

Jesus' Victory is a Call to Follow

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Passage

Acts 1: 3-11(NIV)

³After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." ⁶So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

⁷He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. ¹⁰They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Introduction

Jesus' whole life from birth through death to resurrection, and ascension was the scene of the great victory over sin and death. He paid the price for sin in His divine sacrificial death on the cross, where He shed his precious blood.

This victory is and ever will be the Lord's, but He shares it now and in the future with all that trust Him and keep His commandments. For that reason, victory is ours, in Christ Jesus, thank God! Moreover, this victory is also proof of his divine power, and at the same token, brought healing to the disciples. Furthermore, this victory is the motivation for a spiritual revolution. .

I. Jesus' victory is proof of His divine power

Our Lord Jesus has foretold his sufferings, death, and resurrection many times. In the book **of...**

John 2:18-21 (New International Version), He said...

¹⁸Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" ¹⁹Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." ²⁰The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" ²¹But the temple he had spoken of was his body."

Jesus foretells his resurrection by his own power, in saying, in three days I will raise it up. He indeed, took his own life again. You see the Jews could not comprehend what Jesus stated, because Jesus spoke in a figure of speech not literally.

Sometimes, we make the same mistakes by understanding according to the letter, which the Scripture speaks by way of metaphors or figure of speech. Sometimes, we read the Scriptures out of context, which leaves us to the wrong interpretation.

Consequently, Christ Jesus delay living earth, long enough to satisfy his supporters of the truth of His resurrection. He appeared to Mary Magdalene and others. Let's read...

Mark 16:9-14 (New International Version)

⁹When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. ¹⁰She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. ¹¹When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.

¹²Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. ¹³These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either.

¹⁴Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen."

This is something we must be aware of, that while Christ comforts his people, he often sees it needful to rebuke and correct them for hardness of heart in distrusting his promise and transgressing God's law.

Look, my friends, it was a time when Jesus showed the apostles his hands and feet, that they might identify Him from the mark of His sufferings. Even then they could hardly bring themselves to believe. He even ate a piece of fish in their presence to remove all doubts, but I believe that they were still in doubt (**Luke 24: 37-43 NIV**).

Everett F. Harrison, who wrote, "A Short Life of Christ "said and I quote,

"All this suggests that the primary purpose of this initial appearance to the Eleven, and the others who were present was to convince them that he was the same Jesus they had known in days gone by, the one who had suffered on Calvary, the one who had died and had been buried. Death had now been robbed of its prey."

Better news cannot be brought to the disciples especially to the apostles than to tell them of Christ's resurrection. Now that they were seeing him, touching him, and listening to his voice, they have realized the amazing truth that Jesus has become victorious over death. However, Jesus had informed them and us that even the rising from the dead would not convince those who refused to accept the testimony of Scripture. Let's read...

Luke 16: 31 NIV

31"If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets; they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."

"Faith is not necessarily created by a display of miraculous power. A faith that rests on evidence but lacks the element of glad acceptance is not faith at all in the biblical sense. You see, where there is faith, there will be a willingness to act on this truth; genuine faith is always voluntary and spontaneous (I quoted, from Beacon Dictionary of Theology)."

Now we know that the resurrection established the truthfulness of Jesus; there was no confusion in the

mind of Jesus between his resurrection and his return. He emerged triumphant over suffering and death and became the universal Lord – Lord of Lords and King of kings! Lord of those who will live because of his resurrection...every one of us.

II. Jesus' victory brings healing to the disciples

The departure came with the lifting up from the earth and removal to the higher heavens where Jesus would continue to minister. Let's read...

Acts 1: 9-11 (New International Version)

⁹After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. ¹⁰They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

It may seem strange that the effect of the ascension on the disciples and the apostles was to fill them with joy rather than with sadness. Assuredly this event served to seal in their minds the supreme truth that God had sent his Son as the Savior of the world. Their joy at seeing the Lord after his resurrection and at His ascension brought them great happiness. The apostle John confirmed in his book how they felt by sharing the victory of God through Christ Jesus. Let's read...

1 John 1:4 (New International Version) says:

⁴We write this to make our joy complete.

The appearances of Jesus to his disciples, was a great time of healing for them. They thought the religious institution and the government had defeated Him.

Look, my brothers and sisters, because of Jesus' victory, we have become victorious as well. Jesus gave us an example of God's love; we love because He loves us first!

He died for our sins; so we can redeem our sin and have eternal life. Thus God no longer remembers our sins against us; it is as if we never sinned.

Christ Jesus brought the Holy Almighty God the Father and humanity together through His divine sacrificial death on the Cross.

He also gave us a newness of life in this world and the hope of eternal salvation in the next.

I assure you, everyone who has faith in Christ, who simply trusts Him for salvation are guaranteed a place in heaven...paradise.

Furthermore, we have this peace and tranquility, joy and happiness in this world; moreover, we have Jesus intervening for us whenever we deal with obstacles and circumstances of life, and situations we cannot change.

Because of Jesus' victory, we leave all these things in God's hands, and talk to Him about them as often as they come to our minds. However, being a Christian does not solve all of our problems, but it does give us spiritual resources for dealing effectively with them. God is always listening; and He promised not to abandon or forsake us!

You see, my brothers, the victory is always the Lord's and is credited to others only as He is willing to make it His gift, or with whom He graciously shares it. For the Lord our God is the one who goes with us to fight for us against our enemies to give us victory.

Christian living depends on our surrender-ness and submission to the triumphant Spirit of Christ; let God re-make us so that our whole attitude of mind is changed forever. Thus, we should follow willingly and faithfully what God stated for us in...

Romans 12:1-2 (New International Version)

¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Amen!

III. Jesus' victory is the motivation for a spiritual revolution

Let's talk about this subject. Let's read...

Acts 1: 4 – 5 (New International Version)

⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

On the day of ascension, according to vs. 8 -9 of today's passage, which occurred at the end of a forty days following the resurrection; the Lord Jesus indicated to the disciples the scope of their witness and the divine empowering which would be theirs through the Holy Spirit.

Also, Jesus said to them in...

Matthew 28:18-20 (New International Version)

18 "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Suddenly, Jesus began to rise into the clouds right before the eyes of the disciples and a cloud hid Him from their sight (vs. nine). Although Jesus had given them careful instructions on what to do next, they stood gazing up to the heavens. On top of that unbelievable momentum, two men dressed in white said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven " (vs. 11b).

This is called the "Great Commission" of the Christian Church. Every Christian is called on to demonstrate his or her faith. We as Spirit-filled Christians become disciples, who make others disciples; we must live according to God's word. We need to teach everyone to obey the Lord's commandments as per instructions given by Jesus; also, we need to affect others with our commitment: act, talk and walk like Jesus. We need to pray continually despite the consequences, and surrender all to God's will for us.

Now it comes the day of Pentecost which means "50." It was a Jewish feast, which fell 50 days after the

Passover. It was also the day God has chosen on which to give **the fullness of the Spirit** to the disciples and the Church as well. Let's read...

Acts 2:1-4 (New International Version)

¹When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ²Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

Let me quote Matthew Henry's concise commentary. It says,

"A rushing mighty wind came with great force. This was to signify the powerful influences and working of the Spirit of God upon the minds of men, and thereby upon the world. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, more than before. They were filled with the graces of the Spirit, and more than ever under his sanctifying influences." "They were more filled with the comforts of the Spirit, rejoiced more than ever in the love of Christ and the hope of heaven: in it all their grieves and fears were swallowed up."

This, my brothers, was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on humans beings promised by God through Christ Jesus. Thus, the Holy Spirit mediates to us the glorified Christ Jesus, and continues Jesus' work in the world.

Closing

My friends, Jesus' resurrection without the ascension would not accomplish much; even so, without the resurrection, we would have no ascension. Furthermore, without either one there is no Christianity. This I believe was the greatest of all the miracles, for it must have been God the Father, who arose him up and brought Him home to be seated at his right side in the heavenly places.

My brothers and sisters, when Jesus ascended into heaven; He gave the disciples, and us as well, the commission to convert the world. However, our Church or any other Christian churches can only fulfill its purpose if saved people realize their responsibilities and join themselves to the church in good works.

Our efforts are to honor God through Christ Jesus by obeying His call to make disciples of all nations; it's something that we can do. We can do that where we are, with those whom we meet, with our neighbors, and everywhere in the world. Whenever, we seek to accomplish God's will, He will bless our efforts because of our willingness to serve, and obey Him. We need to be aware at all time of Jesus' words, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age " (vs. 20b of Matthew Chapter 28, NIV). Praise the Lord!

My brothers and sisters, Jesus' ascension was not a loss for the apostles, the disciples and us, because it also makes possible a new experience of God's presence as Spirit. Therefore, the Holy Spirit mediates to us the glorified Christ, and continues Christ's works in the world. Amen!

I would like to finish this sermon with the book of Philippians...

Philippians 2:5-11 (New International Version)

⁵Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

**⁶Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,**

**⁷but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.**

**⁸And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!**

⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place

and gave him the name that is above every name,

**¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,**

**¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.”**

Amen!

Let's pray...

WORKS CITED:

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