

Friday: "It" Has A Model...

Read: Exodus 19:4-6 ⁴ You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

<p>Reflect: The exodus from Egypt – a monumental demonstration of God's power and compassion. It is referred and alluded to many times in the New Testament.</p> <p>Question: how does the church typically talk about "redemption" and similar concepts? It seems the talk usually focuses on "spiritual" things. Yet the liberation (redemption) which accompanied the exodus was far more than spiritual. However, even with all of the Passover (cf. Exod12) ties to the Lord's Supper the church seems to miss the very physical reality of the exodus, and what Jesus' Resurrection means.</p> <p>The redemption which took place through the exodus from Egypt was political (no longer subjects of Pharaoh), economic (they were exploited slaves), social (as slaves they had no 'human rights'), and spiritual. How can we wrap all that up into something "spiritual"? Does it now make a bit more sense why the early church shared everything in common (e.g., Acts2:44-45) and why God was pleased (e.g., Acts2:47)? All the exodus did for Israel will one day happen for all of God's people (The Church – i.e., the new Israel), but until He completes it our task is to bring it to earth now (cf. Mt6:9-10; Phil1:27; 3:20).</p>	<p>Respond: What are your initial responses to today's "reflect"?</p> <p>How do the thoughts of today's devotion match up with Thursday's?</p> <p>Could you really do with less if it meant others would not lack and God's Kingdom would grow?</p>
<p>Pray: Pray for King Solomon Christian Service Camp and the National Missionary Convention; missions New Life supports. Pray Bob Griffin and Larry Hayes (elders of New Life) will continue to seek God's Kingdom. Pray for protection from sin and strength during times of testing.</p>	

Saturday: It Guarantees A Renewal...

Read: 2 Peter 3:10-11¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. ¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,

<p>Reflect: I know a common belief is this world will be obliterated by fire. Yet what does the Bible say? Even though the NIV says "destroyed" in v10 ("burned up" above), the Greek word does not mean destruction...it means a loosing or unbinding. Interesting huh?</p> <p>Just as 2 Peter 3:13 speaks of a "new" heavens and "new" earth, so does Revelation 21 (they merge and become one in the text). The word used in both places for "new" is a Greek word (καινός) which means a refurbished type of new (e.g., a mint condition restored 60's muscle car), not "brand new" (like a baby).</p> <p>So, God will refine this earth with fire (i.e., burn all the impurities away – fire need not destroy) and then His space ("heaven") will merge with ours and "He will be our God" (e.g., Gen17:8; Exod6:6; Ezek37:27; Zech8:8; Heb8:10; Rev21:7). Beautiful! All because of the Resurrection; maybe we should talk about it more often...</p>	<p>Respond: If God had to create a totally new earth (from scratch) then does it not seem that Satan did something God could not undo?</p> <p>Notice what v11 says. The Bible does not give us information for the sake of information. How will this change you?</p>
<p>Pray: Pray for Strong Tower Ministries and LCREP; missions New Life supports. Pray Ed Asbury, Keith Krause, and Mike Haag (deacons of New Life) will respond in godly ways to Peter's teaching. Pray for our worship tomorrow at the Church Building. Thank God for desiring all sinners to come to Him.</p>	

Yes Easter Was Last Week...
April 11 – 17

I wonder how much of the "Easter candy" from last Sunday remains in "Easter baskets" all across America. Sadly those remnants will likely stay around much longer than the thoughts of Resurrection Sunday in the mind of many (especially since many in America are not Christian).

Yet since the Christ Event (Jesus' birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension) has the power to not only shape our present but also chart a course for our future...should "It" (all of it) not be at the forefront of our minds? Obviously it should. Sadly it is not.

No part of our existence is to be untouched by the Resurrection (or the entire Christ Event for that matter). Hopefully this will become clearer as we make use of the devotional guide this week – and as we continue to mature spiritually in the future. (As always, please feel free to give me feedback, ask questions, disagree if you want even...just let me know; we learn best in community.)

Perhaps this prayer, by John Baillie, can be of help to all of us...

Eternal Father of my soul, let my first thought today be of You,
let my first impulse be to worship You, let my first speech be Your name,
let my first action be to kneel before You in prayer.
For Your perfect wisdom and perfect goodness;
For the love with which You love mankind;
For the love with which You love me;
For the great and mysterious opportunity of my life;
For the indwelling of Your Spirit in my heart;
For the sevenfold gifts of Your Spirit:
I praise and worship You, O Lord.
Yet let me not, when this morning prayer is said,
think my worship ended and spend the day in forgetfulness of You.
Rather from these moments of quietness let light go forth, and joy, and power,
that will remain with me through all the hours of the day;
Keeping me chaste in thought;
Keeping me temperate and truthful in speech;
Keeping me faithful and diligent in my work;
Keeping me humble in my estimation of myself;
Keeping me honorable and generous in my dealings with others;
Keeping me loyal to every hallowed memory of the past;
Keeping me mindful of my eternal destiny as a child of Yours.
Through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

What a prayer...what an Awesome God we serve!!

Monday: It Happened...

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:12-20 ¹² Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?...¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁵ We are even found to be misrepresenting God...¹⁷... your faith is futile and you are still in your sins...¹⁹... we are of all people most to be pitied. ²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits...

<p>Reflect: You likely remember the quotes from the last two Sundays... <i>If Christ is raised, nothing else matters. If Christ is not raised, nothing matters.</i> [Jaroslav Pelikan] <i>Nothing matters but Christ's resurrection. And because nothing matters but Christ's resurrection, everyone and everything matter.</i> [Robert Lowery] They seem to match up with Paul's words.</p> <p>The "resurrection of the dead" was foolishness in the Greek world of thought (e.g., Acts 17:32). Since "the body" was thought to be a prison for "the soul," why would we want a physical body again? It seems a resurrection of the dead is foolishness for our culture as well. E.g., our culture spends BILLIONS to "stay young," undoubtedly some have hopes of "cheating death". Yet Paul says without the Resurrection we have nothing.</p> <p>Yet the inverse is also true. Since Jesus is raised then talking about it is profitable, our faith is solid, God is pleased when we talk about it, our sins are indeed forgiven, those who have died are now reigning with Him, and we have the most privileged position in the world. It changes everything...</p>	<p>Respond: Is anything false in the quotes to your left?</p> <p>What would a non-Christian friend say if you talked to them about our future, bodily resurrection?</p> <p>How does the last paragraph to the left impact your outlook for the day?</p>
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Pray: Pray for Ryan Nelson (CEA Church planter) and "33 Church" in Olathe. Praise God for our time of worship together yesterday at the Church Building. Ask God to help your life be shaped by the Resurrection. Continue to pray for workers in God's Kingdom (Mt 9:36-38).

Tuesday: It Is Priceless...

Read: Philippians 3:7-11 ⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸... because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish...¹⁰ that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death...

<p>Reflect: How passionate was Paul about the Resurrection of Jesus? Well, for some Christians it caused him to do the unthinkable...he cursed. In v8 Paul says all he thought was important before the knowing Jesus –the Messiah – is (put nicely in English) "rubbish" (or dung; more literally sh*#).</p> <p>Again... <i>If Christ is raised, nothing else matters. If Christ is not raised, nothing matters.</i> [Jaroslav Pelikan] <i>Nothing matters but Christ's resurrection. And because nothing matters but Christ's resurrection, everyone and everything matter.</i> [Robert Lowery]</p> <p>There are a few possibilities for what is meant by the power of Jesus' Resurrection, sufferings, and death; each has merit and helps us see a bigger picture. Grammatically the "him" and "power" are linked as one in the same. In other words you cannot have one without the other. To truly know Jesus you must know the Resurrection. Without it He was merely another Jew murdered on a cross in the first century, which is where many are comfortable with keeping Him...</p>	<p>Respond: What are you willing to forsake for the gospel?</p> <p>How does Romans 6 fit in with these verses?</p> <p>How does 2 Corinthians 5:11-21 fit in with them?</p>
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Pray: Pray for God to continually be at work at LCS, MCC, and OCC; missions we support. Pray for God's perspective on the things of this world. Pray for our Children's Worship time and all of the servants who make it a possibility. Continue to pray for God's people to have boldness to speak for Him (Acts 4:29).

Wednesday: It Defeated Satan...

Read: Revelation 12:7-13 ⁷ Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against... the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸ but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven...he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. ¹⁰ And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser...has been thrown down..."

<p>Reflect: When was Satan cast out of "heaven"? While opinions vary...this is the only text which talks specifically about it. Side note(s): the context of Ezekiel 28 is the king of Tyre (and Ezekiel 26 has a prophecy against the nation of Tyre); the context of Isaiah 14:12ff is the king of Babylon (plus "Lucifer" in the KJV is Latin for "morning/day star" – not Satan's first name). How is Job 1:6 possible if Satan did not have access to "heaven"? See also 1 Kings 22:19-23.</p> <p>Notice what happens in Rev 12:1-5 – Jesus is born. After Jesus is born then there is a war in "heaven". The Bible shows us Satan (somehow – e.g., Job 1:6; 2:1) was able to roam between earth and "heaven" at will until the Christ Event (Jesus' birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension). Yet notice what v10 says – Satan is thrown down. Now think about (or look at) Romans 8 (esp. v33) and 1 John 2:1-2. Satan no longer has "access to God's ear" – praise God!</p> <p>The War is over...Satan is defeated and God (Jesus) reigns supreme! Granted, battles still rage around us daily...but the ultimate outcome is guaranteed. Jesus paid the price with His blood. The Resurrection changed everything!</p>	<p>Respond: Compare the language of Genesis 11 (esp. v4) with Isaiah 14. Interesting?</p> <p>The same word in Rev 12:4 (cast) and 12:9 (thrown) is also used in Rev 20:3 (threw). How is this significant?</p>
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Pray: Pray for Shiloh Home of Hope and Emporia Christian Schools. Praise God The War is over...ask for strength and faith for your own battles. Continue to pray for God's Word to spread rapidly (2Thess 3:1).

Thursday: "It" Defines Politics...

Read: Philippians 1:27 ²⁷ Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, Philippians 3:20 ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

<p>Reflect: "Politics can start a fight; Religion hard to know who's right..." (<i>Politics, Religion, and Her</i> – Sammy Kershaw). There is much truth in those song lyrics. Yet for Christians we must understand everything is "politics," and yes it may start some fights – just be gracious.</p> <p>The phrase "let your manner of life be" (1:27) is one verb; "citizenship" (3:20) is a noun. Both words are related...they look a lot like our English word "politics." Since politics refers to one's allegiances, for the Christian there is only one option – God's Kingdom.</p> <p>The book of Revelation divides humanity into two groups: those who dwell upon the earth (e.g., Rev 6:10; 11:10; 13:8; 17:8) and saints (e.g., Rev 8:4; 13:7,10; 14:12; 19:8). Revelation tells a tale of two cities (via comment by Shane Wood – cf. Rev 21:2; 18:10), and the Greek word for city is <i>polis</i> (cf. politics). It is incorrect to think God's Kingdom has not yet come. If Christ is not reigning (an aspect of the Kingdom) – then how is He seated (Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 8:1; 12:2)? Remember how Jesus' ministry started (e.g., Mk 1:15).</p>	<p>Respond: Is God pleased with any earthly government?</p> <p>What are difficulties in trying to separate politics and religion?</p> <p>Who do you know in the "earth dwellers" group you would like to become a "saint"?</p>
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Pray: Pray for the ministry of Cookson Hills (a Christian Children's home and mission New Life supports). Pray Brent McCrory (Preaching Minister of New Life) will continually live by God's politics. Continue to pray for open doors to share God's Word (Col 4:2-6).