

The Resurrection

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When the Spirit of Truth confronts us with the reality of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are compelled into an internal confrontation with God's saving message that lives in our hearts and that inwardly presses us to give it vocal expression. (Rom. 10: 8, 9, and 10)

That message which is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1: 16), endures the forces of suppression that work in us subjectively by that same malignant spirit with which the power structures of Jesus' day conspired to discredit the victory of His life over death, and continue to do so in this very hour as wolves in sheep's clothing seek to convince the ignorant and gullible of that which is alien to their own hearts.

The relationship between the resurrection and its corresponding apostolic proclamation is different than the relationship that exists between fact and the affirmation of fact on the plane of observable existential phenomenon. For instance, I may state factually to you that it is a bright, sunny day, but the brightness and sunniness of the day does not exist in my statement.

In the fullest sense, I cannot transmit nature's gift to you of that day by my statement. It may bring you some cheer to hear the fact, but to go out doors and see the bright, blue sky and feel the sun's warmth on your face is quite another matter.

But when the resurrection of the Son of Man is heralded in the power of the Spirit, the saving life of Christ, that life that death cannot hold, is present in the message. The reality and the message become one.

Christ Himself, as the "Life-giving Spirit," comes to us in and as the message, and we hear His "yes" and "amen" to all the promises of God (for all God's promises have their fulfillment in the resurrection of Christ). (2Cor.1:20) God spoke His final, all-encompassing message to us in His Son, and at the heart of that message is the truth that death does not terminate life, rather, the reverse; life terminates death.

God's Son is God's message to us, His "Logos," and we hear God loud and clear in the resurrection of Christ. The dynamic that played itself out historically is the same dynamic that is in our hearts and in our mouths.

We have tended to reduce that dynamic to a formula. Get someone to admit to believing that Jesus rose from the dead and then encourage them to say so, and then assure them that they've met the conditions to be saved. No, no!

What is at work in the experience of true salvation is the resurrection-bearing, saving Word of Christ that has been spoken into every human heart by the Father. It's that Word that saves us, that heals us, that makes us whole by the wholeness of the Divine Nature.

It is not your mental assent to historical fact that makes resurrection work for you; it is the power of His resurrection that aligns your heart with the Truth that makes you whole. The forces of suppression cannot stand against the power of God's salvific message as He gives our souls ears to hear what He has said in Christ.

The historical resurrection of Christ brings the heart face to face with its own message, the message that answers its own need to know that the last enemy, death, has been defeated, that our destiny is not one of the fear of the unknown, but a destiny of life lived eternally in the confidence that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Whether it be the nihilistic attempt to find refuge from the fear of death by insisting that the immediate end of death is non-existence, or the superstition that fears death as an eternal state filled with horror, or any other sort of vain imagining, a man's lostness consists of those things that alienate him from his own internal witness that we "will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:17)

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