

Easter April, 2017

Victory Over Death

Apply 1st John 1:9

Father we are grateful for the privilege of being able to study your glorious word:

I ask the Father to take that which I will present, make it real so we can grow in your wonderful grace and be

more like our Lord and Savior – Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

Mental Attitude Towards Death

Philippians 1:21: “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain”.

1 Cor 15:54:” When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true; ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory;’ ”

1 Cor 15:55 “Where oh death is your victory? Where oh death is your sting?”

1 Cor 15:56 “The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law”

1Cor 15:57: “Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”.

Most mental attitudes that we study have been related to living, but there is also mental attitude which God wants us to have in relation to death. Death is not a pleasant subject, and most of us don’t even like to think about it; but we all must face it at some time or other. How can we have a good mental attitude towards death? In one word: knowledge; knowing what it is all about. We tend to fear the unknown, but for the believer there is no place for fear either in life or in death. In fact, God expects us to be perfectly calm when faced with death.

Job 5:21” You will be protected from the lash of the tongue and need not fear when the destruction comes.”

Psalm 23:4 “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for you are with me. Your rod and your staff they comfort me.”

Matthew 10:28 “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather be afraid of the one who can destroy both the soul and the body in hell.”

What is that mental attitude? “Fear not!” You can’t have such an attitude towards death without knowing Bible doctrine because the word of God is the only place where true and accurate information may be found. One doctrine that will give you the right mental attitude is the doctrine of resurrection. We are going to examine that doctrine of Resurrection today, which is traditionally celebrated once a year, although the Bible is filled with this subject.

Resurrection is a doctrine we need to remember every day and know so thoroughly that it shapes our mental attitudes about death. Remember Paul put it this way “for to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

Resurrection vs Resuscitation

- Resurrection: New life in a glorified body that will never die again
- Resuscitation: to bring back from death to die eventually again

Elijah restores the Widow’s son:

1 Kings 17: 12 As surely as the Lord your God lives, she replied, “I don’t have any bread – only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it – and die.”

1 Kings 17:13 Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid.”

Elijah performed miracles for them throughout the duration of the famine.

1 Kings 17:17 Sometime later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He finally grew worse and worse until he finally stopped breathing.

The widow immediately forgot God’s command to “Fear Not” and thought Elijah was bringing discipline upon her for some sin.

What would Elijah do? He would give her a vivid object lesson on when she should not fear!

He stretched himself over the boy 3 times and prayed and the boy’s soul came back into his body. Was the boy resurrected?

No, he was revived -- he was resuscitated. The boy was resuscitated from death to live, grow old and die again another day.

God used several people to demonstrate resuscitation, while Christ was the first person to be resurrected.

1Cor 15: 20 “If Christ is indeed raised from the dead, the Firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”

1 Cor 15: 23 “But each in his own turn: Christ the Firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him”

People in the Old testament got a glimpse of His resurrection through this miracle. As the Prophet Elijah identified himself with the dead boy by stretching out upon him, and the boy’s life returned, So Christ identified himself with death that we might have eternal life. The prophet identified himself with death three times and thus showed that Christ would be dead and buried for three days before He rose from the grave.

Elisha Restores the Shunammite’s Son

II Kings 4:18 -37 The woman of Shunem was a woman of great faith. Perhaps she had heard of the miracle of Elijah saving the Widow's son. She and her husband often took care of Elisha; but when her boy became suddenly sick Elisha was away. Did she panic? She didn't even tell her husband that her son had died. She wasn't afraid; she took a servant and the two rode quickly to find Elisha. He used the same procedure on the Shunammite's son and resuscitated the boy. The mother did not show fear, only great faith.

Like the Shunammite, you know it shall be well. The doctrine of resurrection guarantees it will be a blessed trip: "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." 2 Cor 5: 8

Jesus raises Jairus' Daughter Luke 8: 40-56

A young girl was dying and her father went to find Jesus. Before Jesus could break away from the crowd the girl had died. He tells Jairus in Luke 8:50 "Fear not; believe only."

Jesus had come to earth to conquer death. Jesus allowed the girl to die for a purpose. He had a lesson to teach them all as well as us. Death is not hopeless. He gave them all a beautiful object lesson to show He has the power of life and death.

Jesus told the disciples many times in the following verses that he came to conquer death (Matt 20:19; Mark 9:31-32; Luke 18: 33; 24:7). Did they get it? No, they were slow to remember like us.

Paul resuscitates Eutychus (Acts 20; 9-12)

A teenage boy fell asleep while listening to Paul's Bible study and fell out of a three story building. The first thing Paul said was "fear not." Paul also brought Eutychus back to life using the same method as Elisha and Elijah.

Over and over we are taught that it is necessary for the Lord Jesus Christ to be identified with death so that we may have life. The disciples were terribly distressed when Christ told them he must die. Why were they so upset ...? They didn't associate death with resurrection.

God Restores Isaac

Gen 22, Heb 11: 17-19. We will go back the old testament and look at one more example. Since the story of Abraham and Isaac on the altar is a familiar one, we only need to glean the principles from it. We know of Abraham's confidence in the face of death. When God put him to the test of sacrificing his only son, Abraham unhesitatingly set out to obey the Lord. He gave no explanation to Sarah or to Isaac; and when it came time to go up the hill he told the servants to wait below until he AND Isaac returned.

What made Abraham so sure that both would return?

Heb 11: 17-19 By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.

Abraham demonstrated the right mental attitude towards death and obeyed God. As a result, Isaac was “restored” to his father.

God does not want human sacrifice, except for the one sacrifice of His Son. (Heb 10: 5-10)

Therefore, when Christ came into the world he said “sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offering and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, ‘Here I am – It is written about me in the scroll- I have come to do your will my God.’ ” First he said, “sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them” – though they were offered in accordance with the law. Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ once and for all.

In Isaac’s place God provided a ram; In our place God provided His Son. The Lord Jesus Christ literally died twice for us on the cross, suffering spiritual death when God the Father put all our sins upon Him. At that moment, Christ was forsaken by both the first and third members of the trinity (Matthew 27:46 “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”) Darkness covered the face of the earth to hide the agony of His suffering. When all our sins were carried away by His spiritual death, His work was finished and He gave up His physical life. This is essentially what we are all gathered here to celebrate on this holy day of Easter.

Christ’s death was well confirmed by the Romans, who came to thrust the spear into his side (John 19:33-35); it was also confirmed by His burial and by the guards who stood by the tomb to see that no one stole His body. When the stone was rolled in front of the tomb and the tomb sealed, that seemed to the disciples to seal their doom. All of them went home, thinking that this One who had come to be their Savior and King had lost!

Did they have nothing in their memory centers? It would seem not! They knew the Old Testament; they knew the illustrations, and the teaching about the resurrection. What’s more, they had seen the power of Christ as He raised many from the dead during his ministry. Why should it be any harder to raise Himself? He had told them many times to “Fear Not!”, yet here they were, falling apart with fear (Matt 28:5). Let us learn from their mistakes and recall the proper mental attitude when faced with death!

It was important that Jesus die physically as well as spiritually, so that there would be a resurrection. There must be a resurrection if there was to be any salvation. A dead Christ could not guarantee life to others. God was pleased with the sacrifice of His Son and raised Him back to life. (Romans 4:25) As the first Human Being to be resurrected, Christ conquered death for us and became a guarantee that all believers would also rise from the dead. This means that man’s enemy, death, was destroyed or neutralized. Not that believers would no longer die physically, but that we would know that death is only a temporary thing. All fear of death is removed and one day, death will be removed forever. (1 Cor 15:26, Rev 21:4) Death just means that we will turn in these old bodies for new ones. Like a seed which is planted and comes up a new plant, so the old body is buried and will be raised a brand-new body. It will have no old sin nature; in fact, it will be like that of the resurrected Son of God (Phil 3:21).