

INTRODUCTION

Although the resurrection of Christ is an actual past historical event and although Christ's resurrection is the guarantee of the believer's future resurrection; the resurrection of Christ is A PRESENT REALITY!

As we consider Christ's resurrection we discover the following:

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 His work on Calvary has fully satisfied the just demands of holy God regarding man's sin and atonement. According to Isaiah 53:11, God saw the labor and travail of His Son's soul on Calvary and was fully satisfied. Both John and Paul refer to Christ as the "propitiation for our sins" (1 Jhn. 2:2; 4:10; Rom. 3:25), which means that Christ and Christ alone is the only sacrifice that fully and perfectly meets the just demands of holy God regarding man's sin. The Hebrew equivalent is "mercy seat." Christ bore our judgment (grace) so that in-turn He becomes the believing sinner's mercy seat.

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

An occupied tomb means an empty message. But an empty tomb means a life-giving and life-changing message. For the believer, *the resurrection of Christ proves that our sins are gone!*

[Christ] was delivered for [because of] our offenses, and was raised for [because of] our justification. (Rom. 4:25; KJV & NKJV)

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

The hope of resurrection gives us the courage to endure affliction. Paul continually risked his life for the cause of Christ. When Paul refers to having "fought with beasts at Ephesus," he could be meaning literally or figuratively. In Acts 19 while Paul preached at Ephesus and folks were turning from idols to faith in Christ, the idol maker's trade union nearly went out of business. So Demetrius, a silversmith, instigated a riot. Paul said, "Why would I risk my life if there's no resurrection?" Christ's resurrection and our future resurrection give us the motivation to keep on keeping on.

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

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ. (Eph. 1:3)

[According to] His divine power He has given us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness. (2 Pet. 1:3a)

Through Christ's death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation, He has already "blessed us with every spiritual blessing" and has already "given us all things that pertain to life and godliness." The resurrection should lead us to desire a continuously holy and victorious life and gives us the power to do so. In Philippians 3:10 and in reference to Christ, Paul said, "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection." In his sufferings Paul relied on the power of the resurrected, ascended, and exalted Christ. It was during Paul's sufferings that Christ was greatest displayed to him and through him. This was Paul's earnest expectation: "That Christ be magnified in [his] body, whether by life or by death" (Phil. 1:20b).

Let's take a look at Ephesians 1:19-21, which I hope is truly an eye-opener. In fact that was Paul's desire: that their eyes would be opened to the spiritual riches and resources that was theirs in Christ.

And what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power [*dunamis*] toward us who believe, according to the working [energy] of His mighty power [powerful power; i.e., the Holy Spirit] which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Eph. 1:19-23)

[Then we come to]: And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins. (Eph. 2:1)

As believers, when we read these verses we realize that we have already experienced the resurrection power of Christ:

And what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power [*dunamis*] **toward us who believe**, according to the working [energy] of His mighty power [powerful power; i.e., the Holy Spirit] which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. (Eph. 1:19, 20a; emphasis added)

Through faith in Christ the believing sinner has been brought out of spiritual death into spiritual life. This new life—Christ's life living in us—through the power and presence of His Holy Spirit, energizes and enables us to live for Him and empowers us to serve Him. Paul's desire—to be more accurate, God's desire is for the believer to live according to the sphere of the resurrected, ascended, and exalted Christ. We are to live according to whose we are and what we are in Christ.

CONCLUSION

I am so thankful for God's grace: God's unmerited favor toward undeserving sinners. I am so glad that we have been "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:25). Although salvation is free and has already been paid-in-full through Christ's death at Calvary, it does not mean that salvation is cheap. Grace has never been, nor ever will be a license to sin. Note the words of Paul:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6:1-4)

To say, "I'll go ahead and sin and then ask God to forgive me," is to abuse God's grace. But to say, "I don't have to sin because God has already forgiven me," appreciates and applies God's grace. God's grace enables the believer to say, "No!" to sin to begin with (cf. Tit. 2:11, 12). Jesus died to give His life for us; He now lives to give His life to us!