

Jesus is Risen: Do Not Lose Heart
2Corinthians 3:16-18

As we come and celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus In this early morning service, it is incredible to think the change that would come over those who loved Jesus and who would come to actually see him that resurrection day. Whether it was Mary or the women at the tomb, or the disciples gathered in the Upper Room, the resurrection of the Jesus changed them significantly and permanently. Some would now even die for Christ knowing nothing of eternal value was in jeopardy. And we realize we have no hope and no faith and no expectancy in the future if Jesus is not resurrected. And so we are also a changed people, and should continue to be a changed people because death could not hold our Lord.

As we come to this passage of Scripture, Paul begins this paragraph in verse 16, **“So we do not lose heart.”** We realize “heart” is talking about the inner you — your mind, will and emotions. It is both who you are and what is going on inside of you. To lose heart is to despair, to lose any hope or expectation that things will get better. I think we all know this but this life is hard and difficult. We live in this fallen world and with fallen people, and your life and my life has not gone the way we thought it would. Every single marriage, no matter who is in the marriage will become a struggle, your children will bring heart ache and pain, no matter how healthy you are your body will break down, no matter how great your job is there will be times you wish you could just quit. And we many times come to an end of ourselves, and it is easy to lose heart. We want to quit our lives, run away from all our problems, maybe give up on our relationships. There is no hope in this situation. There is no hope in following God at least in my situation. And where has the fall come down on you to cause you to lose heart? Where do you want to give in and give up?

Because, listen to how Paul starts this verse again, **“So we do not lose heart.”** Notice first of all the plural pronoun “we.” He is writing not to certain believers at Corinth but all of them, and by extension all of us. And also notice the first word “So.” That word looks back, and on the basis of the truths that have just been presented we do not lose heart. So the temptation is to take our eyes off the truth of Christ and just look horizontally at our struggles and problems and be overwhelmed. But we all need to look to Christ and not lose heart. But here is the question, what truth is Paul talking about that causes believers, you and me, not to lose heart? And that is what I want to look at before we enjoy a delicious breakfast together. And I want us to see a couple of truths, and I hope it will be encouraging and help all of us as we live in this world of pain, loss and disappointment that we will not lose heart, but be so encouraged to follow our living Christ.

1. We do not lose heart because Christ is raised from the dead. V. 14.

One of the main things that gives me so much confidence that I will one day be with Christ in glory is not looking at my stellar life. I think the more we look at our lives, the more we are honest about our thoughts, the more we see anger and sin and pride and lust and unforgiveness. My life is not a stellar life, so if I kept looking at my life then I would always lack security and joy and assurance. But the thing that gives us so much assurance and stability and joy is not just looking at the sacrifice of Christ,

although that is so great, but also looking at the resurrection of Christ. Think about it, death could not hold my Saviour and Lord. And we don't see the glory in that truth so maybe we do not think and meditate and encourage our hearts enough with the truth that Jesus is alive, and in particular what that means not only for my present and what that means for my future as far as my salvation. And the more we recognize his resurrection and what that means for our salvation, the more it changes us in all our trials, suffering, and causes us not to losing heart. In fact seeing our resurrected Jesus does the opposite of losing heart — regardless of what we are going through it gives hope my God is for me and can never, nor never will be against me.

Look at the beginning of this verse, **“knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus.”** The more I see this word in “knowing” in the scripture the more I so appreciated it. It does not point to something we need to learn but something that we already know as believers in Christ. We know that “he” as the verse says is God the Father. And what did God the Father do? He raised Jesus from the dead. He resurrected him. And so often we think this is a great ending to a bad story, or this is the way God corrects a great injustice that has been done. But we do not realize the significance of the resurrection to our faith? One is that by the Father resurrecting Jesus he validates all of the words and works of Jesus. It shows us the truth of who Jesus is and what he says can be trusted. Jesus said they would take him and execute him and that he would rise again three days later. If he was a sinner, or a fraud, or a false Messiah then he would have remained in the grave. Peter after preaching about the resurrection of Christ on the Day of Pentecost says in Acts 2:36, **“Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”** He is Lord and Messiah. The resurrection is God's stamp of approval on the life, words, and promises that Jesus gave. So when Jesus says that He will give his life as a ransom for sin, God the Father gives his stamp of approval on that promise by resurrecting him. I know that what he has done on the cross has been validated through his resurrection on the cross.

But not only that we realize the reason why God the Father resurrected the Son is not that he felt sorry for the Son or wanted to give him a break after all that he went through but because God the Father is absolutely holy and righteous. And because he is holy and righteous, the only righteous thing God the Father could do is resurrect the Son. Think about it, if the wages of sin is death, and Jesus is my sin bearer and he cannot pay for one of my sins, then he is still under the just and righteous judgment of God. God's wrath is still somehow and somehow still being poured out on him, and he has to remain in the grave. And we are people to be pitied because we have trusted in a false Christ. But also on the Day of Pentecost Peter preaches, Acts 2:24, **“God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.”** It was not possible to be held by death because he had paid the debt of sin. Think through the nature and character of God. If the wages of sin is death. Jesus died and paid the wage, then if he remains dead then God would be unrighteous to keep under the penalty that he has paid fully. God is just. Therefore God raised him from the dead. Folks, Jesus is alive!

So think of what the message for us is. All our sin has been forgiven forevermore. His sacrifice has forever secured our forgiveness. I never have to wonder

if Christ has forgiven this sin or that sin, or if this sin or that sin is unforgivable. So think of it. Because whatever mess I find myself in — in my life I am redeemed. I am forgiven. The things that I am going through are not a measure of God's displeasure of me. We have such a hard time forgiving others. They seem so big and unforgivable. But then in those times of clarity we start to see our own sin, and our sin becomes bigger than our spouse or children or whoever and we wonder if our sin is forgivable. It is easy to lose heart. But we do not lose heart because we have this knowledge that God the Father raised the Son, and therefore we stand forgiven! Are you preaching that resurrection message to you? It does not matter what you are going through. Nothing will ever separate you from the love of God through Christ Jesus. Jesus is alive. He is risen!

2. We do not lose heart because Christ guarantees our resurrection. V. 14b.

One of the comforts we have during any kind of suffering or struggle is that it will come to an end. One of the lies we tell ourselves is that this or that affliction will never end. My pain is permanent, but the resurrection of Christ guarantees us a life like none we can ever fathom or anything have ever experienced. The death of a Christian is the funeral of all suffering. And that would be glorious enough, but it even gets better. Christ's resurrection guarantees my resurrection with a body fashioned after his.

So consider and delight in what Paul writes here of why we do not lose heart, **“knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.”** Notice the word “will.” It is a word that speaks of what will come but what has not come yet. It is the anticipation. And the anticipation is that the One who raised Jesus will raise us up also. It's a declaration that we are not only accepted by the Son but also loved by the Father.

And I want to bring up a couple of things here. One is God the Father will raise us up with God the Son. And the glory here is that our coming resurrection will be patterned after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So think of what 1 Corinthians 15:20, **“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”** Jesus is the first fruits. The meaning here is that he is the first part of the harvest, and that first part of the harvest promised a greater harvest to come. But they are all of the same kind. So just like Jesus' body was earthly, his resurrection body was his but as we know it was changed. One of the ways that it is changed is that his humanity cannot die. It cannot waste away. It cannot corrupt. All the harmful things of this life will be forever banished. Listen to 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, **“So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.”** And not only that, the sin nature that so easily entangles us will be eliminated.

And I know we know these truths, and everything I have said you probably heard before, but how often do we preach these truths to ourselves? Because all the pain, struggles and disappointment that I go through this life is a pointer. It is a pointer to what Jesus Christ has delivered me from, and the life that I am going through. Think of it, again, this life is momentary as we will see a little later this morning, but what is to come is eternal. Every ache and pain is part of the fall and the curse, every difficult and

trying relationship is part and parcel of the damage of sin, every death is a painful reminder of separation in this life, but they are all pointers that life will not always be this way. We are not stuck, but we are delivered. When something goes wrong there is a promise. Life will not always be that way. And think of it, I deserve worse! So guess what? Don't lose heart. How could we ever lose heart? Paul realizes his life could even end because of the hatred of his enemies. But he is not stuck. His Jesus, and what he has done on the cross, and his resurrection promises that God the Father will raise him up also. It cause him to persevere no matter what the obstacles in his life.

Do you find that encouraging because it gets even better. Listen how this verse ends, **“and bring us with you into his presence.”** Did you get that? This fearful God that we looked at on Friday, we are going to come into presence with Jesus and through the merits of Jesus. And the fear we will have is not terror fear. We hide from things that terrorize us, but a worship fear, and absolute delight and awe and sense of glory of being in the presence of our God who is the essence of beauty. And here is the thing, because of our sin nature has been eliminated in the resurrection, and because we have perfect sanctified mind and heart, in this new humanity we will be able to enjoy and delight and worship God as much as perfected humanity can, and here is the thing — it will never get old or boring. When we've been there ten thousand years bright shining as the sun, we have no less days to sing his praise than when we first begun.

Do you feel stuck this morning? Do you feel like your losing heart? Are you overwhelmed with all your difficulties? Change the message that you are tell yourself. Let me close with these words, because this is about you, Revelation 21:3-4, **“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”**