

I AM: Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life - Lesson Summary

There is considerable debate around what constitutes life. When we consider the tragedy of abortion, there are individuals who would argue that life is not present until the baby's first breath. Others, myself included, believe that life begins at conception. So, does that mean it's possible to have life without breath, or breath without life? While these are complex questions, I believe that Jesus' statement that He is the resurrection and the life does not have to be.

As we've considered Jesus' 7 "I AM" statements, it's important to remember that Jesus is not saying He is like these things. Jesus doesn't say, "I am like the bread of life. I am like light. Or, I am like a gate and good shepherd." Instead, He declares that He is these things. They are not simply reflected in Him but they are who He is. When Jesus declares He is the resurrection and He is the life we see that life is ultimately defined by Christ. As we consider this statement more deeply, I believe there are really two transitions that we must focus on throughout Scripture. First, the breath of life and the arrival of death. Secondly, the removal of death and the arrival of the breath of resurrected life.

The breath of life is first mentioned in Genesis when God speaks creation into being. In a sense, God's breath creates everything we see. However, it's in *Gen. 2:7* that we see God breathe into man the breath of life. There is something unique to man and woman created in God's image. While the animals had the breath of life (*Gen. 7:22*), only man received it directly from the Lord in such a deeply personal way. God's physical touch in His creation of man is a beautiful picture of His relationship with us. Yet while we received the breath of life, we quickly lost it.

When you consider the Bible's account of Satan's interactions with Adam and Eve, Satan plants seeds of doubt and confusion. He convinces Adam and Eve that they have not received full life. He claims that God's holding out on them. He is keeping them at a distance by not allowing them to be like Him completely. Sadly, like you and I would have, Adam and Eve believe Satan's lies and pursue what they believe will give them even greater life only to find out that it brought death. Our first account of death in Scripture occurs when God has to kill animals to use their skin to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness and shame. In this instant, death became our reality. You could sum this up by simply saying, God breathed life into man but we surrendered it.

But God! These are two amazing words in Scripture. So often in Scripture we are presented with a reality that is beyond our ability to fix until God intervenes. Despite our choosing death over life, in a beautiful display of His love for us, God sends Jesus in order to be the resurrection and the life that we lost. While death had arrived, One greater than death would come. Through His life, we could experience true life again. Consider the account of Jesus on the cross in the Gospel of Mark. *Mark 15:37-39* reminds us that it was Jesus who gave His last breath. God's breath on man at creation brought life, but our actions brought death. Jesus's action of surrendering His breath at His death brings life. The transformation that we find through Jesus is amazing. *Eph. 2:4-5* tells us that "God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, made us ALIVE with Christ even though we were dead in our trespasses. You are saved by grace!" The gravity of this truth should overwhelm us. We have been made alive with Christ! Who once was dead is now alive. For those of us who have received the call of Christ, we have received the breath of life and are truly alive. Have you experienced the breath of God through Christ? Are you living and breathing in a way that would reflect his reality?

Discussion:

Read *Romans 5:12-21*

- 1) In light of these verses, why is it so significant that Jesus is the resurrection and the life?
- 2) What does this passage say we've received because of Jesus' death and resurrection?