

Questions About How can Eternal Life Sleep in Death & John 6:63

By Pastor Ed Anderson

Didn't the Lord Jesus come to give us eternal Life? Isn't that the Gospel message? How could eternal Life sleep in death? How are we to understand John 6:63?

King James Bible

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

New King James Version

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

Answer:

You're absolutely right to focus on **eternal life** as the heart of the gospel. Jesus *did* come to give us eternal life — not just in the future, but starting **now**. But understanding *how* that life interacts with death — and what Jesus meant in **John 6:63** — requires careful study of Scripture's **whole testimony**.

Let's explore it together:

1. Did Jesus Come to Give Eternal Life?

Absolutely. Jesus said:

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."— *John 10:10*

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."— *John 17:3*

"He who hears My word and believes... **has everlasting life**, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."— *John 5:24*

So yes — eternal life **begins now** through relationship with Christ, not merely after death.

2. Then How Can We “Sleep” in Death If We Have Eternal Life?

This is where we distinguish between:

- **Spiritual eternal life:** now, in our relationship with God (John 17:3)
- **Immortality of the body:** future, at the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:52–54)

Though believers have *eternal life in Christ*, we still experience **physical death** (as sleep) while awaiting the final **resurrection of the body**.

“The wages of sin is death, but the **gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus...**”—
Romans 6:23

Yet even Paul, filled with the Spirit, said:

“It is appointed for men to die once...” — *Hebrews 9:27*

But for the believer, death is **temporary** — a sleep (John 11:11–14), not the end.

“If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.” — *1 Thess. 4:14*

In other words: Eternal life is assured spiritually now, but bodily immortality is fulfilled at the resurrection when Jesus returns.

3. What Does John 6:63 Mean?

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” — *John 6:63*

Key truths here:

- The **Holy Spirit** is the One who brings true, spiritual life — not mere religious rituals or external efforts.

- Jesus' **words** (especially in John 6 about eating His flesh and drinking His blood) are not to be understood carnally but **spiritually**.
- The "**flesh**" (human effort, literalism, or ritual without faith) cannot give life.

This verse affirms that **real life** comes through **union with Christ** by faith and the **indwelling Holy Spirit**, not through the mere **appearance of religion**.

4. Then What Dies — If I Have the Spirit in Me?

- Your **body** dies because of sin's effect (Romans 5:12)
- Your **soul** (personhood) "sleeps" in death (1 Thessalonians 4:13)
- The **Holy Spirit** (God Himself) does not die or cease — but you, as a person, **rest in God's hands** until the resurrection

Summary in Simple Terms:

Truth	Explanation
Jesus gives eternal life	Yes — it begins now spiritually and continues forever
Believers still die	Yes — physically, but temporarily (like sleep)
John 6:63 means	True life is spiritual, not from flesh; His words are life-giving
Why death still happens	Because immortality is promised at resurrection (1 Cor. 15:53)

Final Thought:

Eternal life is not just **duration** — it is a **quality of life in union with God**. While death may interrupt our earthly journey, **it cannot interrupt our relationship with Christ**. That's why Jesus said:

"Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" — *John 11:26*

He meant that **death has no power** over those who belong to Him — because He will raise them up at the last day (John 6:40).