

This Is How We Know: Eternal Life
Easter Sunday
April 1, 2018
Lynn Haven UMC

Introduction

And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life. I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life. (1 John 5:11-13 NLT)

Eternal life has certainly been one of the most debated topics since the dawn of man. What is the meaning of life? Why are we here in the first place? What happens when we die? As Christians we may not have the answers to all of these questions, but we do trust in God's Word that tells us everyone who claims Jesus to be their Lord and Savior and accepts Him into their lives will spend eternity with Him. We may not know the hour or day of our reunion, but because we know His name, this is how we know we are eternally saved.

Digging Deeper

Eternal Life...

Is received by believing in the NAME of Jesus.

- Do names hold power? Shakespeare famously wrote in Romeo and Juliet, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet." If you're familiar with that story you know that names play a very important role in the lives of those families. Perhaps we could call a rose something else and not change a thing about it, but the name of Jesus possesses the power to deliver us from the sins of this world. The mighty name of Jesus represents a Savior who has conquered death and delivers the promise of eternal life for all who believe in Him. Think about long it took you to come up with a name for your favorite pet (or perhaps your favorite child☺). Did you spend hours researching the origin and meaning? If the significance of a name matters so much to you, don't you think it matters even more to God? Perhaps that is why He stressed the importance of not taking His in vain when he handed those stone tablets to Moses all those years ago. How many biblical examples can you recall where Jesus gave a new name to a disciple? How did the meaning behind their new name directly correlate to His purpose for their ministries?

Is experienced in the here and NOW.

- Jesus said: "I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life." (John 5:24 NLT) We already have eternal life so how foolish it would be to wait until we think we are nearing death to start living like we believe it. Pastor Rick Warren recently published a short devotional about the realities of Heaven. In it he says, "Heaven is designed for you and me. God didn't design Heaven for himself. He designed it for us. When God started thinking about Earth, he started thinking about Heaven. The Bible says God made the entire universe because he wanted a family to spend eternity with. Heaven is the place he's designed for his family. We weren't meant to live on Earth. You and I were made for Heaven!"

So if Heaven is a place on earth, we can get a taste of what the future holds for us right here and now! Then, when death does come, it simply becomes a door to even more life. This is how we know eternal life, it begins the moment we believe in Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit so it is experienced right here and now. Have you ever thought of where you are now as being where you may end up forever, but with a newfound ability to see the splendor that lies beyond the “veil” hanging over our human eyes? Have you ever experienced what you believed to be evidence of heaven through the beauty of God’s creation?

Is NOURISHED through discipleship.

- “So you must remain faithful to what you have been taught from the beginning. If you do, you will remain in fellowship with the Son and with the Father. And in this fellowship we enjoy the eternal life he promised us.” (1 John 2: 24-25 NLT) Eternal life is experienced when we maintain a vital relationship with Christ. What are some daily habits you consider to be a critical part of developing a deeper level of discipleship? Has anything been preventing you from doing these things? Is there someone that inspires you to live a more passionate, Christian life? What are their most compelling attributes?

Conclusion

We cannot wait until we die to look for eternal life, because it’ll be too late. Instead, we must receive it by believing in the name of Jesus, start to live it in the here and now, then nourish it through discipleship so it will grow and can be shared with others. If there was ever any doubt that eternal life is ours for the taking, it was erased 2000 years ago when Eternal Life came walking out of tomb. Because He lives, we too can live – abundantly, eternally, and victoriously.