

I want to know Him and the power of his resurrection. (Bases upon Phil 3: 10)

There He is, the one who healed the sick and raised the dead, the one who fed the thousands from a few loafs and fish, the one who claimed that if the temple were destroyed he would raise it again in three days, and to top this off, His blasphemous claims to be the only Son of God the father.

I AM the way the truth and the life. I AM the bread of life. I AM the source of living water.

Pretty lofty statements for the son of a poor Nazareth carpenter, who if he had only listened to his mother and brothers, who tried to warn him that he was loosing the plot he might not be in this predicament. Dead! Lay in a borrowed tomb, after suffering the most horrific and humiliating deaths that anyone could imagine, scourged to within an inch of his life, beaten and humiliated, stripped, and then crucified on a dung heap between two petty thieves. His accusers mocking to the very end, he saved others; now let him save himself, if God was his father let's see Him get him off the cross, look! He's calling on Elijah, yes, and his enemies finally after three long years of plotting and scheming had their day, the unschooled self appointed preacher and insurgent was dead, and his rag tag bunch of followers scattered to the four winds. Life could return to normal for the ruling Jewish authorities, they could continue to practice their "dead in the water" rituals and sacrifices, and wait for Messiah to come (Shame really, since there're still waiting today).

It also seems strange that they did not give more heed to a few natural phenomena's that took place immediately after he died. For example, a total midday eclipse (not an every day occurrence). Followed by an earthquake, rocks being split, graves were opening and dead people rising and walking about Jerusalem.

Surely the tearing of the Temple veil wasn't some act of wanton vandalism. No, there was the odd hint that this was no ordinary man that had been crucified, even the heathen roman centurion and his guards acknowledged Him. The chief priests and the Pharisees did have one doubt though, they thought that the cowards that were his disciples would get enough courage to organise themselves, come and steal the body, and then tell everyone that he had risen, which is kind of hard to make stick if all you've got is a corpse propped up against a wall. I somehow don't think that plan would have been the catalyst for 2000 years of human history, dominated by heroic acts of faith by men and women serving a Real Living Saviour. I'm glad that God's plan was a lot more tangible and powerful than that thought up by the Jewish authorities. It's worth noting that the only two men mentioned in the gospel accounts of the burial of Jesus, were two secret believers of the very council, which condemned him to death. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus both highly regarded members of the Sanhedrin. They, not any of the eleven remaining disciples, had the courage to approach Pilate to remove the Son of God from the cross prepare his body according to custom and --- Lay God on a Slab.

God's Divine Amputation

The Lamb has been sacrificed, sin has for once and all been atoned. The God-Man's earthly tent lies lifeless. This moment in earth's time had been planned in eternity.

Blessed be God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He choose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the beloved.

Eph 1:3-6

Here lie's the beloved, having loved us, you and me, all who had gone before us and all who would to come, till the end. Or in God the Father's calendar, the beginning of the end.

Divine Amputation: The impossible had taken place, God the Father and God the Holy Spirit were cut off from God the Son. No human brain can start to fathom the depth of this event, but we can put a name to it - "Amazing Grace." The borrowed tomb was going to be God's launch pad for eternity, here the power of the resurrection was going to be displayed not only to mankind, but to the powers and principalities of the universe, the ultimate victory from what looked like (from a worldly perspective) the jaws of defeat.

Just as Jesus three days earlier spoke His last word on the cross. "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit," and breathed His last. The all powerful, all consuming, life giving Spirit of God re-entered the lifeless body of Messiah!

Up from the grave He arose, with a mighty triumph o'er His foes. He raised the victor from the dark domain and lives forever with His saints to reign. He arose! ... He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

This was the dawn of Truth, the beginning of the Way, and the first step on the pathway of Life for all mankind. The God-Man was alive, and was going to show Himself to a stunned and doubting world, not a mythical phoenix rising, but in every sense the personification of majesty and beauty. And to this very day, they remain stunned and doubting. So help me Lord to cast of any sin that clings closely to my members and let me run with endurance the race that is set before me looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the Joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (see Heb 12:2).

I want to know Him and the power of His resurrection!

So, what was Paul meaning in Philippians? If anyone knew the power of the resurrection surely it was him. A Pauline conversion is the big one, a testimony to die for. In most cases testimony's normally start with, 'well there wasn't any bright light

from heaven or anything like that' ... But Paul! He was arrested in his murderous tracks on the road to Damascus. Dramatically struck down with a personal encounter with the living, risen Christ, saved and commissioned in the same encounter, everything he had lived for, all his worldly ambitions to stamp out this movement they called the 'The Way', every hateful and murderous thought he had was going to be seared from his heart.

The persecutor became the persecuted. The Lord said to Ananias "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake." So maybe now I don't want a "Damascus Rd" experience (if it comes with a bucket load of suffering). If there is anything I have learned in my years as a Christian, it's clear that no matter if we see ourselves as a Peter or a Paul, or in most cases, just an ordinary Joe, if we have truly given our lives over to Christ we will suffer, some more than others. But in all situations God gives grace upon grace that His precious children may stand in the day of trials and temptation. Yes, of course Paul knew Christ, yes we know Christ, but as Paul was relating in the earlier verses of Philippians 3. That he counted all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. Therein lies the desire not only to know Him, but to know Him more putting on that slab, where my precious substitute lay, all my earthly ambition, all my fears and anxiety's, all my jealousy's and pride, that The Mighty Life Giving, Healing, and Resurrecting Spirit of God can enter my life unhindered, empowering me to fight the good fight, to run the race, to discipline my body and mind, bringing it subject to the One with whom all creation will have to give account. Mine is this: to know Him and to know Him more.

Love Dwelt with us!

Love, He dwelt with us for thirty three years.
He took upon Himself a world that was filled with grief and tears.
Love, He walked with the common man.
He ended up with the sins of the world engraved on his hands ... on His Hands.
So what will we say, we did not receive?
What excuse will we give because we did not believe?
Think of a man on a dark, dark morn' dying for you, long before you were born.

In His Grip, Pilgrim! 04.