

THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION (Part 2)

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1st Peter 1: 3-5; NIV)

The part 1 of this preaching explained that besides our beliefs, the resurrection of Jesus Christ has been witnessed well, and arguments against it are not very logic in the historical context. I ended with a quote from 1st Corinthians 15: 14-17 where the apostle Paul states that if Christ had not been risen, there would have been no deliverance from sin. Now, I will continue with the meaning of the event in our past, present and future according to the Scripture on top.

Resurrection power in the believer’s past

In his letter, Apostle Peter is writing to Christians who were persecuted and therefore scattered in the Roman Empire. He encourages them by praising God for His mercy of providing a new birth through the reawakening of Jesus Christ from the dead. Since his readers were new-born Christians, they had already received this inward regeneration. Up to date, when a person receives Jesus in his or her heart and is baptized, this has a great spiritual meaning. The past of the person is washed away through the cleansing of the blood of Jesus. The new life that we receive is our living hope. In Colossians 2: 12.13 Paul writes: “You were buried with Jesus in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. When you were dead in your sins (...), God made you alive with Christ.” We should not think of this as merely symbolic language. When we talk about receiving new life, we do not simply mean gaining a new perspective. The new birth in a Christian's life is an event just as real, objective and dramatic as the resurrection of Jesus, itself. The quotation on top continues that our new inheritance will never perish, but is being preserved in heaven for us. True riches like love or peace are not being saved in a bank or invested in a stock market. Nothing can de-value our precious spiritual inheritance. However fragile our earthly banks are; the “bank of heaven” remains secure. Because of our sins we didn’t have a chance in regard of gaining eternal life. Nevertheless, through Jesus’ sacrificial death and the power of His reawakening, our status before God has changed and we have received a living hope. During this time of uncertainty, this means that God encourages, sustains, and upholds us. It is natural to experience anxiety and fear. Nevertheless, the love of God can help us to calm down and to demonstrate love and empathy to people around us, as well.

Resurrection power in the believer’s present

In the last part of the Scripture on top, Peter speaks about how we, as Christians, can experience God's reawakening power during our earthly lives. He compares it with a Roman soldier carrying a shield for his protection, and he encourages us to apply it in times of trouble. In the following verse 6, Peter mentions the grievance of his readers. He writes that whatever their circumstances looked like, God's presence was there to see them through. Obviously, God did not keep the believers out of suffering, as we are not spared from COVID-19 restrictions or the deadly danger it brings. When today, we Christians face sickness, hardship or persecution, we often claim that God's power will give us victory. Sometimes, we find it difficult to admit that we are going through hard times, because we think it would mean we were weak in faith. However, Peter states that God is in control within our trials, and they can be part of His plan. Whatever the outcome looks like- God is surely with us and will preserve our souls. When we

cling to Him, He can use our adversities to refine us and to draw us closer to Him. The fact that God raised Jesus from the dead shows that He is sovereign. It is a deep truth that His divine power is with us, today.

Resurrection power in the believer's future

After we have seen God's reawakening power wash away our past and labouring in our present, the climax of what it does for us lies still in the future. Already, we have been saved from the dominion and penalty of sin. Moreover, one day we will be redeemed from the existence of it. This is what Peter meant when writing in verse 5 that our salvation will be revealed in the last time. God is leading us to it. It is good to know God, but what we experience with Him, today, is only a foreshadow. We are looking forward to a better life to come, where we will enjoy the infinite pleasure of His presence, forever. However hard and painful our lives may be now while many suffer because of the pandemic; then, there will be no more crying, mourning or death. There is light at the end of the tunnel. Jesus will come back to finish His work.

In 1st Corinthians 6:14, Paul says: "By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also." As Christians, we live in anticipation of this day. The certainty that we have a guaranteed eternity of joy ahead of us shapes everything we do today. We do not invest all our time and effort in earthly things, but we focus on knowing and serving our Lord and Savior, loving and serving others and this way become stewards in the kingdom of God. God's resurrection power acts in the future of every Christian to reveal the salvation for which we long.

The three verses on top give us a glorious condensed portrait of the capability of the resurrection at work in our lives. God has wiped away our past by the new birth, is shielding us every day from the evil through our faith, and He will fulfill His redemption by giving us eternal life when we pass away. This is why Peter starts with an explosion of praise. After all the ups and downs he had gone through since he had started following Jesus, His reawakening was the "happy end", after which everything else made a sense for Peter. It is the essence of what we believe and hope for, and it is the source of our salvation, which is at work in us. As we have seen, this goes for our past, present and future, so one can say that Jesus is behind, beside and before us.

Prayer: Dear Lord of all grace who has conquered hell, death and the grave, our Lion of Judah who heals, delivers and saves, our victorious champion; we thank you for our lives and the lives of our loved ones. We thank you for medical staffs, teachers, politicians, scientists and all people who do their best to help the suffering of humanity. Bless them with your strength, wisdom and knowledge in their work, and help them to find you to receive salvation. May your resurrection power help us Christians to live for you and share our faith with those around us! In Jesus name; amen.

Greetings and blessings,
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