

## Hidden Treasures 201

*"Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." Matthew 7:7*

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### THE LIFE WAS MADE MANIFEST

We can read in 1 John 1:1-3:

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life - the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us - that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

"The life was made manifest", we just read. We have seen it! Our hands have touched it! That is John's good news to us. It has to do with something concrete, something that can be touched with our hands. And it is this concrete Christian life that we want to point out to you today.

In Jesus' days, the Jews were awaiting the coming of the Messiah. But when Jesus came, there were only a few who recognised the Messiah in Him. The rest had false expectations. They expected the Messiah to come in human magnificence and with a distinguished outward appearance. But we see that He did not fulfil their expectations. He came as a servant and not as a ruler. It was His task to reveal this life. What actually is this life? "... learn from me for I am gentle and lowly of heart," Jesus said. Meekness and humility, that is life. Love, purity, patience, yes, all godly virtues - that is life.

"Learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly of heart", Jesus said. He did not say: "I have something important to say to you about meekness and humility!" No, His testimony was: I am gentle and lowly of heart.

That was the life that was made manifest, and that which the apostles could touch with their hands, and what they preached about. Before their own eyes they saw love, goodness, and righteousness. However, because most of the people were not expecting this kind of life and because they had no desire for such a life, they could not recognise the Messiah in Jesus.

And how is it with us? Yes, how is it with us; with those who call ourselves believers?

What is our desire? What are our expectations? Many are expecting signs and wonders. Many people are looking for impressive messages and preachers. But in the midst of these high expectations, they usually have no vision for nor take any interest in this life that Jesus wanted to reveal to us, a life that He is still offering us today.

Because there is so little hunger and thirst for this life, one doesn't see nor hear this powerful message; that is, in fact, that the life has really been manifested. Usually, one does not even see the way to this victorious life, and to the sanctification which Jesus made possible for us. One does not see the glory about which the Apostle Peter spoke when he said (2 Peter 1:3+4): "His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

It is our desire to strengthen the hearts of those who hunger and thirst after this life, those who have a desire for the same life that Jesus revealed, a life that can be touched. What is then the mystery of this new life? The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:10 :

"Always carrying in the body the death of Christ, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our bodies." Here we see once again the goal of the message of the New Testament, namely that the life of Jesus really is to be revealed in our bodies.

Just think, what a message! What a gospel! That is why the life was manifested; it is to be revealed in my body and in your body!

In the previously quoted verse, the condition for this to happen comes forth. Paul said: "... always carrying in the body the death of Jesus." Here we touch upon the real mystery. Jesus not only came with a new life, but He also came with an entirely new death. He taught us: If a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, only then will it bear much fruit. The new life is a resurrection life, a life that can only be lived at the expense of our self-life. "Yet, not my will, but Thy will be done", was Jesus' prayer to the Father.

John 1:4 : "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men", wrote the Apostle John. Children in Sunday School sing that we ought to be a little light for the Lord. There are probably a lot of us who would like to be a little light in this world. Let us not forget that the life is the light of man.

Christ's virtues are revealed in our bodies only when we are lights. This reminds me of

the story of a young man who was listening to a discussion about which Bible translation was the best. When he had listened to it all, he said: "I am of the opinion that my mother's translation is the best." Yes, he had a God-fearing mother and we can understand that he actually wanted to say that his mother revealed the life that the Bible speaks about. May God give grace to everyone who has a desire to be such a "walking Bible translation". In this way we can be, so to speak, the Word of God on two legs. Goodness, patience, and thankfulness will be something which can be touched by everyone.

Where this life is revealed, fellowship comes forth. People who are religious can have the same opinion about a matter, or believers can have the same teaching. But, oh, how difficult it is to come to true fellowship, to real brotherhood and unity! Only a resurrection life brings forth fellowship, only the life that is a fruit of the death of the self-will.

Let us do as Paul admonished Timothy (1 Timothy 6:12) : "... lay hold on eternal life." Whoever wants to grasp the life must first be gripped of it. We would like to recommend that each one of you to read in the Word of God with the prayer in your hearts: that the life which the scripture witnesses to would also be revealed in you.

"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil," (Deuteronomy 30:15) said Moses to the people of Israel on one occasion. Life and goodness form a pair. Yes, they are one and the same thing. Death and evil also form a pair. Yes, they are, likewise, one and the same thing. When evil (for example, anger and impatience) comes forth, one reveals, very simply, death and not life. But praise be to God that His Son came to destroy the works of the devil, so that the life of Jesus could be revealed in our bodies!

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