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Daily Devotional - Monday, April 28, 2025 - Raised for Freedom

APRIL 28TH 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, April 28, 2025 - Raised for Freedom

When a reporter from the *New York Journal* contacted Mark Twain to find out whether rumors that he was seriously ill or perhaps even dead were true, Mark Twain told him that the rumors had confused him with his cousin who had been ill in London and had recovered. “The report of my illness grew out of his illness,” Twain explained. “The report of my death was an exaggeration.”

The opposite is often the case with legalistic spiritual systems. They assume there is spiritual life in those who are actually dead in sins. This was the spiritual condition of the Colossians when the gospel came to them. “When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ,” Paul reminds them in verses 13–14. “He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.”

Because Christ took upon Himself the penalty for our sins, we are not bound by any custom, observance, or regulation that claims to make us right with God. Even the regulations in the Law of Moses were only “a shadow of the things that were to come,” while the reality “is found in Christ” (v. 17). The appeal of many of these legalistic systems is that they offer the appearance of holiness with the rigor of their demands. But in reality, they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence (v. 23).

When Paul tells us not to let anyone judge us in such matters, he means that we should not let them impose their practices and standards on us. For the Colossians, these were regulations about food, festivals, and observances. Righteousness is not earned by obeying rules.

Go Deeper

What is your approach to holiness? Is it external or internal? Does your righteousness begin with Christ or are you depending on a to-do list provided by someone else?

Pray with Us

God of the ages, our prayer today is Paul's instruction to the Galatians: “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery” (Gal. 5:1).

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, April 24, 2025 - Resurrection Bodies

APRIL 24TH 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Thursday, April 24, 2025 - Resurrection Bodies

When I was a professor, I sometimes assured my students that there were no stupid questions. I did find, however, that there are other kinds. Some questions are annoying. Others are disingenuous. Many are ill-informed. In verse 35, Paul raises two questions posed by some of the Corinthians that he calls foolish: “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?” To modern readers, these questions seem reasonable. Why would Paul call them foolish?

Paul deemed such questions to be foolish because they cast doubt on God’s power and ability. The evidence for what God can do is found in what God has already done. In verses 38–44, the apostle focuses on several analogies that point to creation for evidence that bodily resurrection is possible. How are the dead raised? They are raised by God’s power. Just as the first bodies were

God's creation, the resurrected body will be a new creation. What kind of body will it be? The resurrection body will be incorruptible. The form of the plant is unlike the seed from which it springs (v. 37). God designed animals, birds, and fish, each with a body "as he has determined" (vv. 38–39; compare with Gen. 1:21). He also made the heavenly bodies different from one another. A star differs from a planet, and a comet from a star. Even those celestial bodies that are similar do not all shine with the same splendor (vv. 40–41).

Those who are in Christ will have what Paul describes as "a spiritual body" (v. 44). He does not mean that it is immaterial. Instead, it will be a body created after the fashion of "the last Adam, a life-giving spirit" (v. 45). We do not need to have all our questions answered. It is enough to know that the believer's destiny is to be like Christ (1 John 3:2).

Go Deeper

What do you know about Christ's resurrected body? What implications can we draw about the believer's resurrected body?

Pray with Us

Loving God, help us accept the fact that not all our questions will be answered this side of eternity. Give us humility to trust You no matter what and to know that when we see You face to face, we'll have all the answers.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, April 22, 2025 - Resurrection Courage

APRIL 22ND 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, April 22, 2025 - Resurrection Courage

Sometimes, the best way to reveal the flaw in another person's reasoning is to show how inconsistent it is. Often, these inconsistencies surface when we examine the difference between what people say and what they do.

This may help us understand the apostle's puzzling reference to baptism for the dead in verse 29. In this section, Paul is showing the Corinthians what is implied by what they say they believe. In verse 29, he shifts the focus on what they do. He does not necessarily endorse the kind of baptism mentioned here. Rather, his aim is to demonstrate how this practice assumed the reality of resurrection. Although the phrase "for the dead" is somewhat ambiguous, Paul appears to distance himself from such baptisms by describing them as something that others do. "Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead?" he asks. "If the dead are not raised at all, why

are people baptized for them?” Whatever purpose the Corinthians thought such a rite might serve, it didn’t make any sense if there was no such thing as resurrection.

Paul appealed to his own example as evidence for the hope of resurrection. The certainty of life beyond this life gave Paul the courage to face death. The mention of “wild beasts in Ephesus” is probably figurative (v. 32). The threat to Paul in Ephesus did not come from animals in the arena but from human opponents. Sometime after Paul wrote these words, his ministry caused a riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:23–41). But such threats were not unusual. As Paul put it, “I face death every day” (v. 31). Even today, there are many places in the world where Christians face similar opposition. The assurance of bodily resurrection gives them the courage to face death no matter the cause.

Go Deeper

What kind of fears do you struggle with today? How can the promise of resurrection help you to face them?

Pray with Us

Father, we confess it’s not always easy to overcome fear. But Paul’s example shows us that the certainty of the resurrection gives courage to face all troubles, even death. Help us to be brave!

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Daily Devotional - Monday, April 21, 2025 - The Necessity of Resurrection

APRIL 21ST 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, April 21, 2025 - The Necessity of Resurrection

Today, people refer to “canceling” as a way of expressing their disapproval of something or someone in a public forum. People cancel others to try to stop the spread of objectionable ideas. And those who have been canceled see it as the suppression of their right to speak freely.

Followers of Christ have always faced pressure from those who disapprove of aspects of the gospel message. In Corinth, this disapproval was aimed at the gospel’s emphasis on bodily resurrection, which seemed incompatible with a dualistic philosophy that saw the material world as being incompatible with the spiritual. Such scorn caused some Corinthians to suppress the unpopular aspects of the gospel they had received from Paul. One result was their assertion that there was no bodily resurrection (v. 12).

Paul's method of dealing with this error was to start with their premise and explain what it would mean if that were actually true. He does this with a series of "if...then" assertions which show that once the foundation of the bodily resurrection of Christ is removed, the hope of the gospel collapses entirely (vv. 13–19). Without the resurrection, faith in Christ is "useless" (v. 14). Apostolic authority for the gospel is eliminated (v. 15). If Christ did not rise "you are still in your sins," and those "who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost" (vv. 18–19). Paul summarizes with this blunt conclusion in verse 19: "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied." The good news is that Jesus "has indeed been raised from the dead" (v. 20). We are now waiting for the full effect of the victory Christ has already achieved to become a reality (vv. 22–28).

Go Deeper

What unpopular aspects of the gospel message do you feel pressured to suppress?
How does their removal distort the message?

Pray with Us

Dear God, give us wisdom to boldly speak Your truth, without excluding parts we may deem unpopular. May Paul's warning to the Corinthians in today's reading serve as a somber reminder for us as well.

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, April 17, 2025 - Prayers From Heaven

APRIL 17TH 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Thursday, April 17, 2025 - Prayers From Heaven

When I announced my retirement, the thing most people wanted to know was what I would do with my time. “I am going to sit on the beach and think about God,” I told them. It was an exaggeration, of course. I live in Michigan, so the beach is too cold in the winter! But have you ever wondered how Jesus occupies Himself now that He has risen from the dead?

Paul reveals that one of the things Jesus does is pray. This was something He did even before His resurrection. But now Jesus does so from a position of complete victory. His sacrifice for sin is complete. He has been raised to life and restored to His rightful place at the Father’s right hand (v. 34). The apostle reminds us of these things to encourage us in the present and reassure us about the future. For those who belong to

Christ, God “works for the good” in every circumstance (v. 28). Christ’s death and resurrection have guaranteed the believer’s complete transformation into His image (v. 29). What is more, as Christ prays for us from heaven, the indwelling Holy Spirit “intercedes for us through wordless groans” (v. 26).

No wonder Paul concludes that nothing we face can “separate us from the love of Christ” (v. 35). Since the entire Trinity is at work in our salvation to make us “more than conquerors through him who loved us,” why should we have any doubt about what the future holds (v. 37)? The level of certainty that Paul describes in these verses is absolute. The ultimate outcome depends on God, not our situation. God’s accusing Law was the chief impediment that stood in our way. Now that Jesus has died and risen for us, there is no longer any charge that can be brought against us (v. 33).

Go Deeper

How would you use the assertions Paul makes in these verses to reassure another believer who was worried about their salvation?

Pray with Us

What can separate us from the love of Christ? Paul gives a definitive answer in today’s passage: Nothing! What a wonderful assurance! Holy Spirit, guide us into life rooted in God’s enduring love.

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