

The power of His resurrection

Source of encouragement for daily life

«Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead» (2 Tim. 2:8 ESV).

In the Christian calendar, the so-called Holy Week occupies a prominent place, when the passion and death of Christ, followed by His resurrection, are remembered. From the beginning of Christian revelation, the Lord's crucifixion has been considered the key to our salvation. On the cross of Calvary Jesus bore our sins and through His bloody sacrifice atoned for them. Thus He opened the door for our reconciliation with God, the beginning of a new life in His kingdom. However, the message of the cross, glorious as it is in itself, would lose its effectiveness if our Saviour would not have risen from the dead. Hence the efforts of the sacred writers, witnesses of the great miracle, to highlight and credit this fact. The apostle Paul, in an unparalleled synthesis of the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:3-4), summed it all up in three sentences: «Christ died for our sins», «He was buried», and «He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures». The rest of the chapter is dedicated to demonstrating the historical veracity of this last event. He gives such importance to it that it becomes a touchstone of the Christian message: «If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty» (1 Cor. 15:14 NKJV).

In another text, the one that heads this topic, the apostle relates the resurrection of the Lord with the Christian ministry. Timothy, his collaborator, as a faithful soldier of Jesus Christ, had to suffer hardships like the apostle himself (2 Tim. 2:3-9). The circumstances in which his militia had to operate were harsh, a temptation to fear, spiritual cooling, and desertion. Well, there is an effective antidote to discouragement and disloyalty, the one given by Paul to his spiritual son, Timothy: «Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead» (2 Tim. 2:8 ESV). With this miracle His power over all forces of destruction was revealed, including death itself. It is not possible to find a greater source of encouragement and confidence. His personal assumption in the face of any type of danger, doubt or suffering can help us emerge unscathed from all temptation:

When feelings of guilt lead you to doubt your salvation, «remember Jesus Christ, risen» and you will understand that «there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus» (Rom. 8:1 NKJV), since Christ «was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification» (Rom. 4:25 ESV).

When the tribulations of life threaten to drag you down, «remember Jesus Christ, risen». Even from the tomb He rose triumphant. He saved His disciples from shipwreck when a storm on Lake Tiberias was about to end their lives. On another occasion, walking at night on the waters of the same lake, He provoked the terror of the disciples who believed they saw a ghost in the walking figure. In many dark situations in our lives we often see scary ghosts when in reality we are in the presence of an almighty Saviour, whom we hear say: «It is I; do not be afraid» (Matt. 14:22-27 NKJV).

When you see that your sky becomes cloudy and a feeling of frustration grips you, «remember...» and everything will change inside you, as it changed for those two disciples of Emmaus, at first sad and disconcerted by the death of the Master, but then

radiant with joy and full of spiritual energy as they realized that their Lord, resurrected, was the Christ, alive and glorified.

When you see that the Church is languishing, becoming worldly and is in danger of extinction, «remember...». Jesus tells you: «Do not be afraid, I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death» (Rev. 1:17-18 NKJV). He goes on to say: «I will build My church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it» (Matt. 16:18 NKJV).

When your faith grows cold and your first love begins to be lost, «remember...». You will hear Him say: «My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness» (2 Cor. 12:9 NKJV). «He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ» (Phil. 1:6 NKJV).

When the fear of death depresses and weakens you, or when a loved one is taken from you, «remember...». The Lord not only conquered death, but with His triumph over it, He can «release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage» (Heb. 2:14-15 NKJV). When we are aware of these realities, we can look at our death or that of our loved ones and friends with serenity, without hidden fears or cold uncertainties. Our faith rests in the promise of Him who said: «I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live» (John 11:25 NKJV). To have Christ is to have life; nothing and no one can annihilate it. We are united to the Saviour through faith, and nothing can separate us from Him or His redeeming action. We are united to Christ as the body to the head. By virtue of this union, God is totally on our behalf. Consequence: «If God is for us, who can be against us? (...) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?» (Rom. 8:31, 35 NKJV). Paul responds with firm conviction: «I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come (...) shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord» (Rom. 8:38-39 NKJV).

REMEMBER...!

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