

1.22.23 Resurrected and Crucified

Two things are vital to any **true grasp** of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. 1Cor 15:3b ...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **4** ...and ... He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, Jesus, the Son of Man, who is God in the flesh, was “lifted up” on a cross-where He died for our sins. And that same Jesus, was resurrected to a bodily life after death. The **Crucifixion and Resurrection** of Jesus securely anchor the Gospel.

SIN and DEATH are the **despicable duo** that have enslaved Humanity to the destructive self-harm of sin and all Creation to the despairing futility of death. In his death and resurrection, the Son of Man dealt once and for all with sin and death. **His crucifixion deals with sin. His resurrection deals with death.**

Jesus’ death provides atonement for our sin. Sin is defeated and everything has been put right between us and God. **And Jesus’ resurrection** provides concrete evidence that -with Sin defeated- **Death has been disarmed and will be dismissed.** Death still barks its threat of separation, but it has no bite. And in Jesus’ resurrection God has promised us that -ultimately- **everything** [the world] **is going to be alright.**

And all of this was accomplished because of the unstoppable, no-matter-what, perfect love of God for YOU and all His glorious Creation. The **Resurrection proves Gods love for you** and it SHOUTS the words of **Julian of Norwich**: *All shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well. Or, in our vernacular: Everything is going to be alright.*

But, of course everything isn’t alright in the present. Is it? The present is full of “all manner of thing” that do not seem to be “well.” There’s hunger and homelessness and depression that feels like “living death.” There are hate groups and bullies and abusers of children, women, and power. There are wildfires, hurricanes, flooding, and earth-quakes; there’s cancer, addiction, human trafficking, and @20 mass shootings a year. **Because of Jesus’ Crucifixion and Resurrection “All shall be well,” but there’s no shortage of suffering in the present – even for those who believe in Jesus.**

In 2nd Corinthians Paul -who taught us about the Resurrection in 1Cor15- has something to say about this issue. He says: [NAS] **2Cor. 1:8** For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came *to us* in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; **9** indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves...

The TEV puts it: **8b** ...The burdens laid upon us were so great and so heavy that we gave up all hope of staying alive. **9** We felt that the death sentence had been passed on us...

NIV We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. **9** Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death.

NLT: **2Cor. 1:8b** ...We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. **9** In fact, we expected to die.

We always think of Paul as the brash, unassailable, action hero -a Gospel Indiana Jones. BUT here in 2nd Cor 1:8-9, he's describing a time when he was broken, certain that all is lost, expecting death, despairing, and basically in deep depression. **What pulled the rug out from under the heroic Theologian-Missionary?** [paint you a picture!!]

The first time Paul visited Corinth [Vegas/SanFrancisco of Greece] he stayed @a year and a half. As always, he started sharing about Jesus with the Jews in the local synagogue. When they start to oppose & abuse him he leaves, taking the Jewish Christians with him and sets up shop at some gentiles home next door. [Priscilla & Aquilla]. The Jews try to take him to court but the judge drops the case.

Then Paul heads to **Ephesus for @3 years.** From there he writes 1st Corinthians. He visits Corinth again- probably to deal with some of the issues of 1st Cor.

The visit doesn't go well. He refers to it in 2nd Cor as a "painful visit" [2cor2:1] –painful for them and really painful for him. After the visit he wrote them another letter. 2Cor 2:4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; This **"teary" letter-** written from Ephesus- probably wasn't preserved [though some think it's part of 2cor].

During his stay in Ephesus, Paul followed his standard operating procedure-Synagogue and the Jews first until they threw him out. Then he moved to a local lecture hall sharing with both Jews and Greeks. Lots of miracles happened in Ephesus: sick healed and demons cast out. A bunch of local Ephesians gave up sorcery and burned their scrolls publicly. [7sonsofSceva] The Name of Jesus was becoming revered. **And then the bottom dropped out.**

An **Ephesian silversmith** realized that if Paul kept on doing what he was doing his souvenir, Artemis Idol-making business was going to take a HIT and with it his bank account. [Ephesus' temple of Artemis was famous]. So he gets the local metal smith's guild together and works them up into a frenzy and they work the crowd into a riot [Harold Hill in Music Man]. Two of Paul's associates were grabbed by the mob and dragged into the amphitheater.

Everything had been going so well, so amazingly well in Ephesus- and then it all fell apart. **Paul fled** out of there as quick as he could. Much later, he secretly meets the Ephesian elders in another city reminding them of his hardships and tests.

And then- on the edge of this catastrophe- **Paul gets word that his "Teary letter" didn't work.** And the Corinthian Church –one of Paul's biggest church plants- is stepping away from the Gospel and embracing teachers and teachings that were contrary to the good news of the Kingdom Paul had taught them. **AND- adding insult to injury- the Corinthians were belittling and disparaging Paul personally!!**

Talking about him as if he **wasn't good enough**. Paul, asks with a "sad sarcasm" – "Do I have to send you letters of recommendation? [2Cor 3:1]"

And...in chapters 4, 6, & 11& 12 Paul lays out his Apostolic credentials in his actions, sufferings and resiliency in hardship. **In ch7 he begs them "make room for us in your hearts."** we wronged no one, we corrupted no one, we took advantage of no one [2Cor 7:2]

In ch10 he quotes the Corinthians as saying he's bold in pen & paper but he's a timid little nobody when he's here. They call him "unimpressive in person" and say his "speaking amounts to nothing." [2Cor 10:10]

In ch11 He tells them they've fallen for **a different Jesus, a different Spirit and a different Gospel** because it came from an impressive voice and personality of some Oprah-like, Celebrity-apostle. In defending himself against the Corinthians comments on his inferiority he says: **2Cor. 11:5-6** I don't think I'm inferior in any way to your "super-apostles." Even though I'm not good with words, I know what I'm talking about.

No wonder he despaired of life and felt as though he was sentenced to death.

He's on the run for his life from Ephesus. The Jews hate him and have a lawsuit with his name on it. The church there is reeling. And now his church family in Corinth - people he loves, people he went out of his way to help- have found shinier, more interesting, people to follow and they're dismissing their "father in the faith" as mediocre, unimpressive and disposable.

To all appearances **Paul had failed** in teaching the gospel to the Corinthians. To all appearance **his faith, his commission, his work was in ruins** and his life was threatened. The way things were going he was likely to die in prison feeling he'd failed the Ephesians, the Corinthians and the Lord Jesus?

And so in this moment sometime after the trouble in Ephesus but before 2nd

Corinthians is written all of Paul's fears get together and join hands and start doing a little dance round and round his mind sucking him into the darkness of depression.

And he describes that moment saying: The burdens of that moment crushed the life from me. I was hopeless. I felt like I was a "dead man walking" to a "short drop and a quick stop."

Then there's an amazing turnaround. TEV puts it best. **2Cor 1:9** We felt that the death sentence had been passed on us. [pause] **But** this happened so that we should rely, not on ourselves, but only on God, who raises the dead. **Of course Paul already relied on the God who raises the dead?** All the NT makes that clear. [A lesson we have to learn again and again.]

According to our brother, the hardship, pain, failure, depression, and death threats brought him a deeper reliance on "the God who raises the dead."

2nd Corinthians is written with that new insight. Paul can remember how deep his dark was, how broken his soul was. But on this side of the tragedy he can say...

2Cor. 4: 8 *we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; **9** persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; **10** always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the

life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. **11** For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

You see? In v10 & 11, Paul marks the ugly, tragic, painful, frustrating bits of his life and ministry- as mysteriously connected to the suffering and death of Jesus. In ALL his teaching **Paul sees his hardships and ours as accomplishing God's work in the world like Jesus' suffering on the cross accomplished God's work in the world**. As parts of the Body of Jesus Christ, our hardships are [somehow] a means to accomplish God's salvation purpose in the world.

2Cor1:5 he says 5 ... **the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance,**

And we saw in **4:10** he says they are 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

In **Phil 3** he says he's "suffered the loss of all things...[v8]" so he can know the "power of the resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings." [we'll come back to this!]

He told the Thessalonians not to be dismayed by "sufferings" because he'd taught them they were "bound to face suffering" if they followed Jesus [1Thes 3:2-4].

He's clear to the Colossians: **Col. 1:24** Now I rejoice in my **sufferings** for your sake, and in my flesh I am supplementing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions in behalf of His body, which is the church.

Peter also says, "Don't be surprised by hardship: **1Pet. 4:13** ...to the degree that you share the **sufferings** of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that at the revelation of His glory you may also rejoice... **And in**

Rev 12 we read that the multitude defeated the dragon **11** ...by the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony. And they did not love their lives so much that they were afraid to die.

See, your hardships, your sufferings, your struggles, -somehow- "carry forward the redemptive effect of Jesus' own death, not by adding to it, but by sharing in it" [N.T.Wright]

Because you are the body of Christ on earth, your sufferings are somehow part of His. And His suffering redeemed the world. So, as His body on earth, your sufferings [somehow] contribute to the salvation of the world. So as James says: **James 1:2** Consider it all joy, my brothers *and sisters*, when you encounter various trials,

Not only is "nothing we do for the Lord in vain;" but our suffering, our trials, our hardships are [somehow] part of Jesus' suffering and [somehow] our hardships contribute to His saving purpose. And so **God's people are "bound to face suffering."** It will not be escaped because, in it, we [somehow] contribute to our King's redemption of the Kosmos.

So Paul comes out of the Ephesus-Corinth debacle with a deeper understanding of the God who raises the dead. And that is:

To follow the resurrected One, is also to follow the crucified One. Our Lord is the crucified one who suffers. And He is the resurrected one who conquers.

Yes, like Paul, of course we WANT to know "the power of the resurrection." The power of the Resurrection is New Creation, it's renewal and restoration, it's the world finally and

completely put to rights- it's God's Kingdom COME and God's will DONE on earth as in Heaven. Of course we want that. But- like Paul -our example- we also need to be willing and able to know the "fellowship of his sufferings" [Phil 3]. Because when we do, in the name of Jesus, according to scripture we supplement what is lacking in Christ's afflictions in behalf of His body, which is the church [Col 1] And we learn to rely **2Cor 1:9** ...not on ourselves, but only on God, who raises the dead.

Jesus is the Resurrected One and He is the Crucified One. Our Lord is the crucified one who suffers. And He is the resurrected one who conquers.

As His people, in Him we will conquer and in Him we will suffer.

N.T. Wright takes all this in and observes, "If you want to see resurrection at work here and now in your own life, you have to be prepared to see crucifixion at work as well."

The Corinthian Church preferred the rhetorically impressive, "super-apostles" over the simple but knowledgeable Paul. Similarly, they wanted the glorious **Resurrected One**. But They didn't want the suffering **Crucified One**. But Our Lord is both. Paul was not the apostle the Corinthians wanted. But he was the apostle they needed.

So Paul wrote 2nd Cor in order to help them understand that **being a follower of the Crucified and Resurrected One is not being a "success story" according to normal human standards.** We are disciples of a resurrected **AND** crucified Lord. The gist of 2nd Corinthians is that being a Christian is walking through suffering, pain and failure WITH "the God who raises the dead" KNOWING as we share in the sufferings of Christ we are [somehow] participating in His work of redeeming the world.

Because of Jesus' resurrection we can trust the **God who raises the dead** even when we are- as Paul wrote- 2Cor6:8b...We are honest, but they call us impostors. **9** We are ignored, even though we are well known. We live close to death, but we are still alive. We have been beaten, but we have not been killed. **10** Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything.

Because of Jesus' crucifixion we trust the God who loves this world so much that He gave his only Son. And that's why we can be, as brother Paul says, 4:8 ...afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; **9** persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;

And, because He is our crucified and resurrected Lord, sometimes in the here and now and for certain in the age to come: Everything will be all right. Or... As I like to say: *All shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.*