

### FOCUS ON JESUS! – THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

(Romans 6: 6-11, 14-17)

#### Let Us Pray:

***Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.***

*Lord thank you for your speaking presence in our lives. Help us to open our eyes, our ears and hearts to hear your Word and receive you and follow you. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.*

<sup>6</sup>The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup>The sinful mind is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. <sup>8</sup>Those controlled by sinful nature cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup>You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. <sup>10</sup>But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

<sup>14</sup>Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. <sup>15</sup>The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." <sup>16</sup>The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. <sup>17</sup>Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

"Focus" is a term popular in many areas nowadays – sport – business – politics. I Googled the word and was flabbergasted at the number of references.

As Christians we are called on to focus as well. We have to focus on Jesus, or as Hebrews 12:2 encourages us:

**Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.**

To focus on Jesus is not easy at the best of times! The distractions are countless. The devil, the world, and our own nature distract us from God and turns the focus toward self.

- Good times distract us:
- Bad times distract us.

Luther used to say of this condition: **"we're 'curved in on ourselves' in our self-centeredness."**

We are called to **focus on Jesus!** as we live in the Spirit  
**as sons and daughters of our heavenly Father**

Our heavenly Father has adopted us as his beloved children. This miracle of grace took place at our Baptism, when he poured out on us his Spirit – the Spirit of sonship, as Paul points out [Romans 8:15:

**<sup>15</sup> The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.**

From then on the Father is constantly at our side, giving us his iron-clad promise [John 14:18]:

**<sup>18</sup> I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.**

So, no matter what happens we know we can place our complete trust in his goodness and mercy. We’ll never be torn from his loving arms. Nothing whatsoever can separate us from his love in Christ! [Romans 8:38-39]

**<sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Put another way: **“Outside God there is no life only death.”**

Jesus said

**“The one who believes in me will live, even though they die”**

God’s only Son died on the cross to give us life, the full life, the life that will never end. As our Epistle reading reminds us:

**<sup>13</sup> If you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.**

**<sup>14</sup> For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.**

Being a child of God involves an impossible kind of contradiction, a battle:

**We have to die to our sinful nature in order to live!**

This is not only hard, it’s nigh well impossible – except by the power of the Spirit, who leads us through suffering to glory.

The apostle Paul faced the same kind of battle as he explained in the previous chapter [Rom 7:18,19,24,25]:

**<sup>18</sup> For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. <sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.**

**<sup>24</sup> What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

We are called to **focus on Jesus!** as we live in the Spirit  
**as heirs of Christ’s suffering and resurrection.**

Suffering is part and parcel of life in the Spirit – both in Christ's life, and in ours.

If Christ, who had no sin was greatly tested, how much more we, who are born with the sinful nature, will face temptation, and need to put to death our "sinful mind."

If God's own Son called on his Father, and was led by the Spirit, how much more will we need to beg the Father and seek the guidance of the Spirit!

**Suffering and life go together, especially in a Christian's life – a life in the Spirit.**

But the present sufferings do not compare with the glory promised to God's sons and daughters. Glory is our inheritance, and will be revealed soon enough! Not as a reward to replace our present suffering, but as a result of our Spirit-given union with Christ and his life, death, resurrection victory, and inheritance!

Glory comes to us as a result of Christ's sufferings. If we share in his sufferings now, how much more will we share in his glory. The Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead will raise our mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in us even now.

This glory, by the way, is not just a future event!

All through our life here on earth, we share the joy of living by the Spirit, under God's grace, as heirs with Christ!

This means that

He will never leave us or forsake; and the riches of his grace are ours and always will be!

Sermon by Pastor John Simboras  
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