

## **“The Resurrection and the Life”**

When Jesus saw Mary and Martha and their friends weeping over the death of Lazarus, “He groaned in the spirit and was troubled” (John 11:33). He loved Lazarus and his sisters. Even though He knew that He would soon be raising Lazarus from the dead, He wept with them (v. 35). Part of Jesus’ weeping may have been over death itself and the pain and sadness it causes in people’s hearts. When sin entered this world, death came with it. Sin causes pain. Jesus wept over the painful, sorrow-filled effects of it on humankind.

Loss is a part of life. But because Jesus is “the resurrection and the life” (v. 25), those who believe in Him and obey the Gospel will one day experience an end of all death and sorrow. In the meantime, He weeps with us over our losses and asks us to “weep with those who weep” (Rom. 12:15) Compassion helps to heal the hurts of others.

### **The Plimsoll Line**

In the 19th century, ships were often recklessly overloaded, resulting in those ships going down and the crews being lost at sea. In 1875, to remedy this negligent practice, British politician Samuel Plimsoll led the charge for legislation to create a line on the side of a ship to show if it was carrying too much cargo. That “load line” became known as the Plimsoll Line, and it continues to mark the hulls of ships today.

Sometimes, like those ships, our lives can seem overloaded with fears, struggles, and heartaches. We can even feel that we are in danger of going under. In those times, however, it is reassuring to remember that we have a remarkable resource. We have a heavenly Father who stands ready to help us carry that load. The apostle Peter said, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1Peter 5:6-7). He is capable of handling the cares that overwhelm us.

Though the tests of life may feel like a burden too heavy to bear, we can have full assurance that our heavenly Father loves us deeply and knows our load limits. Whatever we face, He will help us to bear it. God may lead us into troubled waters to deepen our trust in Him. “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1Cor. 10:13).

### **Free from the Law of Sin**

The elephant is the largest land animal on earth and one of the most powerful. Yet it takes only a strong rope to restrain one. Here’s how it works. When the elephant is young and small, he is tied to a large tree. For weeks, he will strain and pull, but the rope holds him fast. So eventually he gives up. Then, when the elephant reaches his full size and strength, he won’t struggle to get free, for once he feels resistance, he stops. He still believes he’s held captive and can’t break free.

Satan can play a similar trick on us to hold us captive. The Bible assures us that there is “no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit” (Rom. 8:1). We have been set “free from the law of sin and death” (v.2). But the enemy of our soul tries to make us believe we are still dominated by sin.

What can we do? Reflect on what Christ has done. He died for our sins and declared an end to sin’s control over us (v. 3). He rose from the dead and sent the Holy Spirit to reveal the way we can live apart from sin in this world while we wait for our eternal home with Him. In Christ, we are set free.

## **Prepare to Live**

In 1931, Jane Whyte felt she was nearing the end of her life. Her husband Alexander, a famous Scottish preacher, had died ten years earlier. As she looked at the world around her, she was depressed by the moral and political chaos. There seemed to be no reason for her to go on, nothing for her to do. At dinner one evening, she sat next to a man who sensed her dejection. "What is your greatest concern?" he asked. "I'm preparing to die," said Mrs. Whyte. "Why not prepare to live?" he suggested.

That was the question Mrs. Whyte needed to hear to break the deadlock in her life. She began to see that God's will is to live and to reach out to others with His word. Her attitude changed and within a year she worked with other Christians on a mission to Geneva, Switzerland. That trip profoundly affected the lives of many people.

Life can seem overwhelming at times, but God offers us hope. Paul wrote, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13). Regardless of your age or circumstances, don't despair and "prepare to die." Believers in Christ can prepare to live, filled with hope, joy, and peace.

## **The Fragrance of Christ**

Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "Memories, imagination, old sentiments, and associations are more readily reached through the sense of smell than through any other channel."

So, what if our lives were a fragrance that attracted people to God? 2Corinthians 2:15 says that "we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing." Our fragrance is pleasing to God, but it also attracts others to Him or repels them. We who understand the sacrifice of Jesus have the opportunity to be the "fragrance of Christ"—a reminder of Him—to others.

The sweet scent of the likeness of Christ can be an power pull toward the Savior. When we walk with God, we leave behind a sweet fragrance that can inspire others to follow.

## **Two Men**

Two men were killed in our city on the same day. The first, a police officer, was shot down while trying to help a family. The other was a homeless man who was shot while drinking with friends early that day. The whole city grieved for the police officer. He was a fine young man who cared for others and was loved by the neighborhood he served. A few homeless people grieved for the friend they lost. I think the Lord grieved with them all. "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" (Matt. 6:26).

## **A Moments Wisdom**

--Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey toward it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us.

--The art of leadership is saying no, not yes. It is very easy to say yes.

--The less men think, the more they talk.

--We are far more liable to catch the vices than the virtues of our associates.

--I cannot give you the formula for success, but I can give you the formula for failure--which is: Try to please everybody.

--It is foolish and wrong to endlessly mourn good folks who died. Rather we should thank God that they lived.