

THE RESURRECTION IS PRACTICAL

The resurrection is practical. In fact, there is nothing more practical on earth. Resurrection means to be raised from the dead. So, even though one dies, it does not mean the end. It makes death temporary. It is our hope. After all, Christians do not get ahead in this life because of their faith.

We live, if we believe in Christ's forgiveness, knowing that we shall be raised by Christ. No matter what happens here, the spectre of death, our enemy, cannot overwhelm our victory in Christ. Sin has already been defeated and grace reigns in our Lord. And even now we live in Him, partaking of His righteousness, having been grafted into His body. So Christ's resurrection is not just a historical fact, or a long-ago memory, distant from our daily life. We who are dying and oppressed by sin are offered Christ's life - His own resurrection glory. So whoever turns from sin to Christ, truly lives. We do not necessarily live longer, suffer less, or have fewer difficulties - in fact, it is usually the opposite. But if we are raised, we suffer temporarily in the hope of life with Christ after we die. We shall be resurrected, following the pattern of Christ. This is the antidote to death, and gives meaning to everything in this sinful world. Without the teaching of resurrection, there is no true Christianity or salvation, but only an earthly and miserable pile of death: *"If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied"* (1 Cor. 15:19). We suffer for a short time, knowing that our goal is life eternal, which is only by the resurrection from the dead to glory.

Christ's resurrection is your resurrection. Jesus is life itself, in whom none are lost: *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"* Our faith is not in a dead god, or a far away deity who cannot listen or help us - we have a specific God - Jesus, the Lord, who lives for us. His life is now ours, being communicated in the Word of forgiveness. Our faith is in God who is good and kind, because Jesus the Son of God took our place under the penalty of death, and rose from humanity's death for us. His life is now ours. His resurrection is our salvation from death and every last shred of guilt. Death is not your concern now, nor anything evil in this world.

So no one can gainsay your resurrection life. It is safe in Christ, having been already accomplished. No doctor can say you will not live forever. No problems or suffering can tell you that your life is over or not worth living - because Christ died and rose to never die again, in your place. Death is defeated for you. Christ's resurrection marks the completion of your salvation. Life is disbursed in the Word of God you hear. It is yours to have and to hold onto. It changes how every day is lived. No longer are you defeated and oppressed by sin, Christ has won life and it shines through in all we do, living in victory over hell and all punishment. We are rescued, since resurrection is certain and Christ does not lie. It is our life and the fact of our existence to be used against all troubles, evils, and the stings of death we face daily. It is eminently practical, because Christians are presented with death, the result of our sin, every day. Satan will not let us escape temptation and our flesh is with us until we die.

We do not see this victory right now, since we live by faith. We wait for it, knowing that Christ died for our sin before He was resurrected. So do not try to escape death or think it should be avoided for as long as possible. We need death, because without it, sin reigns. There is no resurrection without there first being a death to sin. You were baptised into Christ's death for all sin, in order that you would be raised with Christ also. *"For if we have been united with him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him... So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus"* (Rom. 6:6-11).

We die daily, continuing in our baptism, to live with Christ as resurrected. But no one dies to sin without gaining something much more than problems and daily dying. We live for Christ, not to get ahead in this world or find an easier life, but to please the Lord Jesus, who is the Lord over death. We serve and obey Him, without fear, already being resurrected in our mind - dead to sin and alive to Christ. We simply await the resurrection of the body, already having the news of peace with God. For we know who will judge the living and dead - Christ, who is our Lord. And He cannot deny us, since we are His right now who has already destroyed death and shattered its dominion. So we live for Him in thanks, not being afraid of suffering for doing right. His call alone gives true confidence in the face of all trials.

What we look and feel like now is not how things after the resurrection will be. Because true life in God does not end or disappoint, we must have an endpoint that lasts. This is what the Christian hope rests in: the resurrection beyond all sinful, earthly things.

Because Jesus lives, you also will live, since you will be raised to glory - like Christ is now. Christ is risen - let this be the most practical fact of your life, each and every day.