

The Bible's promise to those who believe is that they do not come into judgment for sin, but has passed from/out of death to life. (see Rom. 8:1). Their vindication is present in the here and now. They are no longer "dead in their sins" before God the Father, but are made "alive in God" through faith in Christ (Rom. 6:11). Though this is a present state it has **future implications**. Those who do not come into judgment will not come into judgment on the last great day either. The saying points to their permanent safety. To have eternal life now is to be secure throughout eternity. Anyone who hears and believes has eternal life. But the words also constitute an invitation, a challenge. They are a call to hear Christ, (repent of sin, and respond in faith) (Morris, L. (1995). *The Gospel according to John*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament (280). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.).

Andrew Olsen writes: "Jesus is not merely the one who brings or saves Life, but **is Life itself**; Life personified. He has Life in himself and does not merely 'rescue' people from imminent death (as in days of the Old Testament narratives), but has enough Life as to be able to rescue people such that they have passed even beyond death."

### What to do next?

1. **Think** Do you consider Christianity like a life-help app, only used when needed in life? Life app or life centre? How do you regard Jesus - Life coach, or life source and life's Lord? How might Jesus' life in you affect meaning and purpose for your life? What might meaning and purpose look like in the life of a Christian disciple? (consider John 13:12-17; Eph. 4; Romans 12)
2. **Act** We know in life what is needed for a healthy human heart (e.g. no smoking, healthy heart diet, exercise, etc.) What actions/disciplines can help us to nurture a healthy spiritual "heart" that aligns purpose and meaning with the help of God's Holy Spirit?
3. **Bear Witness** How might you go about describing the meaning and purpose of your life if you were surveyed tomorrow on the street?
4. **Serve** How does this stream of grace in the Bible direct your energy for the sake of the community in which you live, work or study?

The members of St. Michael's Anglican Church acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation as the traditional custodians of this land, and pay our respects to their elders past, present and future.

## 7 STREAMS of GRACE



Do you remember the board game, Battleships? Opponents would each place toy ships on their own plastic grid running from A-J and 1-10 hidden behind a screen? One player calls out a coordinate like B6, and the opposing player looks at the toy ships on their hidden board to discover a "hit" or "miss".

Our sermon series *Seven Streams of Grace* (SSoG) divides the whole Bible up into a huge rectangular grid, similar to the old board game. A large poster hangs in the church space or can be found on-line. The rows represent the "streams" or themes of God's saving grace that run through the valley and rivers of the whole Bible, and the columns represent the "eras" (milestones in Biblical history) in which each book of the Bible is set. This Bible study is part of the journey and can be used as a devotional study, but is best suited to group discussion. Join us on this journey along the rivers of grace down the ages for life, for love and for our salvation.

- Steve Webster

### Bible Study Notes for session #1 LIFE

#### 1. Warm Up

- ⇒ If surveyed, what might your neighbours say to the question "What is the meaning/purpose of life?" What do you think might drive, or lie behind the various responses?
- ⇒ What purpose and meaning for life do you see evident in the following current news feeds (divide the items to 3 groups & feedback):
  - ♦ <https://www.wired.com/story/what-random-walks-in-multiple-dimensions-teach-you-about-life/>
  - ♦ <https://honey.nine.com.au/2018/04/11/12/40/ufc-star-says-mma-fighting-saved-her-life-after-contemplating-suicide>
  - ♦ [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/life-liberty-and-the-pursuit-of-naked-self-interest/2018/04/10/4b056298-3cd9-11e8-a7d1-e4efec6389f0\\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.790d395db4c0](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/life-liberty-and-the-pursuit-of-naked-self-interest/2018/04/10/4b056298-3cd9-11e8-a7d1-e4efec6389f0_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.790d395db4c0)

- ⇒ What differences could emerge in life from these two different philosophies?
- ♦ Tony Robbins, life-coach to the privileged, says: “don’t think about what life does **to** you, but what life does **for** you?”
  - ♦ Rick Warrens book The Purpose-Driven Life begins with the first line, “It’s not about you?”



## 2. Searching the Bible

- ⇒ Read Jesus’ statements in *Luke 9:24,25 & 17:33* and discuss the confronting challenge he makes to the “normal” course of life.

Consider the stream of LIFE on the SSoG chart (or the summary here).

What messages about life are taught along the journey from start to finish?

How do they differ from/align with from many philosophies of life on show in the survey discussed earlier?

### The Stream of LIFE through the Bible

➤ <b>Origins</b>	God-breathed LIFE	<b>Gen. 1:26-27</b>
➤ <b>Ancestors</b>	God’s power over LIFE	<b>Gen. 22</b>
➤ <b>Exodus</b>	God’s LIFE-saving purpose	<b>Exod. 11-15</b>
➤ <b>Kings</b>	The costliness of LIFE	<b>2 Samuel 24</b>
➤ <b>Wisdom</b>	God the rescuer of LIFE	<b>Psalms 18; 107</b>
➤ <b>Prophets</b>	LIFE to come	<b>Isa. 25; Ezek 37</b>
➤ <b>Remnant</b>	God sustains LIFE	<b>Esther</b>
➤ <b>Church</b>	LIFE in the believers	<b>Rom. 5:5; 8:10,11</b>
➤ <b>End Time</b>	Our LIFE hid with Christ in God	<b>Rev. 20; Col. 3:3</b>

The whole sweep of the bible’s message tells us that...

- ♦ God gave us life, but it was truly spoiled
- ♦ God loved his creation and made a promise and formed a people and a plan
- ♦ God sent His Son into our world through that plan to make life new and eternal
- ♦ God offers us a re-connection through faith in Christ that makes life full and abundant, and
- ♦ God will bring all of life to a grand fulfilment

## 3. Considering Jesus

The most important era for study of LIFE (not listed above) is that of Jesus’ earthly ministry. Regarding “LIFE”, hear these claims of Jesus from the Gospel of John:

- ♦ John 1:4, 5:26, 10:10, 11:25

Take time to study these events:

- ♦ Jairus’ daughter (Luke 8:40-56)
- ♦ The widow of Nain’s son (Luke 7:11-17)
- ♦ Lazarus (John 11:1-44)

## Going deeper

In John 5:17–26 Jesus makes **five unmistakable claims** to full equality with God the Father: 1) in His person (vss. 17–18,26), 2) in His works (v. 19–20), 3) in His power and authority (vss. 21,25), 4) in His judgment (v. 22), and, 5) in granting the gift of eternal life (v. 24).

Vs 24 “Eternal life”

Jesus closed this section of His discourse by reaffirming His authority to give eternal life to whomever He desires. The Lord underscored the statement’s monumental significance by introducing it with the solemn formula in verse 24 “amēn, amen” (truly, truly). He identified those who receive eternal life as those who hear His word (or message) and believe the Father who sent Him. As always in the Scriptures, divine sovereignty in salvation is not apart from human responsibility to repent and believe the gospel. The word here is a PERFECT ACTIVE INDICATIVE; that which has happened in the past and has now become **a state of being**. (Uutley, R. J. (1999).

Vol. Volume 4: The Beloved Disciple’s Memoirs and Letters: The Gospel of John, I, II, and III John. Study Guide Commentary Series (53). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.)

Eternal life is more than duration; it has a unique quality and character all its own. Eternal life is **God’s own life**, infused with His vitality and moral character, granted by grace to us through spiritual birth (see John 3). Those with this life can have new and peaceful fellowship with God and purposeful relationships with other believers, for we are linked to Him and one another by eternal bonds (Richards, L. O. (1991). The Bible reader’s companion (electronic ed.) (682). Wheaton: Victor Books.).