

The Marks of Faith in the Resurrection

Every year thousands of people climb a mountain in the Italian Alps, passing the “stations of the cross” to stand at an outdoor crucifix. One tourist noticed a little trail that led beyond the cross. He fought through the rough thicket and, to his surprise, came upon another shrine, a shrine that symbolized the empty tomb. It was neglected. The brush had grown up around it. Almost everyone had gone as far as they cross, but there they stopped.

Far too many have gotten to the cross and have known the despair and the heartbreak. Far too few have moved beyond the cross to find the real message of Easter. That is the message of the empty tomb.

Lavon Brown

1 Peter 1: 3 – 9

1) New birth into a living hope

- Imagine twins in their mothers' womb have a conversation regarding their impending birth. The one says to the other that he has heard rumours that they will get out of their and will eat through their mouths and not through their belly buttons. They will live in a world surrounded by air and not by water and they will breath air through their noses. There will be wide open spaces and that they will, one day, walk upright, unattached to anyone. In that world there are creatures of all sorts that don't resemble them at all. There are plants, flowers and trees with aroma's that they can't even consider. And so the conversation went on. At last the one twin declared it a fantasy and curled up and went to sleep in the world that he decided was all there was and all there would be. The other believed in this outside world and couldn't sleep for the excitement that gripped his heart at the anticipation of experiencing this new world that they could only imagine but would one day experience.
- When we were born again we gained sight of an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for us.
 - Our human logic, like the twins in the womb, would consider it a fantasy.
 - But we know it's true because Jesus has already risen from the dead as our forerunner.

2) Shielded by God's power through faith

- Romans 1: 16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile
- We all watch movies and are marveled at the tremendous feats the actors accomplish. However, behind the scenes that we don't see in the movies are sets and ropes that enable the actor to seem invisible. Remove these and these actors will show themselves to be as fallible as anyone else.
- We are upheld by the power of God when we believe in the resurrection of Christ. If we have been raised with Christ in newness of life then the power of God for a godly life is made available to us.
 - Christians are accused of using Jesus as a crutch because we can't stand alone. Too often Christians defend themselves by saying that Jesus isn't our crutch. I want to say that we ought not to defend ourselves and admit that we need Jesus and His resurrection power to get through life.
 - We rely on His power not on our own. We are weak – but He is strong
- The word for shield is as a guard at a gate. He watches over us and will make sure that He keeps us.

3) A Steadfast Faith

- A young man was fascinated by a moth and performed a little experiment to see what would happen when it was released from its cocoon without a struggle. Using his pocket knife, he slit the enclosure, allowing the insect to emerge freely. However, it had none of the expected colour, it could not fly, and it soon died. As he thought about this, he concluded that the pressure exerted on an emerging moth is essential to its proper development—yes, to its very existence. He later learned that through the moth's struggle to free itself, its body fluids are stimulated, and the lustre is developed on its wings. So too for the Christian, life's pressures can produce positive results.
- Having faith in the resurrection of Christ not only causes us to endure and persevere through all trials that come our way because of the hope that we have but we see our trials as an essential part of gaining a better resurrection. We have been purified through them.
 - Hebrews 11: 35 Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection.
 - 2 Corinthians 4: 17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison (NASV)
- Thus understanding the resurrection we stand steadfast in our faith in our Lord Jesus

4) A Love for God

- The fourth mark of faith in the resurrection is that we love God even though we haven't seen Him
- We, however, ought to bear in mind that we cannot say that we love God and do not love our neighbour.
 - Thus truly believing in the resurrection will release the love of God into our hearts for Him and for others
 - If we say we believe in the resurrection but do not have love for God or others then we have not truly believed.
- Having this faith and love will release in us an inexpressible and glorious joy
 - The joy of the resurrection life fills our hearts as we taste the life to come.

How Do I Know He Lives?

How do I know that Christ has risen?

What proof have I to give?

He touched my life one blessed day,

And I began to live.

How do I know he left the tomb

That morning long ago?

I met Him just this morning,

And my heart is still aglow.

How do I know that endless life

He gained for me that day?

His life within is proof enough

Of immortality.

How do I know that Christ still lives,

Rich blessings to impart?

He walks with me along the way

And lives within my heart.