

## **The Resurrection Makes All the Difference**

‘A preacher was visiting with his congregation after the Sunday morning service when a determined-looking woman approached him. Obviously displeased, she said, “Pastor, as a member of the pulpit committee, I was hoping that your sermons would excite our congregation”. The new pastor replied, “You’re right, I did say I could excite this congregation, but I did not say I could raise them from the dead!”’

Apparently, that congregation lacked life! And apparently, it was also beyond resurrection! At least in the opinion of that new pastor. Which, if true, would be a most serious state of affairs. Because, without resurrection, nothing else matters. And that fact is not opinion. It is the verdict of the Apostle Paul, inspired by Holy Spirit, Who is the final Word on absolutely everything. Indeed, this was the purpose, the goal, the end result, of God’s entire plan of salvation.

God, Adonai, is Life. Is existence itself. He has no beginning, no end. God just is. He is everything. He created all things, visible and invisible to us. And then He created living things to inhabit all the vastness of space and time He had made. It was by no means in the least in any way haphazard. He knew everything He was doing. It was all according to His plan, be-

cause He always sees the end from the beginning. Because He knows Himself. And He is everything, and nothing exists apart from His power, His life-giving force. From the pages of the Bible, and from the revelations and prophecies He gave to many humans over the millennia, we know that He created a race of angelic, spiritual beings. But He knew ahead of time that many of them would rebel against Him. He also knew ahead of time how He would remedy the situation. The entire plan for all time and creation was already meticulously laid out to the very last detail in His omniscient mind. He created these spiritual beings to live with Him. To “attend” Him. To “serve” Him, so to speak. But they’re not really servants. They were made for God to love. And for them to love Him back. While they are separate from God, at the same time, they must be with Him. For the very reason that true separation from Him would cause them all to cease to exist. Which is why, in the revelations of Heaven and the throne “room-universe”, of God, we see it is filled for as far as the eye can see and beyond, with all kinds of angelic beings. For God is life and love. And all life, love and light flow from and is sustained by Him.

While we do not know all the details, assuming we could even conceive of all the wonders of God’s creative purposes, He created physical matter. He created all that which we humans can see, experience, touch, handle, and manipulate. We, too, are physical beings. With bodies that are both physical, material, while at the same time, also having a spiritual nature, as it were,

which is from God's Spirit, which is His very breath giving us life, making this physical matter alive. We truly live and move and have our being because of Him, because His breath of life, our spirits, connect us to Him. When our bodies physically die, our spirits return to Him Who gave them to us at the instant of our being made alive. Unlike the spiritual, angelic-like beings God had made before us, we were molded from this very earth on which we live. From the dust of this planet, He formed us, infusing into us His very Own image in ways that no other of His created beings were given. After forming Adam, God breathed of His Own Spirit into Adam's body, and Adam became a living being. God then made Eve in the same way, but by taking a rib from Adam's body, so that all humanity from then on would come from Adam.

We are all Adam's descendants. We are all "flesh and blood". Our physical life force resides in our blood. When our blood ceases to move, when it is spilled out of our bodies onto the earth, our physical bodies die. But the Spirit of God that had been breathed into us, creating and giving life to our spirits, never ceases to exist. Our spirits live on eternally, for God is God. He never dies. He was never born. He has always been, and always will be. As He is eternal, and as our spirits, which look just like us, just without the hard, solid physicality of our bodies, as our spirits came from Him, our spirits also never die. But, because we were always made to be jointly physical and spiritual beings, we are not fully "alive" until we are joined with our resurrected bodies.

Paul gave a stern lesson to the Corinthian Church. So many of them had become enamored by the impressive, spectacular display of spiritual giftings, of speaking in tongues, of spontaneous prophesying, of the sudden, unexpected words of knowledge being given which revealed the hidden secrets of the people to whom these words were given, all of this and more, attracted many of the Corinthians. They came for the giftings, and took pride in how spectacular and impressive they could be, often trying to one up each other. To be “better” in some way or other than the others. Christ Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross and His resurrection from the dead had practically become an afterthought! They were dangerously close to missing the whole point of Christ’s coming, that of having faith in Him. The whole meaning of salvation and its absolute necessity was lost on many.

That was the situation for too many of the Corinthians. And just like the Scripture teaches us that there’s nothing new under the sun, so there are some churches today that are repeating the same folly as those Corinthians. But there are other churches, far too many of them, that have so focussed on a different set of God’s gifts that they, too, have fallen into the same trap, but to an even worse state than what Paul addresses here. Many of these folks are fixated, rather obsessed, on the aspect of supposedly “serving” people. Yes, this is a gift. But, in true devilish fashion, it’s been twisted and perverted into an unrecognizable monstrosity that usually goes by the names of social justice, wokeism, ac-

ceptance, tolerance, diversity, equity and inclusion. Churches in the clutches of this deception have such difficulty understanding the rock bottom fundamentals of true faith that they have pronounced that Lord Jesus did not actually have to die for people to be saved. Even saved from what? That in order to get to God, to get to Heaven, our good intentions are all that are needed. Indeed, believing in any of the various “gods” of the many world’s religions can help us on our own way to achieving godlikeness ourselves. I recall a ministerial candidate back in the late 90s making a statement that it wasn’t really necessary for Christ to die on the cross, but it just so happened that that was the way God chose to do it. Then. Not really necessary for us nowadays!

Talk about the ultimate repudiation of Christ Jesus! The ignorance of God’s Word, the Holy Bible, is breathtaking. Indeed, it is by design. The devil’s design. To keep people from reading the Bible keeps them from learning about God’s perfect plan for salvation, and indeed, the *resurrection* of humanity, of our physical and spiritual existence. For in God’s plan, not only are we raised from the dead to new, everlasting life; along with us we bring the rest of this physical creation to renewed, unceasing life as well.

Truly resurrection is indispensable! As an exasperated Paul spent nearly an entire chapter to explain to the Corinthians, he plainly states that unless there is resurrection, unless we are resurrected to new life, unless Christ Jesus Himself had been resurrected, then nothing else matters! If only for this earthly life of a

few decades we are “saved”, to live more happily, more prosperous, more comfortably, what a crock! What a waste! Why bother? Why do we need to have faith? Why do we need to give our lives in service to the Gospel? What is the Gospel? If only for this physical life, why is it Good News? What’s good about it? Just so I can get a brand-spanking new car every year? Just so I can buy whatever I want whenever I want? Just so I can pleasure myself with whatever and whomever whenever I want? Is that happiness? The meaning of life? Well, we know the answer.

As Paul said, “if there is no resurrection, then not even Christ Jesus was raised, and our faith is then all in vain”. The resurrection makes all the difference in the world. It is NOT some pipe dream! It’s the very promise of God. It’s the very purpose of God. It’s the very plan of God from before all time and space. It satisfies in the absolute perfect way the luminous purity of the righteousness of God. It perfectly provides the way for our sin to be paid for, for God’s perfect justice to be satisfied, for us to be reconciled, permanently, back to perfect fellowship and love with our Father God Who loves us so perfectly we can’t even imagine it! For those of us who say yes to our Savior and Lord, we then become the very children of God, brothers and sisters of King Jesus, heirs along with Him of *ALL* things, of all creation, to live and reign alongside Him for all eternity, to eventually sit in judgement over even the angels and spiritual beings of God! Truly, this is our destiny. All we need do is start living like it. Now. By faith.

