

**Livin' the Life**  
**The Eternal God Promises Eternal Life**  
**John 8:48-59**  
September 2, 2018  
David Taylor

We are looking at the life of Jesus and the life he promises in our series on the Gospel of John, Livin' the Life. Today we look at The Eternal God Promises Eternal Life from 8:48-59. Please turn to John 8:48-59 and read along or listen as we read God's word. Jesus is still speaking to those who believed in him. He insults them when he tells them that they do not really believe in him. This only increases the opposition between Jesus and the Jews, but it is out of this opposition that two great realities come out, the deity of Christ and the promise of eternal life to those who keep Jesus' words.

Last week we saw that Jesus refuted every attempt the Jews made to prove that they are children of Abraham and children of God. Children of Abraham would not seek to kill him and children of God would love him. So, now the Jews resort to attacking him personally, calling him a Samaritan and claiming to have a demon! Samaritans were considered heretics and half breeds, a mix of Jews and Gentiles, from six hundred years before the time of Christ, had their own form of the Old Testament, and of worship. The accusation of having a demon is because what he is saying sounds crazy their understanding of the Jewish faith.

What I find amazing is that as offensive and resistant they are, Jesus continues to pursue them. The Father sent him on a mission and his life was oriented around that mission. God is seeking and saving the lost through the person of Jesus. He was relentlessly loving and merciful toward his enemies. Even his harshness was so they would see their sinfulness. No one ever sees their need for salvation unless they see their sinfulness. God by nature seeks and saves the lost. This is why we are working towards giving 20% our income to the mission of God.

Jesus denies having a demon and objects to their dishonoring him. He does not seek his own glory; God seeks it and God is also the judge (49-50). That is, he honors and glorifies God his Father in his life and ministry and God in turn, honors and glorifies Jesus, his Son. In the Old Testament, only God is glorified but in the New Testament, Jesus takes the spotlight of glory and honor that belongs to God. God the Father glorifies the Son, ultimately through the cross and exaltation and ascension. In the New Testament, Jesus takes the center stage of glory. This is one of the reasons why Jesus came to be seen as God, alongside God the Father yet they still embraced monotheism. Jesus is warning them. My Father is the judge and in opposing me, you oppose the one committed to glorifying and honoring me. In rejecting Jesus, they are rejecting the God of Abraham. This stings because they claim to be children of the God of Abraham.

But Jesus did not come to judge (3:17; 36). The first coming of Jesus was bring salvation; the second coming of Jesus will be to execute judgement. That first window will close and when he comes the second time, he will execute judgement toward his enemies, those who have rejected him. Our response to Jesus determines whether we face eternal joy and happiness or eternal torment and misery. It will be far worse than anything you can imagine. Then Jesus offers a promise to those who face God's judgment.

Look at 51, if anyone keeps my word (then) he will never see death (51). Why does he not just say believe or come or receive, words he has used already? I think he is clarifying the nature of saving faith. Obedience is necessary. Not an obedience of works but an obedience of faith (Rom 1:5). The fruit of genuine, saving faith is a life of obedience. So, if you keep Jesus' word you will never see death, only life. He is not saying you will not die, but not see death. There is a difference. The Jews are convinced that he is crazy (52). They respond that Abraham and the prophets died yet you say if anyone keeps my word they will never taste death (52). They think Jesus means literally but he means spiritually. Then they go on, are you greater than father Abraham, the father of our faith? He and all the prophets died. Who do you think you are (53)? They cannot imagine Jesus being greater than Abraham but that is precisely where he is going.

Do you think about death and dying? Do you ever contemplate your own mortality? Those are good things to think about. Some of you probably don't want to think about it. You are uncertain about it and so you avoid it. Death is all around us. Death is a constant reminder of sin and that God sent Jesus on a mission, and Jesus sent us on a mission (20:21). That is, he has sent each of us on the same mission the Father sent him on. Do you believe that your life is meant to revolve around God's mission? Mission defines Jesus and it defines us.

So Jesus promises that those who obey his word do not see death, you die but no you do not experience death. You go from this experience of eternal life to perfected eternal life. Eternal life is by definition ongoing (11:25-26; 5:24). Our bodies die but we go on. Scripture describes death for the Christian as sleeping (1 The 4:14) until God raises us to eternal life that is perfected (1 Cor 15:52). In the new birth God makes us spiritually alive to him which is eternal life. But eternal life by nature secures life after death and cannot be reversed because, by definition, it is eternal or unending. It is eternal because it is generated and sustained by God. So, we do not see death because when our physical bodies die, we go immediately into the presence of Jesus until our bodies are resurrected in the last day and we really live, for all eternity. Our bodies will be perfected and our life with God will be perfected (Heb 12:23).

Then Jesus gives this indictment, you claim he is your God but you do not know him. I know him and I keep his word (54-55). They claim to know God but they don't because they are rejecting Jesus. Then Jesus refers back to Abraham. Your father Abraham rejoiced and was glad that he would see my day (56). Jesus claims to have personal experience of Abraham. The only way he can know this is because of his preexistence (1:1). So, they ask, you have seen Abraham (57)? Then Jesus makes one of the clearest statements about his deity, before Abraham was I am, a direct claim to be God (58). Jesus is greater than Abraham because he is God, identified with the God of Abraham, who has existed from all eternity. They know this so seek to stone him but Jesus left because it was not his time to die.

Jesus can make this promise that those who keep my word will have eternal life and never see death because he is the great I am. Only an eternal God can promise eternal life.

