

Cornerstone of Christianity

Lesson 10: **November 6, 2014**—*sanctification*

On the day that Jesus Christ rose from the dead He proved that He was God (Romans 1:4)! If Jesus had not risen, he maybe would have been just a very good and loving man with the greatest intentions who died a needless death, or he was a ‘liar’. But Jesus is the *Truth* (John 14:6); Christ’s love was first His Father’s love (John 3:16); His intentions were the express and exact will of the Father, and His blood-spilled was His Father’s required ransom for our sin—**He would rise!**

Charles Spurgeon, who refers to believers as ‘followers of the crucified’ said, “When death itself appears, faith points to the light of resurrection beyond the grave, thus making our dying Benoni to be our living Benjamin” (ref Genesis 35:18). He said the following about the temple of the living God being in us:

“Beneath His eye and care,
The edifice shall rise,
Majestic strong, and fair,
And shine above the skies.”

In that Genesis passage, Rachel, the loved wife of Jacob, was dying while giving birth to her second son. She named him Ben-Oni (son of my trouble), but Jacob renamed him Benjamin (son of my right hand). **God takes our dying life of trouble and through faith in Jesus Christ gives us new life in Him!**

God speaks in eternity, so when Jesus called out “*It is finished*” from the cross, salvation for all who believe was a ‘done deal’—past, present and future. He knew He would rise; He knew He would spend 40 days on this earth with His followers; He knew He would ascend to the Father’s right hand, and He knew He would send the Holy Spirit to dwell in believers. Charles Spurgeon said, “We track Thee from the cradle to the grave—for every word and deed of Thine was love—and we rejoice in Thy love, which death did not exhaust; Thy love which shown resplendent in Thy resurrection.”

At 9:45 a.m. on Sat., March 29, 2014, a car drove up my drive with some women inside. One got out with a pamphlet and what looked like a Bible in her hand and came to my door. She said she had a booklet for me “celebrating the death of Jesus”. I asked if she was Jehovah’s Witness, and she said yes. They do not believe Jesus is the Son of God—something straight from the devil. I did not accept the pamphlet. When followers of Christ take the Lord’s Supper, **we remember His death until He comes, but we celebrate His resurrection** because we know that Jesus is God’s Son and, in fact, He is God!

Paul proved and witnessed, particularly in 1 Corinthians 15, the following details about Jesus' resurrection (John says Mary Magdalene saw Him first):

Jesus was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (v 4)

He appeared to Peter and then to the twelve (v 5)

He appeared to more than 500 of the brothers (v 6)

He appeared to James and to all the apostles (v 7)

He appeared to Paul, also—as to one abnormally born (v 8)

And said: *“If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body”* (v 44b).

“Now, when the New Testament tells us that Jesus Christ is risen” expounded J. I. Packer, “one of the things it means is that the victim of Calvary is now, so to speak, loose and at large.” So, the first to see the empty tomb was Mary Magdalene—followed by John and Peter—which put dread, fear and concern into them all, as primary suspects in the theft of Jesus' body, the disciples might be next to die. Mary was also the first to see her Risen Lord—what a wonderful sight! Remember as she stooped to embrace Jesus' feet, was told by her Lord not to cling to Him like that—we are not to cling to Christ's earthly form.

Because Christ has risen, we that have placed our faith and trust in His atoning death and have our full confidence in His resurrection will rise too! Jesus talked to Martha in John 11 and reassured her in verse 23 *“Your brother will rise again.”* Those were Jesus' words of reassurance to her, and we know that He had blessed plans to raise Lazarus from physical death that very day. But there is a 'resurrection' life that will be lived by true believers. Ephesians 2:4-7 *“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions**—it is by grace you have been saved. 6And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.”*

Acts 2:1 *“When the day of Pentecost (remember giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai) came, they were all together in one place.”* We know that the Holy Spirit came and the birth of Judeo-Christianity arrived 50 days after Jesus rose! The church's two ordinances are the one-time—right after salvation—believers' baptism which memorializes our death to the old life of sin and our 'resurrection' to new life in Christ Jesus, and the Lord's Supper, 'whenever' it is celebrated, so that we will *“remember the Lord's death until He returns”!* Colossians 2:12-13 *“...having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.*

*13When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, **God made you alive with Christ.** He forgave us all our sins.”*

Romans 5:10 *“For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, **how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!**”* Because of the reality of the resurrection, we can live in resurrection power—daily delivered from the rule and reign of sin! According to John 20:1-31 the resurrection of Jesus Christ paved the way for His followers’ lives to be transformed—for them to live a new way, and for the reigning-in-their-hearts Holy Spirit to conform them to the ‘image’ (character) of Christ. It was after Jesus’ resurrection that His siblings became believers, and that His disciples were reunited and reinvigorated to do what Christ had commanded in His Great Commission! For them, seeing was believing; and God was blessed, but how much more blessed He is when we believe by faith though we’ve not seen.

Colossians 2:6 *“So, then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, **continue** to live in him....”* We walk in Christ the same way we received Him: we repented of our sin and asked to be given new life in Christ Jesus. John MacArthur, Jr. said, “Separation from sin is now the direction of our lives, and someday it will be the perfection of our lives. Sanctification equals separation; the believer is set apart from sin and set apart unto God (1 Corinthians 6:11 and Hebrews 13:20). Romans 8:29 says we are predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ.

Colossians 3:1-4 *“Since, then, **you have been raised with Christ**, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”* Henry van Dyke said, “Remember that the transfiguration of the soul is but the preparation and encouragement for the sacrifice of the life.” Someone has said that when we get to heaven, the Lord won’t check us over for medals but for scars.

2 Corinthians 5:14-17—*“For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵And he died for all, **that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.** ¹⁶So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”* “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die,” said Dietrich Bonhoeffer, author of *The Cost of Discipleship*.

1 Corinthians 11:18-19 *“In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. ¹⁹No doubt **there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God’s approval.**”* “Let us not pray chiefly that God would let us into heaven, but first that he would send heaven into us,” said van Dyke. We should be reflecting God’s influence over our thoughts, words and actions. The Lord loves to see his own characteristics shining through our lives as we faithfully serve Him. And A. B. Simpson

encouraged, “We are members of His body, His flesh, and His bones, and if we can only believe and receive it, we may live upon the very life of the Son of God.” The last phrase in John 15:5 says, “...*apart from me you can do nothing.*”

I. We need to know that we need God, and that without Him, or apart from Him, we can do nothing. We need to recognize our weaknesses to see His strength at work in us. We need to know that when we are weak, then He is strong; that He will show His strength through our weakness so that the Father will be glorified—so there will be no doubt as to *Who* did the work! To focus on our abilities or our deficiencies is just as self-absorbing—give them to God.

II. We need to believe God’s power is available to us. 2 Corinthians 1:8-9—*“We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. ⁹Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on **God, who raises the dead.**”* Joyce Meyer shares her years-ago struggle as a new believer: “I could tell people about Jesus, but I couldn’t act like Jesus. It’s never too late for a fresh start with God!”

Paul prayed for the Christians to know God’s power in Ephesians 1:18-20a *“I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and **his incomparably great power for us who believe.** That power is like the working of his mighty strength, ²⁰which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms....”*

The Holy Spirit gives us His own power to live the Christian life—moral power and excellence of soul. While we are going through problems and hardships, He gives us the power to remain stable, to love the unlovely, to be what God wants us to be, and to resist temptation. When something awful or ungodly is happening to us, we don’t have to act awful and ungodly. James 4:7 says we resist the devil—we resist acting like him. We exhibit the Christ-life!

► 1 Corinthians 15:14-15 *“And **if Christ has not been raised**, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵More than that, **we are then found to be false witnesses about God**, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.”*

Acts 2:23 *“This man [Jesus] was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴But **God raised him from the dead**, freeing him from the agony of death, because **it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.**”* Then verses 25-28 have the King of Israel’s words about the Risen Lord: *“David said about him: ‘I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.*

²⁶“Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, ²⁷because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

²⁸“You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.” Acts 2:31-32 explains: “Seeing what was ahead, he [David] spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. ³²God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.”

Albert Moller, “People don’t want to hear that they are accountable to Almighty God. They don’t want to answer for their sin.” And Spurgeon again: “The cross was, in fact, the full expression of the world’s feeling toward Him; ‘There,’ they seemed to say, ‘Thou Son of God, this is the manner in which God Himself should be treated, could we reach Him’.” But in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 God is at work to change believers saying, “And that is what some of you were.”

Since Sodom and Gormorrah were destroyed because of their desperate ‘sin’, eighty-eight other nations have fallen to the same sin. Way back in 1978 Zig Zigler said, “Eventually the people will be led to believe that sex is fine with anybody so long as it is that ‘meaningful’ relationship. ...Worst of all, millions of ‘good’ people will get so hung up on the ‘rights of minorities’ and the ‘consenting adults’ bit that they will completely forget that sin is sin—regardless of which sin is involved.” We are definitely there today!

In Oct 2013, our pastor preached on ‘Peter-Pan’ Christians from Hebrews 5:11-6:1 about Christians who do not want to grow up in the Lord. They remain—

1. slow to learn—no push;
2. need someone to teach them;
3. still dealing with the elementary truths;
4. needing ‘milk’ instead of spiritual meat;
5. still infant—baby talk and baby walk, and
6. not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.

He further stated that Peter-Pan Christians shun Christ-likeness; they refuse the responsibility of being an example, and they promote stagnation in the Body of Christ. God wants us to grow up in Him, to live the ‘exchanged’ life—Christ’s for ours! The prescription is: 1) solid food, 2) consistent practice, and 3) keen understanding.

Henry van Dyke sums, “The one ideal that is pure and permanent and satisfying, the one ideal that actually has had power to keep itself alive and prove itself victorious over the disintegrating forces of sin and death, is the ideal of Jesus Christ. The men and women who have built upon that foundation have left behind them the most enduring and glorious work....” **Romans 6:10-11**

“The death he (Jesus) died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

¹¹In the same way, **count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.**”