

Crucified and Risen with Christ

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[0 : 0 0] Fifty days after the death of Christ, Jews gathered in Jerusalem for a special religious festival, and Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, stood up in the city and spoke to the gathering and said, this Jesus you crucified by the hands of lawless men, God has raised from the dead, loosing the pangs of death, for it was not possible to hold him. And in that great statement, Peter was saying, first of all, there is a company of people who have seen

Jesus risen from the dead. Eyewitnesses. He has appeared to us. He is alive. And what he has done coming out of the tomb is of first importance. It is the good news that this broken world is waiting for. That in Christ, crucified and risen, we have a saviour from sin, from Satan, from death, and from all his enemies. That is the truth that we believe in as children of God this morning. As we turn to Colossians chapter 3, I want you to see that not only has Christ risen from the dead, but Christ has risen from the dead, taking us with him.

verse 20 of the previous chapter. If with Christ you died. And then into chapter 3, if then you have been raised with Christ. And the if there is not an if perhaps, but an if as is certainly the case. Since you have died with Christ. Since you have been raised with Christ.

You have died with Christ. Your life is hidden with Christ in God. The glorious, unique, historical, never to be repeated event of Jesus Christ. Happened as he took with him to the cross and the empty tomb.

All who believe in him. A qualification. Before we turn to the verses themselves.

[3 : 4 0] Jesus did something on the cross that he did entirely on his own.

He said to the disciples before he died, where I'm going, you cannot come now. And the importance of that is that he was going to the cross to do something that none of us could assist him in.

He went to the cross bearing our sins and he rose from the dead unassisted by any human being. He did that because only he could do it. None of us was good enough to help him.

Having said that, I come back to these words in Colossians. You have died with Christ. You have been raised with Christ.

You have died with him and your life is hidden with Christ in God. And I want to explore these words and to try and grasp what the Apostle is saying to us.

[5 : 0 0] You may, at first glance, find them rather fanciful. That we should have died with Jesus and raised with him. But I want to try and get into Paul's mind and to show us that there's nothing fanciful about it.

That he's talking about something that is of the utmost reality. And that it's true of every single Christian. Not just of a select few, but of all of us who've believed in Jesus.

That we have died with him and we've been raised with him. Well, I want to look at these verses and these words under two headings.

And the two headings show us two dimensions, two angles, you could say, of how we die with Christ and we rise with him.

The first one is this. If it's going to appear. The first one is this. If you're a child of God this morning, a believer in Jesus, you have participated in his death and resurrection.

[6 : 34] When he died and rose again. That is, when he died and rose again, he took you with him.

Now, I'm going to deal with this first dimension more briefly because it's not to the fore. It's not foremost in Colossians 3.

But it's so important we grasp it. And I want to take you to three Old Testament characters to help you understand what Paul is meaning.

First of all, I take you to the high priest. Now, in the arrangement that God gave the people for the atonement of their sins, God instructed the high priests to go to the place of sacrifice with special clothing, special garments, and two in particular.

The first one was a sash or a robe. I'm not exactly sure what we'd call it. They called it an ephod.

[7 : 48] And it would have gone round his shoulders. And on the shoulders were two stones. And engraved on the stones were six and six on each shoulder, twelve names of the sons of Jacob.

Twelve names of the tribes of Israel. And then, over the ephod, he put on, I guess it was a tunic.

It's called a breast piece. And sewn onto the breast piece were twelve very precious stones.

And onto each stone was written, again, the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. And in that picture, the Israelites were being shown that when the priest goes in to the place of sacrifice, he carries the people on his shoulder and in his heart.

They belonged to him at that critical point. And when our priest, our great priest, went to the cross, he took us on his shoulders and in his heart.

[9 : 29] Here's another illustration from the Scriptures. When David went into battle against the giant, and he killed him, his victory over Goliath immediately became the victory for the entire Israelite army.

And when Jesus went into the cross and came out of the empty tomb, in like manner, he gave victory over sin to the entire company of God's people.

And then, the third man of the Old Testament that I take you to. And here, actually, is the most important one. When Adam was in Eden, you and I were in Eden with him.

He was the head of the human race. And when Adam disobeyed God, he brought the entire humanity crashing down with him.

And when Jesus came as the new man, the second Adam, by his cross and resurrection, he took us with him and raised us with him from the dead.

[11 : 15] So that, just as by one man's disobedience, we were all made sinners, by one man's obedience, we are all made righteous.

We will all be made righteous. And so, it is, and I can, if I can, just leave this with you before we move on.

You and I, if we're Christians this morning, we shared in the death and resurrection of Christ at the very point when he died and rose again.

Now, I move on to the second dimension.

And this is what is very much to the fore in Colossians 3. Not only did you participate in his death and resurrection, but if you're a Christian this morning, you experienced his death and resurrection.

[12 : 32] In your death and resurrection. Let me explain. If you look back in verse 12 of the previous chapter, you'll see that we have been buried with him in baptism.

That's a sign of our belonging to Christ. Christ. In which he goes on, you were also raised with him through faith. And so, it is that when someone becomes a Christian, believes in Jesus, there is this involvement in the death and the rising of Jesus Christ.

Now, I want you to note how he says, with him. Because, before you became a Christian, you were without him. You were without God and without hope in the world.

You were totally apart from him. But when you had faith in Christ, you became with him.

Now, let's note the order. For each of us, it was death first and then life.

[13 : 55] Death and then life. you have died with him, says the apostle, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

And you died with him in your own experience of becoming a Christian. Elsewhere, Paul put it slightly differently.

I've been crucified with Christ. It's no longer me that lives, he said. No longer I who lives. And, when you and I entered into Christ, there is something in us that died.

Now, I want to, I want to try and be of help here to some of you who have not yet followed Jesus. You're not yet a Christian.

And perhaps you're weighing up whether this might be for you. And what we're hearing, what you're hearing here may alarm you. Is it really as extreme as this?

[15 : 05] A death before life? And I want to tell you, yes, the change that must happen in your life is utterly radical.

Colin, a few weeks back, used the expression, it's not a case of beginning a part-time job or taking up a hobby.

It is way bigger than either of those. It's a death-to-life experience. And if you ask Paul, well, what exactly was this death that I need to go through?

He would say this, it's obviously not a physical death. You don't need to die physically before you're raised with Jesus.

Nor is it actually a change in your appearance outwardly or in the kind of personality traits that you have. But it is this.

[16 : 16] It is coming to the point in your life where you recognize that all through my years so far, my fulfillment, my goals, my desires, have all been focused on me.

And I have been a me-worshipper. And when you come to Jesus and put your faith in him, you become a God-worshipper by dethroning yourself.

And Jesus comes in and he takes charge. That's the death that he calls you to die.

Let me now speak a word to believers.

Can you see how vast this is in your life? Part of the difficulties that we often get into is we do not we do not keep in the forefront of our minds just the magnitude of what happened when you became a Christian.

[18 : 02] It was absolutely earth-changing. As Paul puts it in verse nine here, you put off the old self with its practices and you put on the new.

When you became a Christian, the old you was terminated. Now, some of us may be thinking in our minds, well, I don't actually recall my becoming a Christian as being as drastic as that.

Perhaps you're saying it seemed so, such a, I wasn't so, there wasn't an emotional upheaval in my life. Or perhaps you're saying I became a Christian at such a young age that I can scarcely remember the day that it happened.

Now, whatever feelings you have about your conversion to Christ, we need to take it from Scripture that it was absolutely vast.

And so it is that you entered into the death and the resurrection of Jesus when you put your faith in him.

[19 : 37] And this great truth lies at the heart of everything that you as a Christian have. Your acceptance with God. Your entering into his family.

Your progress in the Christian life. Your eternal security. It all rests on the fact that you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Now, I want to go on to Paul's application. New life with the risen Christ always brings about a new lifestyle.

Always. there is no receiving of gospel blessings without there being a change into godly behavior.

Gospel blessings in Christ are always turned into Christian godliness. holiness. And that's immediately apparent from Paul's third chapter here.

[21 : 08] I think I should read it again to let us see how central Christian holiness is for the person who's died and risen with Christ.

First one. if then you have been raised with Christ seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Set your mind on the things that are above not on the things that are on earth for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God when Christ who is your life appears you also will appear with him in glory and here's the application here's the godly behavior that must follow put to death therefore what is earthly in you sexual immorality impurity passion evil desire and covetousness which is idolatry on account of these the wrath of God is coming in these you too once walked when you were living in them but you must put them all away anger wrath malice slander and obscene talk from your mouth don't lie to one another seeing you've put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator now you read these and you can see that

Paul is saying seek higher things seek the things of heaven set your mind on them put to death what belong to your old existence and put on a new life and that is the urgent exhortation that scripture gives to every Christian but I want to impress upon you from the apostle that there is here far more than mere exhortation there is far more than him saying this is what you now are obliged to do when you and I in Christ died and rose with him sins overwhelming power in your life was broken it was broken so that you are no longer under its dominion its enslavement previously you were utterly enslaved by it indeed previously and here's the thing you were incapable of obeying

Christ from the heart yes we may have done many good things heroic things compassionate things loving things but we never did it with the foremost thing in our mind that we might please him because the person who is of that old existence cannot obey the law of God he or she is incapable of pleasing him but in Christ we have been set free from that overpowering influence now I want to take you to a home in Pennsylvania about certainly 60 years ago and there was a gathering which turned into a kind of informal home group and the topic of their discussion was the way in which

[25 : 49] Adam's sin has spread out to everyone and infests every corner of our lives and there was a man in the group who was known for his humility and his Christian maturity and at one point in the discussion someone turned to him and complimented him on his godliness and he responded immediately by saying if you only knew the cesspool of iniquity that's in my heart and I imagine that some of the members of the group were a bit taken aback by this but what he said actually puts his finger on a problem we have with

Paul's teaching because what we what happens to us is that we cannot see how this victory over sins enslavement is born out in the reality of our daily lives this man used a very ugly comparison of liking the sin in his heart to untreated sewage church that that is actually how we so often feel that we as children of God there are times when we realize we've let him down so badly we have soiled our lives and we then at that point ask ourselves am I any different from what I was before I became a Christian I look at my my crisis at this moment in time and

I say have I actually changed at all from what I was before I believed and am I any different from the people about me who are not Christians and that man in the group would have come to you and he would have said to you there is all the difference in the world there is an eon of difference between what you were before you believed and what you now are in Christ because in Christ yes we sometimes feel dreadfully dirtied by our sin but sin is no longer the controlling power in your life brothers and sisters and we need to keep coming back to that heavenly reality and to realize it and to set our minds on it and to glory in it that is the truth about you that sin is no longer the controlling power in your life because you have put off the old nature with its practices verse 9 and you have actually put on the new nature and there is walking about

Glasgow now a new you and I want to say to you this this is an engine for our holiness really this is a dynamic in our lives as we think on it and dwell on it this is a dynamic that helps us to battle against the temptations that persistently trouble us you have died and today your life is hidden with Christ in God let's pray dear loving father please help us to set our mind on these things to consider them and to reckon them to be true for us and help us in our ongoing struggles of putting to death what is earthly and putting on all that gives you pleasure amen to let them and you