

RESURRECTED LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST MEANS LIFE FOR US

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One of the most serious temptations faced by true Christians is for one to lose sight of the Scriptural basis upon which their faith rests, and to then walk by feelings, experiences, (or by what they see in themselves). That always brings trouble (of course), and it makes one become doubtful spiritually, and, unable to live a continually victorious and overcoming life of faith. (Heb. 10:38) says, "the 'just' shall live by faith".

Indeed, there are very few people in the denominational Christian world who understand what real faith is all about. We need to be reminded time and again, because our former ideas of faith were, that it consisted of some kind of a pious feeling or self-righteous spiritual condition within ourselves, that would justify us or commend us to God, causing Him to do things for us.

Ideas like that (which are prevalent in the human heart), are just the opposite to what real faith is, because real faith in God works exactly the same as faith in man. Faith can only be exercised through a spoken or written word. To have faith in God in this present age, means to believe what God's written Word says (especially about the sacrifice of His Son in our behalf, and His resurrection to life to conquer the power of death and Satan). Nowhere in the Bible are we instructed to look and see how we feel (or what we are of ourselves), but to always go by what God says in His Word. Faith will always be in what a person believes (about some thing or person), so to believe and to go by what God's Word says, is what it means to 'walk by faith'. In other words, we are to consider what God says in His Word, and not what we can see or feel, nor are we to accept the doubt that Satan will always tempt us to accept. Abraham believed what God promised him, and God inspired him with the faith to follow the directive that He had given to him (without doubting). The 'faith' (shown by Abraham's actions in obeying God), was a gift that God inspired him with, as we are told (Ephes. 2:8) "For it is by grace that you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves. It is God's gift and is not on the ground of "merit", (not received because of a person's actions, but simply because they believe God's Word, He will inspire them with faith to enable them to follow it).

Because one believes God's 'Salvation Message' about His Son, Jesus Christ, and what He accomplished for us through His sacrificial work of Atonement,.... part of God's gift is to inspire them with 'faith' to believe for and to accept His gift of 'grace' (that He extends to all who will truly 'believe' His Message). As the verse says (of a 'believers' faith to believe God's Word and accept the 'grace' that God extends),.."it is God's gift, and not on the ground of (self) merit."

"It makes no difference what kind of experience we have had, if we continue to depend on that experience and found our faith on it, our condition will only get worse; but, if we change our attitude and begin to believe and walk in the light of what God's Word says (no matter how difficult or seeming hopeless a place we are in),...the whole situation will change at once. We will pass from weakness to strength, from a defeated life to a victorious one, from sickness to health, from trouble to peace, and from want to prosperity." (Because we believe God's Word).

For an illustration of faith,..if you were told of something that had happened, and you believed what was said, a mental picture would be presented to your mind through the words that were spoken to you. That would be faith in a spoken word,... seeing something in your mind that someone had described (or told you about), instead of seeing it with your eyes or feeling it with your hands.

Or, if someone would write to you describing some place they were visiting, telling what it was like, and you believed what they wrote, you would have the same type of mental picture conveyed to your mind through those written words. That would be faith in a written word.

Even when we literally see something with our eyes, a mental picture forms in our mind that portrays characteristics of what we are seeing, (whether rough or smooth, soft or hard, etc). So, if we can neither see nor feel a thing, but we are only told about it, there comes to our mind that same picture as though we had actually seen or felt it. We see the thing through the person's word, just as real as if we had it in our hand.

Faith is believing something through a written or spoken word, instead of actually seeing (or feeling it) as the human heart naturally wants to do before believing something. (Many times, we have heard and used the expression "seeing is believing" in human affairs,.. however, in spiritual matters, God wants us to first 'believe' His Word so that He can make it come true in our life (and in that of our loved ones), and more importantly, receive added 'spiritual blessing'.)

Believing something through a spoken word was all that faith consisted of when Jesus was on earth in person. People saw things through a spoken word. We have been left 'exceeding great and precious promises' (the Bible says), also many statements of what the 'resurrection life' of Christ means, (and we are to see it through that written Word). We cannot be too definite (nor too sincere) about wanting to see clearly what it really means, because the moment we realize what the resurrection of Christ (to life) really means to us, we can have the full benefits of it to take possession of our life. (2 Pet. 1:3-4) "as 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."

All we have to do is to "look and live", because the very moment we believe and accept the statement of God's Word concerning the death of Jesus Christ and His resurrection to life and power,..(the shackles of unbelief that had bound us, will fall off, and we will enter into rest and victory),...just by believing the statements of God given us in His Word about His Son.

(As another illustration), the Bible is a 'will' and 'testament'. Beginning with Jesus Christ, it is called "New Testament". We may not always realize what the word 'testament' means. The word 'testament' means 'will'... that is an 'inheritance left to another. When anyone makes a will and dies without changing it, that will is put into effect. It goes through the legal process and the money (or whatever it might be), are turned over to one of more people mentioned in that 'will'. That is the same as a testament, and the 'testator' is the one who makes a 'will' or 'testament'.

The word 'testament' means that the 'testator' has already died,.. and in the New Testament, it means that Jesus Christ died, so the 'will' has already gone through the legal processes. The things mentioned in the 'will' (or 'testament') have already been turned over to the ones mentioned in the 'will' (and that means us, as believers). We have had all these things given to us (through God's) "exceeding great and precious promises". Therefore, the moment that we 'believe' what His 'will' says, we will not only begin to realize what our possessions are 'in Christ', but we can enter into receiving them at once, (by faith).

As further illustration(taken from the world's viewpoint) suppose you were heir to some property or money from someone living in a distant place. You would not know a thing about it until a copy of the 'will' was sent to you, telling of the amount of money or property that had been left to you. As soon as you believed what that 'will' said, you would begin to have a sense of possession, and begin to feel as rich as the information in that letter (or 'will') had stated. You might begin to plan how you would take possession(and what you may do with those riches).

That is what God's Word is. It is His 'will' (His testament), to inform us of our 'inheritance' in Christ. Our only responsibility is to believe what God is telling us in His 'will', and the moment that we truly believe it, we will be able to act by faith accordingly, and enter into the possession of our inheritance. [It is a promised inheritance that has been made valid by the Atonement Blood of Jesus Christ, and we should never surrender that Atonement inheritance to the devil (because of the doubt and fear that he often uses to try to rob us of those Blood-bought privileges and divine rights) (while he also tries to destroy our faith in God.)]

God, Himself, cannot keep us out of our inheritance (the late Pastor noted); because it has been left to us and it has already passed through the legal processes, out of God's hands into ours (according to His promises). We know from (2 Cor. 1:20), "For all the

promises of God, whatever their number, have their confirmation in Him (Christ); and for this reason, through Him also our "Amen" acknowledges their truth and promotes the glory of God through our faith."

We all have a free-will choice, however, and we can refuse to enter into the possession of it (if we choose). We can believe Satan and doubt God, and never get any of our inheritance in Christ,.. or.. we can believe the plain statements of God's Word,... believe what God has to say about the death and resurrection to life of Jesus Christ... and enter into possession of our inheritance right away and begin to act accordingly.

The human heart is mired in unbelief, until one believes what God's Word says about the death and resurrection of His Son, to Life, ... then the condition of their heart changes drastically (as God inspires that person with faith), and they will begin to act accordingly. (Matt. 3:8) says, "Therefore let your lives prove your change of heart." The life of a true 'believer' will portray a 'life of trust' (instead of a life of rebellion and unbelief).

To truly understand what the resurrection of Christ really means to us today, can be the beginning of having conditions of the 'Garden of Eden' restored in our life. It is most important that we understand the representative aspect of Christ's atonement sacrifice. That is the greatest aspect,... the death and resurrection life of Christ, via representation.

A representative is having someone else to act for you,... (to take your place). It could be compared to giving someone else the right to cast your vote for you, and that person would be your representative.

Jesus Christ died as a representative in our place. We were 'born rebels', with a rebellious spirit in our heart, and we were subject to death (as the natural penalty) because of that rebellion (or treason) in our heart toward God). In the Bible, treason was punishable by death.

In reality, we are God's own possession and His property, and He is the only One to say what we shall be (or where we shall go and what we shall do). We became subject to death through the sin of Adam, but God (in His great mercy and love), sent His Son Jesus to die in our place. His death by representation, bore the penalty (or took away the penalty), that we had inherited from Adam. As a result, we are exempted from the punishment of our treason. We are freed because Christ's blood pardoned and cleansed us, and His resurrection to life to set us free from the bondage of sin and Satan.

When Jesus Christ represented us in his death, He not only bore our sin and guilt, but all the results of sin as well,... that is, (diseases, troubles, poverty, and every other bad thing). When He died, it was the same as if we had died (to pay the penalty for our sin and the rebellion of unbelief). (2 Cor. 5:14-15), "For the love of Christ overmasters us, the conclusion at which we have arrived being

this—that One having died for all, His death was their death, and that He died for all in order that the living may no longer live to themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again."

If one had passed away (the Pastor said), they would be free from sinning, free from sickness and pain, from all poverty and worry. We often hear it said of a person who passes away, "now their troubles are over"... Well, when Jesus died, it delivered us from trouble of every kind, and from every work and power of the devil (exactly the same as if we had actually passed away two thousand years ago).

No one could convince us that a person in the grave has had diseases, pain, trouble, or worry (since they passed away), because they would be free from those things. In the same way, Jesus' death and resurrection has made us just as free from sin, sorrow, disease and evil of every kind (which we had inherited from the first Adam).

The sixth chapter of Romans explains very clearly for us, that His death was our death. (Rom. 6:10-13), "The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to Him as instruments of righteousness."

We want to be definite in asking God to make that very plain to us, because when we truly understand what Christ's death and resurrection has done for us, we (in faith on what we believe), actually become free from the bondage of sin and rebellion, and from Satan's power and influence, as well as from all his diseases, aches and pains, sorrow and burdens. It is just the same as if we had died to pay the penalty for our sin, because Christ's death was in reality our death, our dying in relation to sin (and every bad thing that we had inherited from Adam).

God's Word (from Genesis to Revelation) has tried to make that fact plain to us, that the death of Christ sets us free from all evil. When Abel offered a lamb as a sacrifice, he received full deliverance from the results of Adam's fall. (Heb. 11:4), "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain (because it was a 'blood sacrifice',...representative of Christ's sacrifice),... "through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead, still speaks."

Cornelius tried to live an overcoming life; he prayed, fasted, gave alms, did everything a human being could do, and did it in a very pious, human way. If we had known Cornelius in his day, we probably would have said of him, "If ever a man lived who would get to Heaven after he died, I think he would". The real facts are, if he would have died in that condition, he would have gone to the 'Lake of Fire'.

God never lets a person go to the Pit without giving him an opportunity to be saved, so He sent an angel from Heaven to tell

Cornelius (and his household) how they could be saved, simply by believing and accepting what Jesus Christ accomplished for them on the Cross,... to pardon, cleanse, and free them from sin and its results.

God has not changed in the least, so if (in the same way), we try to find out what we should know about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God would send an angel to tell us (if he had to), just as He did for Cornelius. (Matt. 5:6), "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be completely satisfied." (That is God's promise to us, if we will only believe to obey what His Word says).

God wants no one to perish, but for all to come to repentance and be saved, through the Atonement sacrifice of His Son, and His resurrection to Life. (That is the key... to repent, believe, and receive the Holy Spirit. It is in God's divine order and plan for our deliverance through the death of His Son, and His resurrection to life, so that we may be raised to Life with Him. If we do not believe that He has risen to Life, then our faith is in vain.)

So, in summary, "THE RESURRECTED LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST; MEANS NEW SPIRITUAL LIFE TO US."

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SOME MAIN POINTS ARE:

1... We should believe God's Word about His Son because that is His 'will' (or 'testament') for us, and, if we believe, God will inspire us with faith to follow Christ.

2... The most important thing for a Christian to understand, is that Jesus Christ shed His lifeblood to redeem and free us from sin, and to pay the price for our forgiveness. When He was resurrected to life from the grave, He conquered death and Satan, so that we might also be raised to life to be with Him. That is the basis for our faith, for that for which we hope for.

3... For us to truly understand that Christ represented us in His death, and what His resurrection to life really means to us, can turn our whole life around, and we begin to have the conditions of the Garden of Eden restored in our life.

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The First Century Gospel Church/Philadelphia