

Pathways To Faith

By Dr. Willie Holley

Why Celebrate The Resurrection?

Soon those of us who have accepted Christ as our Lord and Savior will celebrate Resurrection Day or as the secular world has labeled this day, Easter Sunday. As Christians we have much to celebrate as we commemorate the resurrection of Jesus. In 1 Corinthians, Chapter 15, Paul gives some very compelling reasons why each believer should celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. First we note that Jesus is **no longer on the cross**. The cross is empty. Second we realize that Jesus is **no longer wrapped in grave clothes**. They are empty and left behind. Third we see that Jesus is **no longer in the tomb**. The tomb is empty. So we ask then where is Jesus now? According to the book of Hebrews, Chapter 12, verse 2, Jesus is **sitting at the right hand of the Father's throne** as the Risen Savior and our Advocate. Here are three reasons every believer should rejoice because Jesus is risen.

(Reason 1) God promises a new life here and now as the children of God. (See 1 John 3:1-3) When you read the NT, you see that Jesus' disciples were not expecting him to rise from the dead, but when He arose it changed their lives. Their despair turned to joy. Their hopelessness turned to lives of purpose and hope. The Apostle Paul counted himself among them. He was a terrorist toward Christians, going out of his way to inflict persecution on them. But when he met the risen Christ, the direction of his life completely changed. (See Acts, Chapter 9) At 1 Corinthians 15:10, the Apostle Paul says, *"By the grace of God I am what I am."* He knew he did not deserve it, but God had changed him and his whole life from what he was before meeting Christ. Can you say that? Has the risen Christ changed your life? Has he changed your bitterness to a forgiving and caring attitude? Has He given you joy and removed your guilt and fear? Has your former behavior changed, and your life gone in a new direction with a new purpose to worship and served Jesus the risen Savior?

(Reason 2) God promises us a new body in the future. (See 1 Cor. 15:35-49) Our bodies serve as a **Temple of God's Holy Spirit**. (See 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). He lives in us. So, what happens when our natural life on earth is over? Will God toss our bodies aside like the plastic bottles that litter the landscape? In 1 Corinthians, Chapter 15, you will find that God is not quite done with our bodies. We will have immortal bodies like Christ. The new Easter Clothes may make you feel great for a day, but God promises to make our bodies in a **new and special** way. 1 Corinthians 15:53 says, "This perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality." You will be made new.

(Reason 3) God promises to take the fear out of death. (See 1 Corinthians 15:54-57)

Because God raised Jesus from the dead, we need not fear death.

The end of 1 Corinthians 15:55 says, *"Where, O death, is your victory. Where, O death, is your sting?"* **You** can almost hear Paul shout in death's face as he comes to the end of his life on earth. He knows that because of the risen Savior, Jesus Christ, he has the victory in eternal life. Verse 57 says ***"But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*** For these three reasons alone, we have reason to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. You have the victory!

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