christ. Our sins are washed away, and we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ through faith. This life is a present gift of God. God has made us His dear children (Eph 5:1ff.) whom He loves and protects, and we want to walk as God’s children, living a life of love as Christ loved us. (Eph 5:2)

God’s gift of life to us in Christ is eternal. All who believe in Him shall have eternal life. (Jn 3:16) Through faith in Christ, we have the gift that God meant for us in the beginning, eternal life in His glory. May God grant it to each one of us.

Your in Christ,

Pastor Don Hougard