

IF YOU NEED EVIDENCE THAT CHRIST IS RAISED FROM THE DEAD, LOOK AT ME

March 23, 2008

Resurrection Sunday

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Eph 1:18-23, 2:1-7

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead has been the subject of much discussion and debate. It is hard to believe that a man can be raised from the dead when he has been pronounced dead and buried in a grave. How can a dead person be brought back to life? Is there any proof? I need to see it for myself. You can't believe everything you hear.

Everyone from presidents to preachers has secrets. We don't know who or what to believe anymore. It was the same way 2000 years ago when the women went to the tomb to pay their respects to the dead. But Jesus was not there. They heard him say, "It is finished." They saw the soldiers pierce him in his side. Finally they saw a large stone rolled in front of the tomb. They were amazed; they wondered where he could be?

The women ran to tell the disciples but the disciples didn't believe the women. So the disciples ran to the tomb to see. Nevertheless it was still hard for them to believe. There are moments when we desperately want to believe, but it is not easy. You want to believe, but you struggle with doubt and skepticism. All we have to do is believe. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Why is it so hard to remember the promises of God? Does he promise and not fulfill? It wasn't until they saw the risen Lord that they believed. 2000 years later, people are still looking for living proof. They need to know that, in love, God sent his only begotten son to show us how to live. We know that it was by faith that Jesus was raised from the dead. They need to know that this thing is real. People need evidence that Christ can turn your life around. They need to know that God still works miracles.

Look at yourself. Think about how messed up your life was when he found you. Who else but God? If anybody wants proof that Jesus raises people from the dead, you ought to be able to say, look at my life. We were dead but now we are alive.

At the end of the first chapter of Ephesians, the apostle Paul helps us to believe. He gives us as evidence the fact that by His power God raised Jesus from the dead and seated him at God's right hand. The right hand is the position of highest glory and power. Christ is exalted above every authority; whether good or bad. The current demon messin' with you is subject to him and the next

one is subject as well. This demon has no real power over you. Only what you allow him to have. Christ is sovereign over the world. God placed everything under his feet.

God raised and exalted Christ giving him the highest position. As believers, we are his body; the fullness of him that fills everything in every way. The body is intimately connected to the head and the head to the body. We are part of Christ. The connection is intimate and organic. Christ is raised from the dead and so are we. Everything that is subject to Christ is subject to us. Not only do we have a vital connection with him, but we also complement him. We are his fullness. We fill Christ up. The body wouldn't be anything without the head, but the head would be nothing without the body. Christ is incomplete without his church. We are to accomplish what he wants to accomplish in the world. If anybody wants to know if Christ has been raised from the dead, they just need to check out our lives. Our lives are evidence that Christ was raised from the dead. There was no life in our souls. We were spiritually dead. Paul is not speaking metaphorically, he is telling the truth. We had no relationship with God. We were blind to the reality. Though He loved us, we didn't love him back.

We weren't trying to talk to God or hear from him. The state of affairs of our lives indicated that we were under the influence of the world, the flesh, and the devil. We were captive to the social and political system of the world. The devil is calling the shots in the world. He is the prince of this world. Though we would like to blame the devil for everything we do, some of it is our idea.

When we can't pay our tithes because we say we have expenses, that's not the devil, that's our idea. Not only were we dead, we were depraved. We inherited the sin nature of Adam and Eve. Not only were we dead and depraved, but we were also doomed. We were by nature objects of wrath. The wages of sin are death, but the gift of God is eternal life. But, because of God's great mercy, he stepped in and turned our situations around. He made us alive in Christ. He raised us from the dead. We are new. We're not the same anymore. We are free. There has been a change in our lives.

We no longer trip over what we do not understand. We don't act like that anymore. We know that if God is for us, who can be against us. We know that nothing can separate us from the Love of God that is in Christ Jesus. We know that we are more than conquerors. The fact that we have been changed by God affects our affections. We aren't gossiping and lying. If you want to know that Christ has been raised, look at me.

We have authority.

God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms. Paul is talking about our position with Christ. We were made to have dominion on the earth. But sin changed that and we lost our position. But now that we have been raised with Christ, we are back in our rightful position and we have power and authority. It all depends on where you are seated.

When you have that kind of authority, you need to act like you have it. Christians have gotten too passive. How can folks walk around your house doing whatever they want to do? Take authority. You have to establish your position. You have to be clear about where you are seated. We have to fight for righteousness. We can't let ourselves be tricked by another election. We have authority. Do you believe this?

If you want proof that Christ has been raised from the dead, all you have to do is look at me.
Peace

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