

**The Family Prayer Center
615 Nassau Street
Immokalee, Fl. 34142**

**The Resurrection Above Ground
and the Resurrection Below Ground – April Letter 2023**

Dear Friend,

This coming Sunday is Easter. It's a time to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The testimony of His resurrection from the dead is recorded in all four of the gospels. Without the resurrection, the gospel message is meaningless. There is no gospel message to preach to the world without a resurrection from the dead.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

The power of God unto salvation all hinges on a resurrected Christ. Paul proclaimed that he was not ashamed, or you might say embarrassed, to preach the gospel because the gospel could be proclaimed with power due to a resurrection. The blood of Jesus on the cross was not enough to redeem us back to God. There had to be a resurrection by the One who came to redeem us. **THE REDEEMER HAD TO BE REDEEMED!** The very redeemer Himself had to be redeemed back to God in a process that took place in an unseen world below the ground of the earth He had been crucified on.

Everything is meaningless without a resurrection!

- A sinless life is meaningless without a resurrection.
- The garden of Gethsemane where Jesus began to drink the cup of sin for all mankind is meaningless without a resurrection.
- The judgment halls of Herod and Pilate where Jesus was judged by mankind is meaningless without a resurrection.
- The scourging post where Jesus received a most horrific beating for the sins and sicknesses of mankind is meaningless without a resurrection

Isaiah 52:14 As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.

Isaiah 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Isaiah 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Isaiah 53:5 But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

- The crucifixion is meaningless without a resurrection.

Luke 23:33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

In the minds of most Christians, the judgment of Christ for the sins of mankind ends here at His death on the cross. Most Christians accept His final words “IT IS FINISHED” as the completed work of redemption.

John 19:30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

The physical sufferings of Christ ended at that moment. The physical sufferings of Christ ended on the cross above the ground of the earth, but the sufferings of Christ were far from over. And redemption was still hanging in the balance of a work that was not yet completed. Jesus was about to enter into the last leg of His journey in redeeming mankind back to God. The next part is perhaps the most crucial. The next part involves the spiritual sufferings of Christ.

The spiritual sufferings of Christ were locked away in a place of the unseen. No human witness could look on these things and testify of them as they did His sufferings on the cross. No, these sufferings could only be witnessed by the Holy Spirit and then testified to mankind through the prophets and apostles. No one could go there with Him except Jesus Himself.

John 13:36 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

Jesus not only offered His body for our redemption, but perhaps even greater, He offered His spirit in place of my sinful nature. Jesus actually became sin for us and then died under the penalty of that sinful nature.

2 Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Jesus did not just become the example for our sin. The language here in the original Greek is that He actually was made sin and became sin. And the Bible tells us that the wages of sin is death. Just like every departed human being who ever died without the life of God in their spirits, Jesus was condemned to Hell to face the penalty for sin not for Himself, but for all of mankind.

The description of His sufferings in Hell are perhaps best described by two prophets: Jonah and the Psalmist. Jesus Himself testified that Jonah’s experience in the belly of the whale would best exemplify His coming suffering in the place of the damned.

Matthew 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

When you read the following portion of scripture from the book of Jonah, I would encourage you not to read it with a consciousness of Jonah in the belly of a whale, but rather Jesus’ suffering in Hell.

Jonah 2:1 Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly,

Jon 2:2 And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, *and* thou heardest my voice.

Jon 2:3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

Jon 2:4 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

Jon 2:5 The waters compassed me about, *even* to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.

Jon 2:6 I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars *was* about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.

Jon 2:7 When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.

Just imagine the place that Jesus found Himself in mere moments after the cross. He no sooner said "It is finished" and gave up the ghost (His spirit) than He found Himself in another place of judgment. The depth of darkness was unimaginable. The confinement in a place of torment with no possible escape begs a place of insanity beyond all human description.

The Psalmist describes with perfect accuracy the place where Jesus suffered. Once again, do not read the following as the Psalmist's experience, but as Christ's.

Psa 88:1 O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day *and* night before thee:

Psa 88:2 Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry;

Psa 88:3 For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.

Psa 88:4 I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man *that hath* no strength:

Psa 88:5 Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand.

Psa 88:6 Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.

Psa 88:7 Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted *me* with all thy waves. Selah.

Psa 88:8 Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: *I am* shut up, and I cannot come forth.

Psa 88:9 Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.

Psa 88:10 Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise *and* praise thee? Selah.

Psa 88:11 Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? *or* thy faithfulness in destruction?

Psa 88:12 Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

Psa 88:13 But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.

Psa 88:14 LORD, why castest thou off my soul? *why* hidest thou thy face from me?

Psa 88:15 *I am* afflicted and ready to die from *my* youth up: *while* I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.

Psa 88:16 Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off.

Psa 88:17 They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together.

Psa 88:18 Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, *and* mine acquaintance into darkness.

The above verses try to describe a place of indescribable darkness. The terror is only magnified by the fact that there is no escape. No one can rescue you. Lover and friend is cut off from you. You are in a land of forgetfulness. There is no portal back into the real world of humanity. There are no doors, no windows, no worm holes of escape – just eternal confinement.

Jesus Himself described Hell during His earthly ministry, knowing that one day He would suffer there for mankind.

Mark 9:47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

Mark 9:48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Amplified

Mark 9:48 Where their worm [which preys on the inhabitants and is a symbol of the wounds inflicted on the man himself by his sins] does not die, and the fire is not put out.

Jesus was in an extreme place of torment. He was not only suffering the flames of Hell, but the horrendous creatures that are designed to add to the place of judgment. The statement “It is finished” above ground on the cross was all He could do in His earthly sacrifice. Now in Hell, He was paying the ultimate sacrifice for all of mankind with His human spirit. No soul had ever escaped this place of judgment in all of the thousands of years of its existence. Jesus knew He was stranded without divine intervention. He had committed His spirit into the hands of His Heavenly Father, and without His faithfulness, there was no escape. But Jesus clung to one infallible word.

Psalms 16:10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Acts 2:25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

Acts 2:26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

Acts 2:27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

What an incredible trust Jesus had in His Father. He believed that His Father would not forget Him in Hell. He believed even in His torment that His Father would raise Him up when the price was paid. Jesus’ faith was rewarded. At the moment of fulfillment, Jesus was resurrected from spiritual death back into spiritual life. There truly was a resurrection from death to life in the midst of Hell! The same Holy Spirit that quickens us at our new birth went into the belly of Hell to resurrect Jesus from His spiritual death to spiritual life once again! GLORY!!!!

Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

Romans 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Jesus became the first born ever from spiritual darkness back into spiritual light, and it happened not at the resurrection of the tomb, but rather in the belly of Hell! PRAISE GOD FOREVER!

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

Jesus Himself was quickened with spiritual life by the Holy Spirit. The Bible tells us that Jesus went on to preach to the just spirits of men in the holding place of paradise, and then led them from that place to the Father in Heaven. But what an incredible three-day journey. No one will ever know the full extent of the suffering that Jesus went through during those days except He and the Father. But make no mistake about it, Jesus had a spiritual resurrection below ground in Hell before the stone was ever rolled away on that first Easter morning. And now, we get to celebrate the above ground resurrection of our Savior coming out of both physical and spiritual death!

What a God! What a Savior! What a plan!

When you celebrate Easter this coming Sunday, please celebrate it with a deeper understanding of the price that was paid.

And if such a price was paid for our beginning, where should our end be? Revival and the Harvest are at hand!

Candy and I want to thank you so much for being partners together in this outpouring. We love you beyond words and pray for your prosperity in spirit, soul, and body.

I will see you in the Revival!

Blessings,
Pastor Bronc