



Rising From The Ashes of Life

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You cannot be a person of faith and not celebrate the most significant Christian holiday of Christ's resurrection. We should consider how it can impact our lives in a multitude of ways. One of those ways is how a person can make a mess of their life before and after knowing Jesus Christ as Lord and find themselves on the ash heap looking for restoration. I believe that this is precisely what Christ's resurrection can mean for someone in that condition.

Isaiah 61:1-3

1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;
2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;
3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, **to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness**; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, *that he might be glorified.* KJV

This passage of scripture is a prophetic promise of a coming day that was fulfilled in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ! The nation of Israel and what they have gone through over the thousands of years since their inception is representative of the world in which we live today.

There were seasons where the Children of Israel kept their eyes on the God of Abraham and experienced great blessings. There were other times when they forgot about God and found themselves falling into bondage to other nations and suffering needless consequences! I believe that is why we are told in **1 Corinthians 10:11**,

11. These are all warning markers— danger !—in our history books, written down **so that we don't repeat their mistakes**. *Our positions in the story are parallel—they at the beginning, we at the end—and we are just as capable of messing it up as they were.* Don't be so naive and self-confident. **You're not exempt. You could fall flat on your face as easily as anyone else. Forget about self-confidence; it's useless. Cultivate God-confidence.** MSG

These Christians in Corinth were being warned by Paul of possible consequences that their forefathers experienced. Even though they were called by God and drank from the spiritual rock which was symbolic of Christ, the people of Israel still subjected themselves to practicing; *Lusts, Idolatry, Sexual Sin, Tempting Christ, and Murmuring*. Sadly this is the case with many in churches who name the name of Jesus Christ! **The result has been that too many Christ followers have ended up with their lives on the ash heap.** Many are discouraged and despondent.

For those who are sincerely repentant and turn to God for His forgiveness, they can rise from these *ash consequences* and face a greater day in their future. What happened to the Children of Israel is a lot like what can happen to believers in Christ today! Moments where we acknowledge God and experience His favor along with His blessings versus times where we have forgotten Him and all He did for us!

It's in those difficult times of our lives that God reminds us of His great love for us and beckons us to return to Him where He awaits us with **Love, Mercy and Forgiveness!** Just like the Father of the prodigal son, he allowed his son to do what he knew would cause him to end up on the ash heap and ultimately in a pig's pen. Still the father had a firm expectation that his son would return to him. When he did the father did not berate him or give him the *I told you so...speech*, instead he showed him love and showered him with gifts and a homecoming celebration!

The great story of the Prodigal Son that Jesus told us in **Luke 15** was designed to give us a genuine glimpse of our Heavenly Father and His great patience and love for us. Even when we make wrong decisions that cost us greatly in our lives. The Apostle Paul revealed in **Romans 8:39**, that ***there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!*** To me this is the story of Easter and Christ's Resurrection. The sheer determination and passionate pursuit of God our Father to bring us into His Family is what Christ's sacrifice truly means.

In our opening passage from **Isaiah 61** God offers us the best deal that mankind has ever been offered. God is willing to exchange what we have for what He has. This is the essence of ***Covenant!*** When two people entered in to a *Covenant*, they not only cut themselves where their blood was intermingled but they also gave each other ***Covenant*** gifts in exchange. **It would not matter if one was richer and the other one poorer!**

Think about when King Saul's son, *Jonathan*, struck a ***Covenant*** with the sheep herder now turned Giant slayer name *David*. *Jonathan* had a Prince's robe and *David* had a sheep herder's coat that was dirty and smelled like the sheep. *Jonathan* gave *David* his Prince's sword and *David* gave *Jonathan* a sling shot! It may not seem like a fair exchange but it is a ***Covenant*** relationship that is identical to the *exchange* we have received from our relationship with our *Heavenly Father!*

These verses in **Isaiah 61** tell us of God's willingness to make a trade with us. *God will take what we have and give us what He has;*

1. ***Beauty for Ashes***
2. ***The Oil of Joy for Mourning***
3. ***The Garment of Praise for the spirit of heaviness!***

God takes the ashes and gives us the beauty of salvation and forgiveness. God takes our sorrow and mourning and gives us the oil of joy in its place. God gives us the Garment of Praise and releases us from the spirit of heaviness. WHAT AN EXCHANGE!

If you think about it ***ashes are the remains of that which has been ruined due to fire!*** We are told in scripture that there are some things in our lives that will be burned with fire and that we will not be rewarded for them.

The bible talks about fiery trials that are to try us in **1 Peter 4:12**. The three Hebrew boys; Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown in to the ***fiery furnace*** in **Daniel 3:19-30**, but came out unscathed! The book of **Nehemiah 2:3**, tells the story of how the Children of Israel ended up in bondage to a foreign nation and how the city of Jerusalem lay in ruins and ***its gates were burned with fire***. It took only 52 days for **Nehemiah** and the remnant people to rebuild the walls and restore the city to greatness in **Nehemiah 6:15!**

Our sufferings are the result of our choices in life! They reflect the internal condition of our heart! Truly our lives are composed of our choices and constructed by our words!

Everything Jesus suffered on the cross is a mirror image of, not His own condition, but of our own sinful condition. *When you look at the cross you should recognize yourself hanging there instead of Him!* Jesus' passion was as our *Kinsman redeemer*. **He took our place...He became what we were so that we could be as He is now!**

Galatians 2:20 - IT'S ALL ABOUT "IDENTIFICATION!"

20. ***"My old identity*** has been co-crucified with Messiah and ***no longer lives***; *for the nails of his cross crucified me with him* . And now the essence of this new life is no longer mine, **for the Anointed One lives his life through me— we live in union as one !** My new life is empowered by the faith of the Son of God who loves me so much that he gave himself for me, and ***dispenses his life into mine!*** TPT

Ephesians 2:5-7 - Quickened, Raised and SEATED with Christ!

5. even when we were dead in trespasses, ***made us alive together*** with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
6. and ***raised us up together***, and made us ***sit together*** in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

7. that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace *in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.* NKJV

Isaiah 53:3 tells us that Jesus was ***Despised & Rejected by Men!***
Still He rose from those ashes!

3. He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; ***He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.***
NKJV

John 6:40

40. And *this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and **I will raise him up at the last day.***” NKJV

God is NOT through with you as some have mistakenly believed. *I’m disqualified...*they say! I think we all have felt that way at some point in our Christian journey. The Bible says in **Proverbs 24:16,**

16. **No matter how many times you trip them up, God-loyal people don't stay down long; Soon they're up on their feet, while the wicked end up flat on their faces.** MSG

It is time for you to get back up and get back to what God has called you to do...***Live the Resurrected Christ Life!***

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