

JESUS IS ALIVE!

REASONS TO REJOICE

Matthew 28:5-8

INTRODUCTION: In these days of bad news, it is wonderful to hear good news. You wouldn't think of hearing good news in a cemetery. Yet, the greatest news to mortal man was heard at the tomb of Jesus. "He is not here, but is risen!" The women heard the good news and then left the tomb "with fear and great joy." We have a reason to rejoice because Jesus is alive! All the blessings of God to His children hang on this truth: Jesus arose from the dead.

I. BELIEVER'S DEBT HAS BEEN PAID

We hear of the enormous amount of debt the United States owes today. Most of us cannot relate to a million dollars, let alone a trillion dollars. A trillion dollars = \$1,000,000,000,000. Someone has said that a trillion dollars would be enough money to buy about a 1,000 boxes of Girl Scout cookies for every person in the United States. A trillion barrels of oil at the current consumption levels could fuel the world for about 33 years. One million seconds comes out to be about 11½ days. A billion seconds is 32 years. And a trillion seconds is 32,000 years. I don't know if that is correct because it is more than I can count.

Our debt of sin is even greater and beyond our comprehension. If we spent a trillion years in hell it would not pay our debt of sin. The punishment for sin is to spend eternity in the flames of hell. Why is the punishment so great? It is because sin is against our Creator who is holy and righteous. Our sin is detestable and repulsive to God. It is because our sin is against God, who is love.

God's love was revealed in "that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." (1 John 4:9) Jesus paid our debt of sin in full. "But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God." (Hebrew 10:12) "When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Hebrews 1:3) The saved are justified by His blood. (Romans 5:9) Justification means "just-as-if-I-never-sinned."

II. BELIEVER'S DEATH HAS BEEN CONQUERED

The Psalmist wrote: "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?" Every person has an appointment with death. (Hebrews 9:27) The wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23) As sinners, we are like hunted criminals being sought after by death. Death is our enemy. Sin entered the world through Adam "so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned." (Romans 5:12) Jesus took on flesh and blood so "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." (Hebrews 2:14) Jesus conquered death when He arose on the third day.

We now can say with Paul, Death is swallowed up in victory. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (Romans 15:54-55) Jesus reigns as the King of life. His shout of victory is found in Revelation 1:18: "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death." The one who has the keys is the one who has the authority. Jesus has complete authority over hell and death.

When we receive Jesus as our Savior, we share in His death and His life. Paul said, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." (Romans 6:5) "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2:20)

While death may claim my physical body, I have the promise of Christ: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24) I have spiritual life.

III. BELIEVER'S DESTINATION HAS BEEN DETERMINED.

The destination of the saved has been determined because of Christ's resurrection. Christ said to His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14:2) That place is heaven. Our eternal home is in glory. Jesus promised, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:3) In Philippians 3:20-21 it is written: "For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Philippians. 3:20-21) The fulfillment of these promises is sure because of Christ's resurrection.

I am looking for my risen Lord to come and take me to my eternal home. In that glorious home of the redeemed, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." (Revelation 21:4)

Some day I will be removed from this world which is cursed with sin, sorrow and death. In heaven there will be no economic problems. In heaven, there will be no little children whose bellies are bloated because they are hungry. In heaven, no mother will have to cuddle her sick child in her arms. We will not be hearing of killings and deaths. In heaven there will be neither hospitals nor funeral homes. Heaven is filled with life and love.

My destination has been determined. I have placed my faith in the One who died for me on Calvary's hill and rose victoriously on the third day. I have received His life. Now I can say "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us (me) from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our (my) Lord." (Romans 8:38-39) I am more than a conqueror through Him that loves me. (Romans 8:37) The resurrection of Christ is my proof that I am forgiven and have an eternal home waiting for me in heaven. I want to live for Him because He was willing to die for me. What a wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord.

LESSONS FOR LIFE:

1) Jesus paid our sin debt in full and has given us eternal life. We have a reason to rejoice!

1) We can face our tomorrows because we know who holds our future. Jesus said, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20) We have a reason to rejoice!

2) When we take our final breath, the living Christ will be there to walk with us through the dark valley of death. He will guide us into His city where there will be no night. (Revelation 22:5) We shall live in His eternal light, His glory. We have a reason to rejoice!

3) The empty tomb affirms there is life after death. In the unseen world, there are two places a person can spend eternity. The person who is saved will spend eternity with Jesus in heaven. The person who is lost will spend eternity with the Devil in hell. Where are you going to spend your first trillion years of eternity?

Helen Blackburn told me of her young friend in church who had cancer. They were close friends. As the cancer grew worse, the young woman began to focus more on heaven. One day she said, I wonder how beautiful heaven must be.

As she was dying, her final words were, "Heaven is so beautiful" as she closed her eyes in death.