

INTRODUCTION

The New Testament writers regularly remind us of what Paul refers to as the “unsearchable” riches that are ours through Christ’s death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation. It was Paul’s desire for the churches at Ephesus and Colossae to get a grasp of who they were and all that they had in Christ, and to presently appropriate it and apply it to their lives. That should be the longing of every pastor. It remains my desire for you, as well. That is the purpose of this series. The resurrection of Christ truly is a present reality!

We see:

THE DECLARATION WHICH IT MAKES (Rom. 1:4)

The resurrection of Christ declares Him to be who He really is: The eternal Son of God! His resurrection proves that He has fully satisfied the just demands of holy God regarding man’s sin and atonement. His resurrection proves that He has fully defeated, disarmed, and disgraced Satan and all his demons (Col. 2:15). The grave could not hold Him. Corruption and decay could not touch Him!

THE JUSTIFICATION WHICH IT PROVES (1 Cor. 15:16, 17)

For the believer, the resurrection of Christ proves our sins are gone. It’s just as David wrote:

As far as the east is from the west,
So far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Ps. 103:12)

But not only is the believing sinner forgiven through faith, God also imputes His righteousness to our account, whereby we stand before Him justified—declared righteous.

THE MOTIVATION WHICH IT SUPPLIES (1 Cor. 15:30-32)

Christ’s resurrection and our future resurrection give us the motivation and the courage to keep on keeping on.

THE SANCTIFICATION WHICH IT ASSURES (1 Cor. 15:33, 34)

Paul writes:

Be not deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.” Awake to righteousness, and do not sin. (1 Cor. 15:33, 34a)

I've heard some folks say that once they come to Christ, they aren't sure whether-or-not they can live the Christian life. The bottom line is this: we *can't* live the Christian life by ourselves. But once we come to Christ, we aren't required to live the Christian life by ourselves. God has already given us, and continues to give us "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3).

In the very first sermon of this series I mentioned that Christianity primarily is a life: Christ's life made living in the hearts of men and women, boys and girls, who come to Him in repentance and faith. So we have the *Savior*. He has also given His Holy *Spirit* who indwells every believer. He teaches us and guides us into all truth. He has also given us the *Scriptures* as our compass and North Star, to keep us on spiritual course and to point us to our heavenly home. He also gives us the *saints*, other believers who will encourage us, pray for us, teach us, and when necessary, admonish us to keep on keeping on.

I know no other way to say it, except that when we fall into personal sin, we have absolutely no one to blame but ourselves. But as believers, when we do fall into sin,

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 Jhn. 1:9)

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin [grace is not a license to sin]. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. (1 Jhn. 2:1, 2)

The story is told concerning Martin Luther, when one day Satan, the great accuser, had been hounding him of the sins of his youth, the sins of his manhood, the sins of the flesh, the sins of the spirit, the sins he remembered, and the sins he had forgotten. And then Satan laughed in his face and said, "There you are. All your sins you ever committed." Martin Luther said, "Write one more." "There isn't one more to write," Satan responded. "Well if there isn't one to write, write across them all, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses me from all sin.'"

THE EXPECTATION WHICH IT PROVIDES (1 Pet. 1:3)

For whatever reason, there always seems to be those who are gloomy and pessimistic when it comes to the church. I call them the Naysayers; the Darth Vaders of the church. Although they call themselves Christian, they seem to always be living on the dark side. They have very little, if any joy. Their demeanor is usually sour. They seem to always be critical, grumbling, or complaining about something. They seem to always have a black cloud hanging over their head—wherever they go and whatever they do. But as followers of Christ, we have every reason to face life with Christian optimism because of a risen Savior. This is not a trouble-free life, but a worry-free life.

The apostle Peter writes that,

[We have been] begotten again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Pet. 1:3)

Such hope is "actively alive," because Jesus is alive! This hope is a continued expectancy of blessings and joy in *this* life and in the life to come. This is Christian optimism and assurance for the present and the future.

Note Romans 8:32:

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with [by means of] Him also freely give us all things?

God “not sparing” His own Son is an absolute guarantee that He will not spare any other blessing for our well-being. Jesus is the fountainhead of all other blessings!

Note Romans 5:10:

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

If God did so much for us while we were His enemies, how much more will He do for us now that we are His sons? Or, to put it another way, if God did so much through the death of His Son, how much more will He do for us through the life of His Son?

In order for a will to be in effect, there must first of all be the death of the Testator. Christ died, so that we might be recipients of His New Covenant—His last Will and Testament. But wait! He also lives today as our Executor, to guarantee that we receive the full benefits of our spiritual inheritance!

Paul also writes in Romans 8:23:

Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

Anthony Hoekema writes:

The giving of the Holy Spirit means the breaking in of the future into the present, so that the powers, privileges, and blessings of the future age are available through the Spirit. We can actually taste of the ‘powers of the age to come.’ What the Spirit gives is only a foretaste of far greater blessings to come. We await the fullness of our inheritance; we are awaiting a much greater harvest to come. But the present possession of the Holy Spirit as the firstfruits makes us certain that we shall someday reap the full harvest. (Anthony Hoekema; *The Bible And The Future*).

Perhaps that’s what Fanny Crosby had in mind when she wrote:

*Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.*