

HE IS ALIVE – JESUS IS ALIVE!

I'm excited about it!!!

Are you excited to know that Jesus is alive!

Allow me to begin by asking you WHAT does it mean to you to know that Jesus is alive?

When I think about the fact that He is alive, I realize that there are a number of paths that we could travel today.

But for this setting I have been led to focus on knowing who we are or who we can be because of the fact that Jesus is alive and all that is ours as a result of the victory He won through His death, burial and resurrection.

NOW LET ME ASK YOU another question - WHY do you think it's important to understand who we are in Christ?

I tell you the truth, my personal life and experiences have taught me how important it is to know who I am in Jesus. I realize that living a defeated life is not intended for a child of God. I haven't fully arrived there yet, but one thing for sure, I'm seeking every day to learn more. Preparing for this session has been a blessing for me, and I pray that it will be so for you.

I am convinced in my spirit that as disciples of Christ, many of us tend to live below the blessings that are ours as believers in the risen Christ and as children of God. I am learning the need for us to see ourselves as God sees us and what He considers us to be through Jesus Christ.

Please allow me to share just a little from my personal experience.

Even though I had been a believer for years, in fact from childhood and well into adulthood, I lived with feelings and thoughts of low self-esteem, feelings of a lack of self-confidence, of not being good enough, and even of not being loved. I often compared myself to others and felt bad

about myself because I didn't fare well in comparison. This way of thinking had become a stronghold in my being.

Even as a leader in the church, I still lived in darkness. In spite of my accomplishments in the church, in school, on the job and in other areas of my life, I allowed my negative thinking and feelings to fuel my actions. Fear of failure was very real in my life, but because I learned that God did not give me a spirit of fear, I would press forward anyway, trusting Him and refusing to allow the devil to win.

Well, years into my life, even after having attended the School of Theology and having been in ministry, God brought me to a place of understanding that having confidence in myself was not the problem. I discovered the importance and benefit of placing my faith and confidence in Him which enabled me, then, to trust and rest in Him.

That was one area of deliverance, but sometime after that He showed me another area of my life where I was in bondage. At one point I thought of bondage as being linked to drugs, to alcohol, to food, to sex, and things of that nature, but God showed me that I was in bondage to serving others. At that time, I thought my value came from serving and doing for others. God instilled in me a love for people, and it made me feel good to do for others. It still does, but God helped me to see and understand that my value does not come from the things that I do. It doesn't come from my status in life, from what I own, from the positions I hold etc. He made it plain that my value comes from Him and Him alone.

My personal journey has taught me and is teaching me the importance of knowing who I am in Jesus and how God sees me as His child through Christ.

When I look back at Eve and her encounter with Satan in the Garden, I see the mistake that she made and the mistake that so many of us make even while walking with the Lord.

To be sure that we are on the same page as far as understanding the need for Jesus to come into the world as a sinless human being, let us go back briefly to the beginning. Because of the spiritual death of Adam, every male that was born after him had his DNA, thus every human is born with a sinful nature, in a state of separation from God.

In the beginning, Adam and Eve were not only created in the image or likeness of God, but they lived in perfect harmony, in perfect communion, in perfect relationship with Him. They didn't have to be concerned about a thing because God provided everything they needed and had actually given them authority over things on earth. There was only one thing that God asked them not to do. He gave them the right to eat from any tree in the garden in which He placed them, but He told them plainly not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. He plainly shared with them the consequences they would face if they ate from that tree. So they knew that if they ate fruit from the forbidden tree they would die the same day.

Well, the day came when Eve was approached by Satan, and she began to entertain what he had to say which was contrary to what God had told them.

Most of us can relate to this from our childhood. Our mom or dad would tell us clearly not to do something, but a thought/desire would lead us in another direction, or our friends might have persuaded us to do otherwise, and we followed their lead wanting to be a part of the crowd or wanting to be accepted. We, then, had to suffer the consequences for our disobedience.

Well, Eve yielded to the voice of the deceiver, and sure enough as God told them - they died, not a physical death, but they died spiritually. The disobedience of Adam and Eve didn't just impact their lives. Their disobedience impacted the lives of all of us who came after them.

If we look at Genesis 2:25 it reads that the man and the woman were both naked, but they were not embarrassed.

Just 7 verses later in chapter 3, we find that as soon as they ate fruit from the forbidden tree, they became conscious of their nakedness and they tried to cover themselves. Self-consciousness entered the scene. Feelings of guilt entered as they became fearful, and instead of their usual transparency with God, they tried to hide from Him. Their harmonious relationship with God changed. Not because of God, but because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve. Rather than walking and talking with Him, they were now trying to hide from Him. And this began the downward slope of humankind as we grew further and further away from God, following the dictates of our minds and our physical desires.

Because our DNA came through Adam, we were all born in a state of separation from God. This then, explains why Jesus had to be born of a virgin so that He would not have the DNA of Adam.

NOW - Did God stop loving humankind? Did He turn His back on us? NO! God's focus became preparing the path for our redemption so that humankind could once again live in union and in harmony with Himself, and once again enjoy the benefits of being in a healthy relationship with Him.

Let's fast forward to the Gospel of John, verse 3, where we find Jesus sharing a visit with Nicodemus. Jesus explained to Nicodemus that no one could enter the Kingdom of God without being born again. He went further by explaining that He was not referring to a physical rebirth through a mother's womb, but rather He made reference to a spiritual birth. How was that to happen? Through JESUS the Christ.

John 3:16 shared that God loved the world so much --- God loves you and me so much --- that He willingly gave His only Son, JESUS, who was born of a divine nature...the only human on earth who had God's DNA, so that all who believe in Him would not perish but have eternal life.

To say that God gave His Son is to say that God allowed Jesus to be sacrificed on the cross, taking our sins upon Him so that through Him we could be given new life, a new birth, a new awakening to the things of God.

Have you ever considered the fact that while Jesus was on the cross, He actually died twice? The first death He experienced was when our sins were laid upon Him. This is why He cried out from the cross, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me, or why have you abandoned me. Never had He been separated from God, the Father. Jesus experienced something that He had never experienced before, and He did it for you and for me.

Following His burial, we know that His female disciples, yes, the women were the first to discover that JESUS LIVES! They were the first to be commissioned to tell the GOOD NEWS.

There is beauty in what Jesus commissioned them to tell His other disciples. In John 20:17 the living JESUS told Mary to "go to my brothers and tell them that I am returning to Him who is my Father and their Father, my God and their God".

Jesus for the first time refers to God, not only as His Father but as the Father of those who had received Him and believed in Him and His teachings. He refers to them now as His brothers.

So now, The WAY has been opened for all who accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord to gain new life ... Spiritual life and direct connectiveness to God, our Heavenly Father.

JESUS LIVES and because He lives, we find in

II Cor 5:17-18 “Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come. All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others His friends also.

We don't have to look back at our past and all the mistakes we may have made. All of that has been forgiven. We have been totally cleansed by the blood of Jesus. If we do look back it should only be to learn from our mistakes and to help others.

Verse 21 states that Christ was without sin, but for our sake God made Him share our sin in order that in union with Him we might share **the righteousness of God**.

When we come to know that Jesus died for our sins, that He arose from the dead on the 3rd day after He had put our sins away and satisfied the claims of Justice as our substitute; and when we receive Him as our Savior and confess Him as our Lord **then we become the righteousness of God through Jesus**. We are not righteous in ourselves, but Christ has become our righteousness, and as long as we are in Christ, God sees us as righteous.

It is at this point that **the nature of God, the Father is imparted to us**, and Romans 8:1 confirms for us that **there is now no condemnation for those of us who live in union with the Living Jesus Christ**.

As born-again believers in Jesus, and as the righteousness of God through Jesus, **we are in right standing with God**.

This means that we can live in the Presence of God without feelings of guilt, without feelings of inferiority, and without the fear of being condemned or rejected by Him. We can now approach God's throne boldly and obtain our petitions. **Our sins have been forgiven and our sin debt has been paid in full. We now live complete in JESUS.**

Further, **our position in God through Jesus** has been sealed by the Holy Spirit. We can find confirmation of this in Ephesians 1:1-14 which reads, “And you also became God’s people when you heard the true message, the Good News that brought you salvation. You believed in Christ, and God put His stamp of ownership on you by giving you the Holy Spirit He had promised. The Holy Spirit is the guarantee that we shall receive what God has promised His people, and this assures us that God will give complete freedom to those who are His. Let us praise His glory!”

Do you believe what God’s Word says? As believers and disciples of Christ, we are a truly blessed people!

John 10:10 states that Jesus came into the world that we could **live** but not just live – so that we could live an abundant life, a victorious life in all its fullness.

And John 12:47 tells us even further that He didn’t come into the world to judge us but rather Jesus came into the world to save us.

Bottomline is God loves you and He wants nothing but the best for you. His will is that we gain knowledge and wisdom of who we are in Jesus and as His children, so that we can embrace and live in that understanding.

Because we, as individuals, have believed, repented of our sins, and received into our hearts, Jesus as our Lord and Savior. We don’t have to wonder if we will make it into heaven or into eternal life. The reality is that as born-again believers in Jesus Christ, we have been promised eternal life. God is our Father, and we are destined to live eternally with Him. Remember John 3:16 which says that those who believe in His Son, Jesus, will not perish but will have everlasting life.

As we look at Colossians 1:13-14 we find:

“He rescued us from the power of darkness and brought us safe into the Kingdom of His dear Son, by whom we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven.”

The word “darkness” in this verse includes the devil’s kingdom and everything that goes along with it. Through Jesus we have been delivered from the power and authority of darkness.

In other words, we have been delivered from all of Satan's power and authority. Knowing this, we should not be continuously talking about the devil and what he is trying to do in our lives.

Now, even though God assures us of our security in Him through Jesus, it is important for us to be aware of the fact that even though Satan has no authority or control over us, even though he has lost the battle, as an enemy he doesn't give up that easily. He still seeks to kill, steal and to destroy. His primary means of operation is through our thoughts. He tried to get into the head of Jesus with the temptations in the wilderness. Jesus dealt with his temptations with the spoken Word of God.

Too often Christians speak much negativity. Their confessions are of defeat and failure. They speak a lot about the struggles they're having, the health issues and sicknesses that they're dealing with, the trouble they're having with their kids, grandkids, their jobs, and the list goes on. These words of defeat and failure are not of God and do not line up with what God says about us nor what He intends for us.

I have often heard people say, "I'm just a sinner saved by grace." If you are a believer in Christ, then without a doubt you are saved by grace **but** in the eyes of God you are no longer a sinner. Jesus has saved you from the penalty of sin, and you are the righteousness of God through Jesus. It is important that we monitor our thoughts and our spoken words to be sure that they line up with what God says.

According to several scriptures, our deliverance comes through our confession, through our spoken word. If you really believe something in your heart, whether it be positive or negative, and you speak it with your mouth, you will really have it.

Proverbs 18:21 states that "What you say can preserve life or destroy it, so you must accept the consequences of your words.

In King James it reads that "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."

To "confess Jesus as Lord" as Romans 10:9 says, means that we are to speak out loud what God's Word says concerning us or our situation and believe it in our hearts. The more we believe and speak His Word, the more our hearts and minds can get a hold of that Word and it can

manifest in our lives. Charles Capps in his book God's Creative Power for Healing states that God's Word is infused or engrafted into you by giving voice to His Word with your own mouth, and this is the language of health to your body. The spoken Word. Remember that God spoke the world into existence.

Romans 12:2 admonishes us to not be conformed to this world but to **renew our minds, to renew our way of thinking.**

The Good News translation reads ... **let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God – what is good and pleasing to Him and is perfect.**

This teaches us the importance of spending quality time with the Lord in His Word and speaking with Him about ourselves and where we are. We must be open and honest with God and with ourselves. None of us have completely arrived to spiritual maturity. We each have areas in our lives that we need to turn over to the Lord and allow Him to grow us up. I personally believe that as long as there is breath in the physical body, there will be room for spiritual growth and development.

This makes me think of James chapter 1, when he speaks of us looking at yourself in a mirror, you are aware of what you see but once you turn away you forget what you saw. In essence, when we spend time with God in His Word, there are things that we see in ourselves that need changing or need work. We see it and we may even speak with God about it, but once we walk away from the Word and get involved in life, we lose sight of what we saw. James tells us that we must submit to God and accept the word that He plants in our hearts which is able to save or deliver us. He shares in verse 25 that **if you look closely into the perfect law or Word of God that sets people free and keep on paying attention to it and do not simply listen and then forget it, but put it into practice - you will be blessed by God in what you do.**

For those who are interested in learning more about who we are in Christ and what belongs to those of us who belong to God through Christ, the late Evangelist Kenneth Hagin recommended that we should find out what God's Word says about you and make that your confession. He shared further that as you read Scripture, you should look for expressions such as

“in Christ”, “in Him”, “in whom”, “through whom”, etc. Not all of our findings will lead to who we are or what is ours, but for those that do – write them down and begin to confess them out loud with your mouth.

An example of such a confession may be:

I John 4:4 “But you belong to God, my children, and have defeated the false prophets, because the Spirit who is in you is more powerful than the spirit in those who belong to the world.

Confession:

Because I am in Christ, God lives in me. He is Greater than the devil. He is greater than disease. He is greater than my situation. And He lives in me.”

From II Corinthians 5:17 we can confess that “I am a new creature in Christ Jesus. I am a new creation with the life of God, with the nature of God, and with the ability of God in me.”

Because Jesus Lives, I, too, live!!!

In our union with Jesus, we have been chosen by God to be His children, to be holy and without fault before Him. To be “holy” is to be set apart. As a child, my pastor often spoke of us as “peculiar ones” – different from the people who have not received Jesus into their lives. In light of that, in Matthew 5:13 Jesus spoke of us as being the salt for the whole human race and as being like light for the world.

In closing I say to you that you are loved tremendously by God, our Father. He has provided all that we need to live victorious lives through Jesus, our Lord, our Savior.

When I was caregiver for my mom, I found posted on her refrigerator a note that read:
God is with me.
God is for me.
God loves me.

I have held on to that.

To say that **God is with me** reminds me of the fact that Jesus promised that He would never leave me nor forsake me, thus wherever I am, He is. Whatever I may be going through, God is with me.

To say that **God is for me** reminds me of the fact that the Lord is my Shepherd and I have no need to want for anything. He's got my back.

To say **God loves me** reminds me that He loves me just as I am, unconditionally. It doesn't matter what others may say or do, I know that I am loved.

When we look at the world today and all that is going on, there's comfort and peace in knowing that God knows all, He sees all and He's in CONTROL. God has the Master Plan. We can rest in Him and always give thanks to God for JESUS and for the fact that JESUS IS ALIVES!

It has been a pleasure sharing with you and I pray that something has been shared that will cause you to seek God even more so, to be aware of His ever presence with you, and that you will purpose in your heart to seek the victorious life that belongs to you through Jesus.

Wherever you may be in your spiritual walk, know that you are loved beyond understanding and JESUS IS ALIVE!!!