

Examining the Resurrection -7- Conclusion

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The risen Christ, who lives today, offers people the benefits of his death and resurrection if they will trust in him as their Saviour and submit to him as their Lord. He has demonstrated his love in paying for our sins. He now offers to come into our lives by the Holy Spirit and to restore us to full fellowship with the living God.

Joy Webb, a British Salvation Army evangelist, describes the conversion of a young Jew in her book *This is Joy*. Her musical group, The Joystings, were performing to a packed hall in Southampton. During the first part of the programme one of the group spoke of what Easter meant to her personally and expressed her belief in the presence of the risen Christ in her life. Towards the end of the programme Joy gave a short message and invited any young people who wished to accept the Christian message for themselves to come Forward and kneel at the communion rail. Several did. A hush fell on the audience, and then she noticed another young man come slowly Forward to join them.

Afterwards, when packing up equipment, she felt a touch on her arm. Turning, she saw a local Christian with this young man, whom he introduced as a Jew. She says:

I'd turned to greet him but the words died on my lips. I've heard older folk, particularly veteran ...Christians, talk about seeing such a change in a person, but frankly, until this moment I had never seen it myself. To say he was radiant would be a complete understatement. He stood there smiling. There was no need for any words; we all knew what had happened. "I feel," he said, "as though I have moved from the Old Testament to the New. When that young lady spoke about the risen presence of Jesus Christ being in her life I knew that it was completely and utterly true and that this is what I had been looking for to give meaning to all the teaching of my faith. I feel wonderful!"

Not all conversions are as dramatic as this, but the new life in Christ that the New Testament talks about is available to all who desire it. The Bible describes this experience in a number of ways. It is called being "born again", "born of the Spirit", "receiving the Holy Spirit", being "in Christ", or "receiving eternal life". Sometimes it is spoken of as passing "from death to life" (John 5:24) or being "raised with Christ" (Colossians 3:1). In its simplest terms it is the risen Christ forgiving my sins, reconciling me to his Father, entering my life by his Spirit and guaranteeing his continued presence through the varying journeys of this life and beyond.

If you desire this relationship with the true and living God, who made himself known in Jesus, may I suggest that you talk to God about it. You may like to use words something like this:

O God, I am amazed at your generosity.

I don't deserve it. I can hardly believe it.

I am beginning to sense you are here, and I realise that you came to this earth for me in Jesus Christ.

I believe he died for my sins and is alive, so that by his Spirit he can come into my heart.

I realise that he wants to involve me in his ongoing work in this world, and I am prepared for that.

Lord, here and now I accept in faith this gift of life in Jesus.

Please help me stick to this decision, and enable me to always appreciate it and live worthy of it.

If you make this commitment, then get a good modern translation of the New Testament and find out more about your living Lord. Also find some other believers who can encourage you in this new adventure.

Michael Green, in his book *You Must Be Joking* gives the following useful illustration. In the musical *Godspell* the joy of the resurrection is shown through dance. Members of the audience are invited to come up on to the stage and dance with the cast. They do not become the cast, but they do share the same experience. Now the cast, so to speak, is the first generation of disciples - Peter, James and John and others who saw the risen Christ. We cannot join that cast as eyewitnesses. But we can join them in the dance of Christian experience by committing our lives to the risen Jesus and accepting him as our Saviour and Lord.

Come, join the dance!