

2014 April 20 **Because He Lives**

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## Introduction

About 30 years ago we were living in Orlando Florida and the pastor of our church asked if I could pick up someone from the airport. I was surprised when he told me this person's name... it was the famous Christian author – Josh McDowell, who wrote the book Evidence that Demands a Verdict. Josh McDowell was atheist and set out to prove that there was no God. During his research God spoke to him and through the writing of this book Josh McDowell became a Christian. As we were driving along, we passed a graveyard. Josh McDowell told me that many times as a single man he would take his dates to the graveyard... wow... this surprised me. The thought occurred to me as I prepared this message... wouldn't it be interesting if we could visit a graveyard and be able to somehow have those who are buried there speak to us. I start by taking attendance... I'd walk up to the grave of Buddha and I would say 'Buddha' I'm taking attendance and Buddha might respond "present". Then I would go to the grave of Confucious and take attendance again. And then I would walk up to the grave of Mohammed and take attendance there. And then go to the grave of Christ and take attendance there. Jesus, silence.. Jesus.. silence... and then suddenly someone in another grave nearby yells out 'he's not here, he's risen". Resurrection Sunday represents the pinnacle of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. Why is it significant to know that Jesus lives? I found 4 things.. there are probably many more.

### **1. Because He lives, I have love.** Verse I John 4:9 (SLIDE)

.<sup>9</sup> By this the love of God was manifested <sup>[b]</sup>in us, that God has sent His <sup>[c]</sup>only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

It says that God's love was manifested to us through Jesus so that we may live through Him. We have eternal life through the merits of the sacrifice of Jesus and not in anything of ourselves. What does it mean that there is love in the resurrection? God's love is modeled for us... He loved us as our supreme example, we should follow the example He has set for us.

Now in verse 10

(Slide)

<sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins

let me clarify this a little further. In this is love... that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. What is propitiation? Have you ever collected trading stamps and traded them in for something. I remember my mother collecting many many trading stamps and eventually she had collected enough to trade them for a new lamp for our home. In the example that Jesus sets for us as our propitiation, He trades his life as a payment for our sins and we get new life.

Slide I John 4:11

**Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.**

In verse 11 it says we also ought to love one another. It means that we should abandon our needs and desires so we can lift each other. All harshness needs to be replaced with God's love. If you came to church hurting and crying out for love, come the empty tomb but first go to the cross. We should be living our lives as God modeled His love for us, demonstrating our love for one another. I know God wants us put love at the very top of our list of things we do. In the Gospel of John the word "love" or its derivative is mentioned 57 times. Our love should be in action to others, in kindness, generosity and service.

## **2. Because He lives, I have life.** Romans 6:4 (slide)

<sup>4</sup> Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Without the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, we could not have new life. Because our old life has been buried with him, this has given us the new life. Can I ask you this question? Why are we still walking around acting like the old person?

Verse 5 SLIDE

<sup>5</sup> For if we have become <sup>[a]</sup>united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be <sup>[b]</sup>*in the likeness* of His resurrection

Verse 6 SLIDE

<sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old <sup>[a]</sup>self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be <sup>[b]</sup>done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

Even in verse 6, it says our old sin nature has been put to death. But we still live in the old body but we should not have a propensity to sin. II Corinthians 5:17 (slide)

<sup>17</sup> Therefore if anyone is in Christ, <sup>[a]</sup>*he is a new creature*; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Like a caterpillar turning into a butterfly, the old has passed and the new has come. Have you ever seen a butterfly turn back into a caterpillar? We should be walking in a newness of life. Our lives should be different. One aspect of this new life is that we should demonstrate the fruits of the spirit.

Galatians 5:22,23 SLIDE

. <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law

Our fruit really represents the productivity that comes from our new life.

## **3. Because He lives, I have hope** I Peter 1:3,4 (slide)

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

A living hope because of the resurrection. This hope is ours today, tomorrow and through eternity. Hope is more than wishful thinking. But instead, a firm conviction. Have you ever hoped for something? I remember as a small boy, I wanted a toy crane for my birthday. I hoped and hoped and hoped I would get it. And then when my birthday came, I opened this big present and it was the crane I had hoped for. When I saw it, I said to my parents "this was the hope I had been carrying in my heart". Because of the resurrected Jesus, we have a firm conviction about our own resurrection. Hope means I can look past earthly troubles to my eternal inheritance. The Greek word for inheritance here is "kleronomia".

YUKO – please insert slide showing just the word KLERONOMIA here..thanks

It literally means "I am holding the deed to my inheritance and even better, God is holding me". I also know that I am sealed for eternity (Ephesians 1:13 SLIDE)

<sup>13</sup> In <sup>[a]</sup>Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also <sup>[b]</sup>believed, you were sealed in <sup>[c]</sup>Him with the Holy Spirit of promise

. Before I came to Osaka, I was working as a chaplain for a hospice. My job assignment was simple. I was to prepare people for death. It was not uncommon for me to lead people to Jesus on a Thursday and then do

their funeral service on a Saturday. My job basically was to explain that God can take the fear out of death. Isaiah 25:8 (slide).

He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord <sup>is</sup> God will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.

I love what it says here. Death has been swallowed up for all time and God will wipe tears from every eye. Yes, because He lives, I have hope.

#### **4. Because He lives, I have power.** Acts 1:8 (SLIDE)

but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

Jesus is alive and through the Holy Spirit who is with us right now we can live in the power of the resurrection. Jesus didn't take off to heaven and leave us here alone. We can live within the power of God and we experience that power in many ways. We see in our everyday life the power of God's Word to convict hearts. Hebrews 4:12 (Slide).

<sup>12</sup> For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart

There is power in the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin. Let me boil it all down for you. If Jesus was not God, then when he told the disciples He was sending the Holy Spirit, he would have been talking nonsense. But Jesus is God, and the Holy Spirit is here today as our comforter. Don't try living life in your own strength. When Jesus told us we would have power when the Holy Spirit came upon us, He meant he was giving us the power to present the Gospel in an effective way. He meant He was giving us the power also to endure trials in life. He gave us the power to act in accordance with the fact that we are now the bride of Christ .And that means we are not to be defiled by the world. He gives us power for living a pure and righteous lifestyle.

How many of you have ever been a bride? Do you remember how special that day was? You were all dressed up in a beautiful gown. Your hair and nails, every part of you was as beautiful as you could make it. Ready for the big day. Now wouldn't it be strange if on the way to the church to get married, you decided to go and dive head first into the local garbage dump. You see, God calls us to be His bride and He wants us to be as beautiful as we can be. So every time we deliberately go out of our way to displease God, it's as if we have jumped into that dump. God doesn't want us to be a bride who looks anything less than the most beautiful aspect of His creation.

#### **Conclusion**

Let me conclude this by saying and reminding you that Christ has risen and he is God and as we've learned today, that Because He lives, we know we are loved, and that we can love others. Because He lives we have life and that life should represent Christ. Because He lives, there is hope and power.. Incidentally, in case you have forgotten, this same power that raised Jesus from the dead is this same power that we can use for our lives. How do we respond to the pinnacle point in the life of Jesus and the in the history of mankind? Remember, we are the bride of Christ. We must do all we can to reflect the purity and sacredness of Jesus through our lives. We can do all this “because He lives”.