

“The Purpose of the Bible” John 20:31  
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During this Easter season, let’s get back to the basics by exploring the Bible in fresh ways. Have you ever asked yourself what is the purpose of the Bible? St. John’s Gospel at least tells us what its purpose is. In the Gospel of John, Chapter 20, verses 30-31, we read: “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may life in his name.” The Bible sets out to give the good news: that when we place our trust in Christ alone, surrender our lives to him, and follow him, we will have life, and have life to the fullest. Let’s look at three of the “basics” about the Bible.

First, the Bible informs about the nature of Jesus. Very simply, the Gospels show us the humanity of Jesus – the real man who shared our living and dying human nature. The apostle Paul, in his New Testament books, supplies additional theological truth about Jesus – that Jesus is truly the Christ, the Son of God. The early Church fathers – taking the Gospels and Paul’s theology into consideration--insisted on the inseparability of the two natures of Jesus of Nazareth, the human and divine. The risen Jesus is the crucified Jesus, and his glory means the whole significance of the cross is ratified by God himself. We may not understand how Jesus can be both human and divine, but we must accept it is true, because the Bible tells us it is true.

Second, the Bible informs us about believing in Jesus. In the Gospel of John, in Chapter 21, Jesus tells Peter to “follow me.” This following is how Peter shows he believes in Jesus, and in the “following” Peter obeys Jesus. Following implies trust, and trust implies trustworthiness. Once again, we might not understand everything about Jesus, but we must follow this Jesus of Nazareth if we believe in him, because that is what the Bible, God’s Word, tells us to do.

Third, the Bible informs us that by believing and following Jesus we will have life. Folks, this means we get to have eternal life, and eternal life starts in the here and now, not after we die. The good news or gospel is that God loves us as we are right now. His redemptive love is so complete that it tenderly embraces us, and while we are being held in God’s embrace, we then desire him so much to remain in that embrace that we allow him to transform us, and then we – being so transformed – simply no longer desire to go back to life as we once knew it. God does not love us if we change; God loves so that we are able to change. And God’s love is an extravagant love so freely given that when received by us it causes a change in us that sets us totally free – free to have “life in his name.”

If you can accept what you may not fully understand about the nature of Jesus, and if you can believe and follow this Jesus of Nazareth without knowing every detail in advance, then right there in the loving embrace of God, whose arms are nailed open on the cross so they can receive you, you will find real life, the kind of life that makes you “full.” And may God bless you as you become an Easter person!