

## “He is Risen – Life in the Risen Christ”

Acts 2:22-39

**Introduction:** (Read Acts 2:22-39; cf. also John 14:15-20; 15:5-7, 12-15) – Every year leading up to Easter I consider each of the Gospel accounts of the events leading up to the crucifixion and the accounts of the resurrection. This year is my 33 year as the pastor in Graeagle. That means this will be my 33<sup>rd</sup> Easter message. I must admit that this year I have considered things I have never really thought about before. What did the disciples and Jesus discuss in those days between the resurrection and ascension? Can you imagine the questions they must’ve asked Jesus? I am relatively convinced that much of what they talked about found its way into the ministry of teaching they had – in their evangelistic appeals to their culture – and into letters they wrote to the young church. I am sure that as Pentecost approached and the disciples waited in that room together praying – as they took care of the business of appointing another to replace Judas – they spoke of the things Jesus taught them while He was alive and the meaning of those things in the light of His resurrection and ascension to glory – His exaltation to the right hand of the Father. When the Holy Spirit was poured out on the believers on that Pentecost – Peter stood up and preached things that he must’ve come to understand from those post-resurrections weeks with Jesus.

The outpouring of the Spirit is the promise of Jesus and the consequence of His resurrection and exaltation to glory – ***“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”*** (Acts 2:36 NIV)

*“In the death of Jesus Christ the final judgement of the world precipitated itself into the present; the final, ultimate conflict between God and evil had taken place on the cross. That was the great decisive point in the ages, the turning point between the old age and the new age. With the resurrection of Jesus from the dead the apostles realized that not only had the decisive event taken place, but the new age had already dawned; the new creation was already revealed in its transcendent perfection and glory in the risen man, Jesus – the first-fruits of the resurrection, the new Adam, the earnest and pledge of our inheritance. ...the ends of the world had come upon mankind, and the final victory of God over the forces of evil lay behind... With Pentecost, the outpouring of in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, the apostles realized that not only was Jesus Himself the beginning of the new creation, but by participating in the Holy Spirit the apostles themselves were already participating powers of the age to come and were already living in the new age...”<sup>1</sup>*

It is by the Spirit that Jesus becomes the “first-fruits” of the resurrection and in the outpouring of the Spirit He becomes for us the “first-fruits” of our inheritance.

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<sup>1</sup> Torrance, “Atonement,” page 428

It is by the Spirit that we are profoundly joined to the risen and exalted Jesus – that we are raised with Jesus and our lives are joined to Jesus and secured/hidden with Jesus in God. It is also by the Holy Spirit that He, in His glory, remains profoundly joined/united to us, to our lives and we are made to live in relationship with Him!!

***By Eternal Spirit Jesus Has Become the “First-fruits” of the Resurrection – We are Raised with Him and Seated with Him*** – (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:20-23; Romans 1:1-4; 6:5; **8:11**; **Ephesians 2:1-7**; **Colossians 3:1-4**; Philippians 3:20-21)

- This means that our resurrection is subsumed in or included in His resurrection - 1 Corinthians 15:20-23

1. This means that, by the Spirit, ***I am raised*** with Jesus. By the Spirit, my new life has been raised with and seated with Jesus in the very presence of God. The Spirit makes me alive in Jesus and then – ***I am brought into and sharing in the life and love of God, by the Spirit who is God*** - **Ephesians 2:1-7; Colossians 3:1-4**

2. This means that when my body dies – the very Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead will also raise my mortal body - I will be raised alive never to die - Romans 8:11

- A fixed and certain hope – Eternal life – Hebrews 7:25; 10:11-14

- We will not taste death – cf. John 8:51-52; 11:25-26

- This means that suffering, affliction and decay – even persecution for the name of Jesus – are powerless to ultimately hurt us or separate us from the life of God **BECAUSE HE IS RISEN – BECAUSE HE LIVES!!** – (cf. **1 Peter 1:3-9**; Romans 8:28-39; cf. also 2 Timothy 1:8-12; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

**Transition:** These are real, objective and substantial achievements of Jesus’ work as the Incarnate Son of God. They have powerful and tangible results because they are based on the working of an incomprehensible power, which achieved a fundamental comprehensive victory over the enemy and the power Satan exerts in sin, the curse and death. The power of this victory is seen in Jesus’ resurrection from the dead and His installation in glory. It is the inauguration of the New Age, of the new creation (cf. Romans 5:12-21). You and I, we the church, share in/live in the power of the New Age ***by the Spirit*** who has been poured out by the Exalted Jesus and dwells in every one who belongs to Him (cf. Ephesians 1:15-23; Romans 5:5-11). ***However, we also live as the church, in this passing age – this world in decay – in bodies that still know suffering, decay and death.***

This objective hope achieved by the Spirit finds its ultimate purpose and strength – now and forever -

***We Are Given the Holy Spirit as the “First-fruits” of Our Inheritance, Who Unites Us – in Relationship - to the Risen and Exalted Jesus – cf. Acts 2:29-45 – He unites us to the life of Christ – our “Exalted Head” – both objectively, as we noted above, and subjectively (in our experience) in this fallen world as we eagerly await and bear witness to the hope that is ours in Jesus. This takes place in two directions – by the Spirit we are known by the Lord in unprecedented ways AND by the Spirit we know the Lord in unprecedented ways!! This is a profound and incomprehensible union that we may experience, and the experience of which is transforming and sustaining!!***

- He is the “first-fruits” of our inheritance – (cf. Romans 8:23; Ephesians 1:3-6, 13-14; 4:30). The Holy Spirit lives in every believer as the “deposit” of our eternal life and the guarantor of our inheritance. The Spirit in us is the substantial and objective guarantee that the promise of our “adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies,” for which we have been predestined, will come to fruition.

- He forms in us the “mind of Christ,” and He confirms to us that we are “children of God” and then He causes us to cry out in love and longing for the Father – ***“Abba Father!”*** Moreover, He does that as He creates in us an anticipation and longing for home (He functions as the “first-fruits” of the life for which we have been redeemed and for which we now long – Romans 8:23; cf. also 2 Corinthians 5:1-5).

***He is the foretaste of the fullness of pleasure that we are created and saved to experience in – all in relationship with God!! We now are able to know Him better – more intimately – than the disciples who walked with Him and ate with Him and were taught by Him etc. for those 3 plus years of ministry!!***

**Note:** The resurrection declares that Jesus is a living person with whom we may have a relationship and not an historical figure to be studied. – not a This becomes a transforming reality when we stopped seeing the Triune God in general and Jesus in particular as a theological truth to be studied – when we stop seeing the Bible as a book of history, religion, and theology – of the end times – a textbook for an academic discipline – and we start pursuing God as a person who has given Himself to us in the most incomprehensible love and His word as place to meet and an invitation to know Him.

- By the Spirit Jesus is made “known” to us in ways that effectively enables us to experience His presence and know His love – right here and right now. By the Spirit He is able to be brought down and “dwell in our hearts.” By the Spirit we are able to “experience” His love in all of its scope and power and thereby “be fill to all of the fullness of God” (cf. Romans 5:5; Ephesians 3:14-19, 20-21). ***Unlike in any other age,*** by the Spirit, we are equipped to experience God as our soul’s greatest pleasure!! This is the “mind of the Spirit” of which Paul writes in Romans 8:5-17. **Michael Reeves wrote;**

*“For if the Spirit’s first work in salvation is to ‘loose our hearts that we might have a lust or desire for the Lord, then the Christian life is about so much more than ‘getting to heaven.’ The Spirit is about drawing us into the divine life. The Father has eternally delighted in the son through the Spirit, and the Son in the father; the Spirit’s work in giving us new life, then, Is nothing less than bringing us to share in their mutual delight.”*<sup>2</sup>

**Note/Transition:** Sometimes the realities of life in this world – this dying or passing age – in these failing bodies suffering decline and decay – are so powerful that they are like the darkness that descended on the Lord Jesus on that cross. Sometimes we feel as though life is so unbearable that we are inclined to cry out “My God...” It is then that we must realize that Jesus sympathy driven intercession is more powerful than ever because He intimately “knows” our hearts, our weaknesses, our doubts and our pain by the Spirit who unites us to Him!!

- Though Jesus is “far away,” by the Spirit, who lives in every believer, we may be intimately “known” by the Lord Jesus - our High Priest - the risen and exalted Jesus in ways beyond how He knew us/the disciples while He walked among them (cf. Romans 8:14-27). The Spirit carries our weaknesses and “groanings” to the heart of our God (our Great High Priest and the Shepherd of our souls and to our Father) and makes them profoundly known to Him!! Jesus’ work is an ongoing work by the Spirit.

1. By the indwelling Holy Spirit we, in our frailty and need, our weaknesses, are taken into the presence of God. The Spirit “lifts us up” into the presence of God where we are seated and our “groaning(s)” are given voice (subjective voice) as they are carried into the life and love of God by the Spirit – we are intimately known of God – in our “weaknesses” and needs – by the Spirit (cf. Romans 8:26-27).

2. He carries our heart – our fears, our needs, our frailties, etc. – into the presence of our Father and Jesus, our incarnate and ascended forerunner. By the Spirit, He enters into/participates in our weaknesses and intercedes for us in sympathy and with compassion, more profoundly than ever before. T. F. Torrance, writes, under the heading “Christ is the eternal leader of our intercession and Himself our one true prayer,”

*“We worship the Father not in our own name, nor in the significance of our own prayer and worship, but solely in Christ’s name who has so identified himself with us as to make his prayer and worship ours, so really ours that we appear before God with Christ as our one true prayer and our only worship. That identification is so profound that through the Spirit Christ’s prayers and intercessions are made to echo in our own, and there is no*

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Reeves, “The Good God,” pg. 68

*disentangling of them from our weak stammering and altogether unworthy acts of devotion”<sup>3</sup>*

It is only in this dynamic, growing and intimate relationship with the Father and Son by the Spirit that these objective and hope filled truths achieved by Jesus at the cross and secured for us by His resurrection and His exaltation to glory can sustain us in the harshness of this present age –It is in “knowing” Him and being known by Him that hope is transcendent and joy indomitable (cf. Romans 8:28-39).

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<sup>3</sup> Torrance, “Atonement,” pg. 274