

Apostolic Perspective: Living With the Resurrection In View

Intro: The entire premise of our faith, is based upon the fact that a dead Man came out of His tomb, after being dead for three days. Either this is true or our faith is worthless. (1 Cor. 15:17) The gospel brought eternal life and immortality to reality, by abolishing death through the resurrection *lit.* “out from among the dead”. While we were dead in our sins, God made us alive together with Christ and raised us up to sit with Him in heavenly places. (Ephesians 2:5-6)

I. THE MIRACLE OF OUR NEW BIRTH

- A. Jesus told Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews who were expecting a physical kingdom immediately, that he had no capacity to understand the nature of the kingdom, unless he was born in that kingdom. He said in essence, currently you do not have citizenship. (John 3:3, 12-15).
- B. We must see the connection between being born again(from above) ,eternal life, and the resurrection:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope (eternal life) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
(1 Peter 1:3)

Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day. Jesus said to her, ”I am the resurrection and the life; he believes in me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. (John 11:25-26)

- C. For the Jewish people, the resurrection to come was an elementary principle of living with belief in the Messiah. Martha had her hope fully set on the resurrection to come. We are called today to set our hope fully on the resurrection of our bodies, and to live with the resurrection in view, determining each decision through this grid:

Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance...for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God. (1 Peter 1:13-14, 23)

II. SETTING OUR SIGHTS ON THAT DAY

- A. The language of Paul was filled with this concept. He said phrases like:
1. We are to live godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope. Titus 2:12-13
 2. We are to look to the things unseen and eternal in the midst of the affliction of this life, for we have a resurrected body to come. 2 Cor. 4:18-5:1
 3. All creation groans and we groan within ourselves waiting eagerly for...the redemption of our body. In hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope...so we wait eagerly with perseverance for that Day. Romans 8:22-25
- B. When Paul was on trial in Acts 22-26, he constantly referenced his hope in the resurrection alone. He also described how this reality so convicted Him to live his every-day life before God and man, knowing His reward in the age to come depended on it. So we see him openly professing this reality before every audience he found himself before.

And Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, “Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day”..I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!” And the Lord stood at his side and said, “Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so also you must witness at Rome also.” (Acts 23:1, 6, 11)

- C. We have a tendency as believers to put great emphasis on faith and love, while almost disregarding the importance of hope. The greatest of the three is love, because love is the fruit of true faith, bolstered by a confident hope. It is this sure hope that sets our heart to live radically in love by faith.

..having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men...For the resurrection of the dead I am on trial before you today. (Acts 24:15-16, 21)

The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith....keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. Among these are Hymanaeus... (1 Timothy 1:5, 19-20) (see 2 Timothy 2:17-18)

III. SETTING OUR AFFECTIONS AND PROVOKING ONE ANOTHER

- A. As we consider the coming Day of the Lord, it heightens our urgency, thus we consider with great sobriety, how we are living our life before God *now*. Urgency provokes us to intentionally prepare ourselves to answer to Him face to face on that Day.

Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men... (2 Corinthians 5:9-11)

..provoke one another to love and good deeds..as you see the Day drawing near. (Heb. 10:24-25)

- B. Enjoyably living for THAT DAY doesn't happen over-night nor does it happen automatically. It requires a deep change in our heart-a yes to the Lord in the small things consistently and over a long period of time. We must cultivate intimacy with God. Paul calls this the set of our "affections":

If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you will also be revealed with Him in glory. (Colossians 3:1-4)

..but the mind set(affection) on the Spirit is life and peace. (Romans 8:6)

"Get behind me, Satan! ...for you are not setting your mind(affection) on God's interests, but man's...deny himself. (Matthew 16:23-24)

- C. Our affections grow from dullness into fervency, as we learn to press on through tests that reveal where our affections lie. This is the central theme of the book of Hebrews, as we see Jesus our High Priest according to His indestructible life and how it is communicated to us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

...you have become dull of hearing. Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to perfection, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about baptisms, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. (Hebrews 5:11, 6:1-2)