

Union United Methodist Church

Sermon Outline: **Victorious Living in Christ 2: The Eternal Life of God in Us**

October 2nd, 2022. Pastor Michael Larbi

Readings: **Genesis 1:1-4, 26-28, John 1:1-13**

1. Energy & Light

Light is a manifestation of energy.

There are different kinds of light, some visible to the naked eye, some not.

Nature of Light

The European Space Agency (ESA) has some precise explanations that might help us:¹

- "Visible 'light' is a form of radiation."
- Radiation is "energy that travels in the form of electromagnetic waves."
- Radiation is "a flow of particle-like 'wave-packets', called photons, that travel at the speed of light (about 300,000km per second)"

The ESA article also explains that, while many describe light in terms of brightness and color, Physicists prefer

- 'intensity': "how much energy can be extracted from a bunch of photons" (brightness)
- 'wavelength': electromagnetic energy travels in waves (like waves of the sea). Wavelength describes distance between waves

Einstein & Nuclear Energy

In the early 20th century, Albert Einstein gave the world his special theory of relativity. You may have seen Einstein's famous equation:

$$E=mc^2$$

¹ https://www.esa.int/Science_Exploration/Space_Science/Energy_light_radiation_temperature

The mass (m) of a body at rest multiplied by the speed of light squared (c²) is equal to the kinetic energy of that body (E).²

In simple terms, the energy that a body has when it is resting (potential energy) can be converted into a great amount of energy in motion (kinetic energy).

This simple discovery led to the creation of the atomic bomb, nuclear weapons, and nuclear energy.

God's Power Manifested at Creation

Given what we now know about energy, light, etc. it should not be hard for us to see that God's infinite power, ability, and innate energy could create the world in six days as described in Genesis.

God surely knew about E=mc² before Einstein did! We are still discovering the laws of physics God has already put in nature. As Einstein put it, "The Lord God is subtle, but malicious he is not."

If humans can harness the known laws of physics to create weapons that can wipe out a city in minutes, or energy to provide electricity to large cities, there is no question that God is able to do infinitely much more.

2. We Were Created in God's Image, Receive Eternal Life in Christ

We must never forget that we are created in God's image. We have within us a measure of God's nature and ability.

Through the sin of Adam and Eve, we became corrupted and died spiritually. Through Christ we are redeemed and receive eternal life.

"The first man, Adam, became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit." 1 Corinthians 15:45 NRSV

² See a simple technical explanation at <https://www.britannica.com/science/E-mc2-equation>

3. The Life in Jesus, the Light of all mankind

John 1 - NIV

4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

- Greek, the original language of the New Testament, has 3 words to describe life: *bios*, *zōē*, *psuchē*³
- All three words are found in the NT, and the context helps with their meaning.
 - ***psuchē*** - means our **“natural life” or “personality” that everyone is born with.** It is also translated “physical sustenance”⁴
 - ***bios*** - the word Biology comes from this word. It **describes a person’s “livelihood” or “physical sustenance.”**⁵
 - ***zōē*** - this is used to denote **“divine, eternal life” - the life of God**⁶
 - Examples:

“In him was life [*zōē*], and that life was the light of all mankind.”

John 1:4 NIV

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life [*zōē*].” John 3:16 NRSV

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life [*zōē*], and have it abundantly”

John 10:10

“Now this I affirm and insist on in the Lord: you must no longer live as the Gentiles live, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God [*zōē*] because of their ignorance and hardness of heart.”

Ephesians 4:17-18 NRSV

³ Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words: 200 Greek and 200 Hebrew Words Defined And Explained

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

- All three words are used in 1 John⁷
 - 14We know that we have passed from death to life [zōē] because we love one another.** Whoever does not love abides in death.
 - 15All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that **murderers do not have eternal life [zōē] abiding in them.**
 - 16We know love by this, that **he laid down his life [psuchē] for us—and we ought to lay down our lives [psuchē] for one another.**
 - 17How does God's love abide in anyone who has **the world's goods [bios]** and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?
- NRSV

4. The Life of God in Us (Christians)

- **Jesus said, as his disciples, we are the light of the world. The life of God in us [zōē] is the light of the world**
 - Jesus said about himself:
 - “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”**
 - John 9:5 NRSV
 - But then he said to his disciples (including us)
 - Matthew 5:14**“You are the light of the world.** A city built on a hill cannot be hid. 15No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16In the same way, **let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”**
 - In other words, let the life of God within shine
 - “Let” means we can stop the light from shining...
- **What happened when you and I were baptized?**
 - “We have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”**

⁷ Ibid

How was Jesus raised from the dead?

By the power of the Holy Spirit:

“God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places”

Ephesians 1:20 NRSV

- **As baptized children of God, we have the same divine power of the Holy Spirit in us**

“If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.”

Romans 8:11 NRSV

5. **Harnessing The Life of God in Us**

- **Rejoice, Pray, Give thanks**

1 Thessalonians 5 (NIV)

16 Rejoice always,

17 pray continually,

18 give thanks in all circumstances;

for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

- **Abide in Christ, Let the Word Abide in Us**

31 Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him,

“If you continue in my word,

you are truly my disciples;

and you will know the truth,

and the truth will make you free.”

John 8:31-32 NRSV

“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” John 15:7 NRSV

6. God's Expectation of Us: Results

o Light of the world

Matthew 5:14 **"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. 15 No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."**

How did Jesus let his light shine?

o His prayer life and dependence on the Father

Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, **the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise.**" John 5:19 NRSV

o His life of obedience to the Father

Jesus is our ultimate example in this

o Bear Fruit

"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples." John 15:8 NRSV

o Holy Living

o Fruits of the Spirit Galatians 5:13-22

o Be Witnesses of Christ

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 NRSV

o Bear Prayer fruit

"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." John 15:7 NRSV

o Make disciples

"go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" Matthew 28:19 NIV

This is the most important task of all disciples of Christ (all Christians) and the Church