

7/9/78

Scripture: Phil 1:1-30

Text: "...in view of your participation (fellowship) in the gospel from the first day until now." Phil. 1:5

Philippians is the closest Paul came to writing a love letter. Today we consider a few random thoughts from the first chapter. The unifying element bringing his ideas together was Paul's firm belief that with his readers he formed a "fellowship in the Gospel." This study should help us to see that all the apparently unrelated aspects of our lives, including the people with whom we deal whether hostile or friendly, can be God's way of working out His purposes. Our part is to see where we fit into the puzzle, and to help relate all those irregular pieces which adjoin us into the total picture God has designed.

Philippi had been founded several centuries before, and named for the father of Alexander the Great. It was a road center with great commercial activity. Recently Rome designated it as a colony for military purposes. Rome had a practice of sending 300 loyal army veterans with their families to live at focal points in their famous highway system. Such outposts greatly enhanced the stability and security of the empire. To be a colony was an honor, a recognition of loyal service. Too bad that in recent times "colonialism" is a bad word! These colonies were little "Romes," took pride in Roman citizenship, retained Roman language and customs and never dreamed of being "indigenized" into local culture. When Paul wrote in Phil. 3:20: "You are a colony of heaven," his readers knew that just as Romans never forgot they were Romans wherever they lived, so Christians must not forget that our citizenship is in heaven. It is not surprising that Paul should use so much martial language in this letter to a city of veterans, although much of that is lost in our English translation.

Sam and Eileen Moffett have written a little booklet on Philippians called, "Joy for An Anxious Age." The first chapter is entitled: "Troubled Times." They point out that it was an age of extremes of wealth and poverty. Nero could spend \$175,000 on Egyptian roses for one party while three-fourths of Rome were slaves. Crime and vice flourished. Immense changes were taking place, especially the substitution of totalitarian for republican government. Paul spoke of Jesus as the "name which is above every name" in the context of an absolute dictatorship which tolerated no rival. Earlier in Philippi and again now in Rome, Paul was a victim of this. His readers also knew persecution, physical and mental suffering, and all the attendant anxieties...but says the Apostle, "in nothing be anxious."

There are four themes we consider in this chapter: (1) Bond servants; (2) Other Brethren; (3) A personal dilemma; and (4) Dear friends.

1 Bond servants. This letter begins: "Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Jesus Christ." The elder apostle graciously included young Timothy as an equal in their absolute loyalty as servants of Christ. Paul is totally committed to Christ. He will forfeit any personal advantage for Christ. Obedience to Christ at every level was as much a part of Paul's personality as was the obedience of a slave to every whim of his Roman master. The difference was that Paul was a bond-servant voluntarily. He could affirm: "The love of Christ controls me."

The Apostle's reference to himself as a bond-servant almost certainly reflected his physical status as a prisoner of the Roman Empire. His readers knew of his brief confinement in stocks in their local jail. He refers to his present imprisonment in verses 7, 12-14, 17, and 19. For a man as active as Paul, confinement was a real hardship. Even though allowed to live in his own rented house with round-the-clock Roman guards, he still must have longed to be out on the streets of Rome, or in its magnificent amphitheatres, or schools of learning, in order to

bring this great city to Christ. He bravely hoped for release, but he really could have no way of knowing what the capricious Roman emperor would do.

Verse 13 shows that a missionary in confinement was still a missionary. Paul had learned in whatever state he was, therewith to be content (4:11) but that did not mean idleness. Rather it was a chance to preach Christ to "the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else." The praetorian guard with the ~~the~~ Imperial guard, the elite picked body of ten thousand troops, with contacts among the highest political circles of the Empire. Like most soldiers, these guard were rotated regularly. Assigned one month to Paul, the next month a soldier might be stationed in the imperial palace, supreme court, senate, or some vital military post...carrying along the faith ~~they~~ caught from Paul. How do you suppose it felt to be on the other end of a chain from Paul, one end locked to the arm of each? Which was the real prisoner? If ever there was a captive audience, Paul had one! And how he liked to talk...about his conversion, about Christ, his travels, his churches, his Christian friends. Such a ^{celebrated} prisoner was the talk of Rome and was visited by the curious and inquiring as well as old friends. All departed knowing Christ better...while the guard had to sit and listen. Many had their hearts changed, and could not keep quiet about it when ordered to a new assignment.

None of us is imprisoned as was Paul, but we are "locked" into various situations by circumstances which God has arranged. When we are bond-servants of Christ, no situation is hopeless, no situation is without opportunity, no situation is beyond God's power to use us to witness.

2. Other Brethren. We refer to other brethren in Rome, many of whom are named in Romans sixteen. At the end of Philippians, Paul mentions "the brethren who are with me" calling them saints. Some were "those of Caesar's household", an almost certain proof that even in the royal palaces there were fellow believers in Christ perhaps influenced directly or indirectly by Paul himself.

There were two kinds of brethren. Some found inspiration to stronger Christian witness because of Paul's prison example. "Most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear." (vs. 14) These brethren preached Christ "out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel" (vs. 16). Here is something for missionaries to remember: Sometimes success is measured by the love and courage and diligence to proclaim Christ that we are able to inspire in others, rather than by whatever immediate success we may have ourselves. Paul thanked God for this.

But there were other brethren who preached Christ from "envy and strife." (vs. 15), and out of selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause Paul distress in his imprisonment." (vs. 17) The word here translated "selfish ambition, is sometimes rendered "partisanship" or "contention." Originally it was not a bad word at all, "it simply meant working for pay. But the man who works for pay works from a very low motive. So it came to mean a careerist, out for office to magnify himself. Hence it came to be connected with politics, and to mean canvassing for office with self-seeking and selfish ambition." (Barclay p. 28). So these Roman preachers were enhancing their own prestige and to undermine Paul's influence while he was in prison! Already the church was beset with those who craved a following, loved the lime-light, and gloried in titles and control! They were not heretics or Judaizers, but politicians, jealous of Paul's influence and reputation. By adding grief and distress over the state of the church to his other problems they were making his imprisonment more difficult.

Leadership

Well, the church hasn't changed much since. As a missionary I know how much distress can be caused by those within the church...often much more than that caused by those outside. We still have politicking, ambition for personal power and control, craving for high office. I saw this same process at work two days ago at a

church affair not far from here where some wheeling and dealing in preparation for the fall General Assembly meeting was going on. But even in his grief over this Paul could rejoice: "What then, only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice" (vs 18). Here was a great soul rejoicing that God can turn even such unworthy instruments into proclaimers of the Gospel. As he saw it, everything is OK so long as the Gospel is preached...but his part is to continue to exalt Christ with boldness. (vs. 20). The valuable point for us in this is: "Don't get so disturbed over what some other church leaders are doing, that you forget your own obligation or neglect the opportunities God gives you!"

3. A personal Dilemma. All of us are familiar with verse 21: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." At the end of the last verse, Paul noted, "No matter what other preachers are doing, my earnest expectation and hope is to exalt Christ whether I live or die." "Expectation" means literally "stretching out the head." Paul was looking out eagerly to see what God had in store for him next. For a man in prison, the alternatives were very clear: they were death or life. Paul could see advantages either way. either

If he lived, he could continue preaching Christ, he could live in the joy of knowing Christ, he could further strengthen his readers. If he died, he would go to be with Christ, something he could anticipate with longing. The latter was by far the easier and happier alternative in the long run. But he believed God wanted him to live so that "I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the flesh." He looked forward to another visit in Philippi!

We usually think of this verse when a person is very sick, knowing that in God's providence he could either be cured to serve, or could die and be relieved of intense pain. We thought of it during Mrs. Garber's last hours. But actually the verse has more to do with our outlook at any time. I want to emphasize just one aspect of this. There is always the danger that we Christians will look for the easy way out. Sometimes it's called a cop-out. Things are rough all over and it's so easy to interpret God's will our own way and drop all the hot potatoes, push the responsibilities on someone else, give some sort of excuse...anything to shuck off the burdens with which God has seen fit to load us. Perhaps the alternative of death is not quite so real to us as it was to Paul facing possible execution, but the pressure to take the easier way is always present. But Paul refused to hope for the easiest way. For him to live is Christ and since at the moment God willed that alternative, he was determined to "live it up" in the very best sense of that expression...because he was living up his life for Christ!

4. Dear Friends. Paul's evident deep affection for the Philippian Christians was expressed often. He is thankful for "every remembrance of you" (vs. 3). They were his partners in the Gospel; and participants even in his prison sufferings. His strongest statement of love is in verse 8: "For God is my witness, how I long for you with all the affection of Christ Jesus."

When people are good friends, when they really have the kind of affection and love expressed here, then they can say things to each other that would not be possible otherwise. So Paul had unburdened himself about his imprisonment, his sufferings, his opportunities to witness, his problems with brethren who had the wrong motives. He could quite openly tell them of the possibilities of a grave future for himself. In sharing all these things with his dear friends he points to God's hand at work, and rejoices in his opportunities to exalt Christ with his preaching. Against the background of these strong affection personal ties, how does the beloved pastor tenderly speak to his Philippian friends?

He says, "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ." (27) "Don't wait until I am with you physically...keep your unity and love and Christian conduct above reproach. Remember that whatever sufferings you experience are what

you share with me for Christ's sake. Let my experience be an example to you."
⇒ The tremendous strengthening value of Christian friendship! Paul could say this and the Philippians ^{would} ~~were~~ listen because of the real love between them. This is the strength of the Christian fellowship, the Christian Church. All together, apostles and people, brethren good and not so good, were participants in God's work. The verb in verse 27 means literally "be worthy citizens". What Rome expected of her citizens abroad, God expects of the citizens of His kingdom. Involvement in the situation where we live, involvement with fellow Christians far and near, involvement in the proclamation of the Gospel. Paul wants the Philippians by word and conduct to be his partners in the Gospel.

- 1- Don't let circumstances (like imprisonment) cramp your style!
- 2- Don't let what other Christians do from wrong motives cause you discouragement!
- 3- Don't let anything tempt you to take the easy way out...live for Christ!
- 4- Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ!
Then you too are truly in a partnership in the Gospel with me!

MADE IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN

Scripture Reading: Philippians 2:5-11; Galatians 4:4

Text: "He existed in the form of God...but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, ~~and~~ being made in the likeness of God." Philippians 2:6-7

Several weeks ago at a special Christmas music program at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville sponsored by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Team, Cliff Barrows told this little story. At an elementary school near the coast, children were preparing Christmas gifts to give to their teacher. One little boy knew that his teacher loved to collect sea shells. To please her, he thought of a place at considerable distance where unusually large and beautiful shells could be found. So he walked that long distance and found exactly what he wanted and presented it to his teacher. She knew that such shells could be found in only one place and exclaimed: "What a beautiful shell for a gift! And what a long trip you had to make to find it for me!" The little boy replied, "The long trip was part of the gift!" At Christmas we remember, that part of the gift we have received was the long trip of our Savior!

In Philippians chapter two, the Apostle Paul wrote of that "long trip" by which Christ Jesus who had existed in the form of God voluntarily came to our world and took the form of a servant. He who had been equal with God assumed both the likeness of men and the appearance of man. This great event of history is known as the Incarnation which means literally to "take on human flesh." Here is the wonder and the splendor of Christmas! From Sovereign to Servant was indeed a long trip, and an important part of that perfect gift offered as a sacrifice for the sins of this world on the cross thirty-three years later. That long trip was the combined effort of the three persons of the Trinity...God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. God the Father SENT; God the Son Went; God the Holy Spirit was the AGENT.

I. GOD THE FATHER SENT. Sometimes in our concentration on the dramatic and romantic aspects of the birth of Christ, we may even forget God the Father, whose part in that event should be central. Like the angels we should be singing, "Glory to GOD IN THE HIGHEST." His was the purpose, His was the plan, His was the preparation.

1. What was God's purpose? His purpose was rooted in His love, His desire to redeem His children from sin, to restore them to fellowship with Himself, and ultimately to demonstrate His true holy and righteous and just nature before all the universe. "By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 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." (1 John 4:9-10) Here is a mystery we can never fathom...something Almighty God

purposed before the foundation of the world.

2. What was His plan? ^{With the whole world lost in the darkness, and doom, and death of sin,} His plan was to provide a perfect solution, a perfect sacrifice, a perfect Savior. That plan was announced through prophets and saints long before the first Christmas. Jesus Himself quoted one of them on the occasion of His first sermon in Nazareth, His home town:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because he anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor.
He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set free those who are downtrodden.
To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19)

All the events surrounding the birth, the ministry, the death, the resurrection and the exaltation of our Lord were parts of a stupendous and incredible plan devised in the mind and heart of God.

3. What was the preparation God made? He prepared a people, a place, and a person. Two thousand years before hand God began to prepare a people in His promise to Abraham: "I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen. 12:2-3) God also prepared a place by promise to Abraham: "I will give to you and to your descendants after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." (Gen. 17:8) The whole Old Testament is the account of how God prepared to send His Son, right down to the preparation of a person, a pious and righteous young virgin named Mary in the village of Nazareth who carried in her veins the blood of Abraham and David.

With the preparation of a people, a place, and this person, God the Father SENT, as Paul wrote in Gal. 4:4, "When the fulness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law."

II. GOD THE SON WENT. The long trip of Jesus Christ two thousand years ago was voluntary, it was an expression of humility and self-sacrifice, and it too demonstrated a love beyond all our comprehension. "His active participation in this historical fact is stressed, and His pre-existence is assumed (in the Biblical words about the Incarnation). It is not possible to speak of the incarnation of one who had no previous existence." (Berkhof, p. 333) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The long trip on which our Savior went involved both humility and humiliation. "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us."

1. Humility was involved in emptying Himself of all the glory, the power, and

the prerogatives of existing in the form of God. He could have reached out and grasped them all for Himself. In exhorting the Christians of Philippi to mutual love, self-sacrifice, and unity in spirit, Paul cited the example of our Lord Himself in the beautiful words we have read from Philippians 2. In another place he expressed this in different terms: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich." The chorus of one of our favorite hymns, written in Montreat many years ago, puts it this way...

Out of the ivory palaces
 Into a world of woe,
 Only His great eternal love...
 Made our Saviour go.

2. The long trip also meant deep humiliation. It was humiliation enough to take on human flesh, to be a man in the fullest sense of the word both inwardly and in outward appearance. But to endure the ultimate humiliation of taking upon Himself the sin of the world was even greater. He who was without sin, pure, holy, righteous...voluntarily became legally responsible for our sins and liable to the curse of the law. We usually think of this in terms of what took place on the cross of Calvary, but actually it began with His willingness to take the long trip, to be incarnated as a man which we remember at Christmas.

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
 Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
 Light and life to all He brings,
 Risen with healing in His wings.
 Mild He lays His glory by,
 Born that man no more may die,
 Born to raise the sons of earth,
 Born to give them second birth. (Charles Wesley)

III GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS THE AGENT. Gen. 1:1-2 tells us that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth...and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters." All through history the Spirit has been at work, executing the plans of God the Father down to the present day when He continues to work in the hearts of God's people. Why then, should it not be perfectly natural that the Holy Spirit should have an active role as agent in arranging for the necessary physical process by which the Son of God should make His long trip into our world?

There is beauty and purity and simplicity in the Gospel accounts of the birth of our Lord. God through His angel announced a miracle. If there are no such things as miracles, if there is nothing supernatural...then we must reject this one. But if we accept the Word of God as true, then we also accept the word of the angel: "For nothing will be impossible with God." (Luke 2:37) I personally accept the literal

interpretation of what we are told in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, and affirm without reservation or hidden alteration of the meaning of the words the statement in our creed, "I believe...in Jesus Christ...who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary..."

Joseph's conduct shows that he knew he was not the father of the child Mary was about to bear. Mary told the angel that she was not involved with any man. To both of them the angel simply stated that the child would be conceived by a miracle of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps more than for any other miracle of Jesus, with the possible exception of His resurrection, there have been all kinds of attempts to explain it away, treat it as an imaginary tale, put different meanings on the plain words used in the account, and so on. All this reflects a modern aversion to the supernatural. Yet for most Christians, it is completely logical that when God was moving to redeem His world to Himself, that He would use supernatural means to accomplish it.

For Christ to be the Messiah, the Son of God, it was necessary that He should be born of a woman, but also that He should not be the fruit of the will of man, but should be born of God. (Berkhof, p. 336). How Jesus could at one and the same time be both fully human and fully divine is really beyond our comprehension. We are left with the only possible explanation: God the Holy Spirit acted as the agent. The Holy Spirit sanctified that virgin birth, and that sanctifying influence continued on through the life of Jesus. Would that amid all the nostalgia, the sentimental, the romanticizing, the imaginative tales, the artificial gilding surrounding this momentous birth of Christ described so simply and directly...that all would bow in wonder and amazement, recognize the great miracle, and exclaim, "Nothing is impossible with God!"

Conclusion. God grant that we may celebrate our Christmas with full acceptance that Jesus whose birth we celebrate was made in the likeness of men. The long trip He took from heaven to dwell among us involved God the Father who sent, God the Son who went, and God the Holy Spirit who served as agent to carry out this great event. May we have the mind of Christ who willingly made that long trip, and may God hasten the day when at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:10-11)

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7/12/87 *Bater*
Quinn

HE DESCENDED INTO HELL

Text: "He humbled himself..." Phil. 2:8

Scripture reading: Acts 2:29-32; Phil. 2:5-11

Some years ago as I prepared a young boy to join the church, I asked if he had any questions. Sammy Folta immediately replied, "What does it mean when we recite the Apostles' Creed where it says, "He descended into hell?" I think I gave him the right answer, but I really wasn't too sure of my self and at once tried to study these words. Sammy had asked a good question, and it is appropriate to think about it as we as we begin ~~what is usually called~~ Passion Week before Easter Sunday. Today is what we call Palm Sunday when Jesus rode into Jerusalem ^{on a donkey} with the crowds chanting, "Hosanna to the Son of David, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" It was from that moment when His divine lordship was recognized by the public that He was plunged into the darkness of death. Jesus "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell."

What about this phrase? Some churches use it, some don't. Some hymnals print it in brackets making it "optional." I must admit that the version in which I first memorized it omitted it, and the Korean version I have used all my life does not even offer it as an option, so that when I repeat the creed this phrase throws me off the track, as perhaps some of you have noticed. Every other phrase in the creed has easily found Scriptural backing, but it is difficult to find good proof texts for this one. The answer I gave to Sammy was, "It means that Jesus Christ really and truly died." Let's look at why those words are in the creed and their meaning for us.

The Apostles' Creed was not written or recited by the twelve apostles of Jesus, but it does express what they believed. It was nearly 400 years after Christ in 390 A.D. that the creed took this name and about 800 years before it took its present form. Not until 570 A.D. was the phrase "He descended into hell" included. The church may have believed this long before, but for 500 years after the apostles it was not included in the creed. Statements of faith, like this one, often include expressions which reflect contemporary situations, and this phrase could have been included to combat erroneous thinking about what happened when Jesus died. Some may have minimized the historical fact and the meaning of the real death of Jesus. So to include these words points out with emphasis that Jesus reached the lowest, harshest, most sickening humiliation any one at any time in all the universe could possibly endure.

Translation The phrase really should be translated differently. Latin was the language in which the Apostles' Creed was composed and the word used was "inferna" which means "below" and represented words in Hebrew (Sheol) and Greek (Hades) which meant "the place of the dead" as in Acts 2:27¹⁷ where Peter preached that Christ was "neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay." The King James Version with which we are so familiar used the word "hell" but that was incorrect and would have been "Gehenna" in the original. Gehenna was the name of the rubbish dump outside Jerusalem where all the trash and garbage of a great city smoldered and stank and was the word the Jews used for a place of punishment. But the word in the Apostles' Creed is not "hell" the place of punishment, but "Hades"...the abode of the dead. It teaches that Jesus went to wherever it is that the dead go...but not to the place of punishment. It is a vivid way of saying that Jesus was really and truly dead.

Necessity Some may argue that these words then are not really necessary since the creed already states that Jesus was "dead and buried." Perhaps so, but its inclusion reinforces an inescapable basic truth: Jesus really died. For three days, He was as dead as any human being ever is, and His humiliation was complete. And this is the thought we must dwell on today before we ^{remember} ~~celebrate~~ ^{fact} the ~~joy~~ of our Lord's resurrection next Sunday. There are all too many people who celebrate the joy of Easter and attend church on that day but forget that without the humiliation of death on the cross by an innocent Lamb of God for the sins of the world Easter is no better than many a pagan spring festival. The phrase "He descended into hell"...better translated, "He descended into the abode of the dead" is firmly based on familiar words in Philippians 2:8, "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death." This teaching is expanded in the Westminster Larger Catechism which asks: "Wherein consisted Christ's humiliation after his death?" and answers: "Christ's humiliation after his death consisted in his being buried, and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death till the third day, which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, 'He descended into hell.'"

Humiliate The dictionary defines the word "humble" as "to lower in condition or rank, to abase." The definition of humiliate is similar, "to lower the pride or dignity of." No one likes to be humbled or to be humiliated, even in minor matters. A public official is humiliated if there is a scandal in his department so that he loses the trust and esteem of his people. A business man is humiliated if he is fired and reduced to begging for a living. A parent is humiliated if a son or a daughter disgraces the family name. In a sense all of these involve some degree of failure or responsibility on the part of the one humiliated. With Jesus the humiliation was in no sense due to any shortcoming or failure on His part...it was entirely voluntary, ^{and in obedience to His Heavenly Father}

He assumed all the guilt, all the responsibility, all the disgrace for us sinful creatures and accepted the humiliation we deserved. Paul put it correctly, "He humbled himself." And this humiliation reached its lowest depths in death... "He descended into the region of death itself."

Shorter Catechism Words I memorized as a boy come to mind as we think of these words. The Shorter Catechism asks: "Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?" The answer is: "Christ's humiliation consisted ^① in his being born, ^② and that in a low condition, ^③ made under the law, ^④ undergoing the miseries of this life, ^⑤ the wrath of God, ^⑥ and the cursed death of the cross, ^⑦ in being buried, ^⑧ and continuing under the power of death for a time." That sentence outlines our thoughts today. I have a little book which has a drawing illustrating the humiliation of Christ, ^{based on this catechism answer} just like steps going downward from heaven to the place of death. This is what God, in the person of His Son, was willing to do because He loves us! "This was like a shepherd becoming a lamb, in order to sacrifice himself to save the rest of the flock." (C. S. Lewis) In so doing, JESUS DID NOT CEASE TO BE GOD. Those things which made Him divine were not subtracted from Him, but a true human nature was added to Him. His deity may have been "veiled" for a time so that many failed to recognize Jesus as God...but this ^{too} contributed to the humiliation of One accustomed to the eternal adoration of all the host of heaven.

Look at these downward steps in the humiliation of Christ, as outlined in the Shorter Catechism answer:

1. CHRIST'S HUMILIATION CONSISTED IN HIS BEING BORN. Surely the Son of God could ~~have~~ suddenly in an instant of time have appeared on earth in full, strong, well-developed man-hood with great fanfare to the applause of vast multitudes! Instead like any other baby He was carried in the womb of Mary, His mother, who delivered Him in pain and poverty. He who was "in the beginning with God" and through whom all the universe was created, humbled Himself to become a wee, helpless, dependent baby.

2. CHRIST'S HUMILIATION CONSISTED IN HIS RECEIVING A LOW CONDITION. We cannot choose where we are to be born, but Jesus could and did choose to take the form of a servant. He ~~was not born~~ ^{did not live} in a magnificent palace but in the humble home of a carpenter and his wife...poor folks among a people oppressed by a foreign power. Countless missionaries may have left ^{comfortable homes in} rich America to serve God abroad...but they have received VIP treatment in comparison to Jesus ^{whose} ~~was~~ hard-scrabble existence ^{incredible} ~~was an~~ come-down from the realms of eternal majesty!

3. CHRIST'S HUMILIATION CONSISTED IN HIS SUBMITTING TO THE LAW. As God, He

had given that law, yet now He subjected Himself to it in perfect obedience, which none of us can do. Many high officials consider themselves above the law, as we have seen in recent days. Jesus, too, was tempted to break God's law many times. ① Three times He was tempted in the wilderness. ② On the mount of transfiguration he was tempted to slip back into the splendor of His heavenly glory. ③ He was tempted when men urged Him to use His miraculous power for an earthly kingdom. ④ He was tempted in Gethsemane to repudiate the cup of death and avoid the crucifixion. ⑤ He was tempted on the cross by a criminal's taunt: "If you are the Son of God, save yourself and us too!" ^{The tempted Jesus never sinned.} In keeping all the law, refusing to take advantage of His ^{death} ~~death~~ to rise above the law, Jesus identified Himself with us sinners...and thus further humiliated Himself.

4. CHRIST'S HUMILIATION CONSISTED IN HIS UNDERGOING THE MISERIES OF THIS LIFE. "He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." (Is. 53:3) "For Him suffering began the moment He began to find out what kind of world He had been born into. It increased in intensity as His pure mind opened up to discover more and more the darkest secrets of those whose brother He had become. A new and tragic note entered into it after His active ministry began, and He experienced both the misunderstanding and rejection of the crowds and the blind faithlessness and lack of sympathy of His friends and disciples." (Wallace, p. 49)

5. CHRIST'S HUMILIATION CONSISTED IN HIS SUFFERING THE WRATH OF GOD. Here we approach mysteries we can ^{never} ~~not~~ fully understand. The only begotten Son of the Father, accustomed to His divine Father's full love...now suffered the wrath of God ^{which we sinners deserve!} "When Jesus cried out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' He was actually experiencing the same kind of thing that the lost will experience on the judgement day." (Williamson, p. 106) He was "made a curse for us." Even God seemed lost to Him. Someone has called this "the crucifixion within the crucifixion." Because of sin He was momentarily separated from God, ^{and} ~~He~~ suffered ^{the} ~~an~~ agony of loneliness...like the scapegoat over whose head the ^{ancient Hebrew} ~~priest~~ had laid his hands and confessed the sins of the nation, ^{and} which was then driven into the wilderness...the outer darkness...alone!

But none of the ransomed ever knew,
How deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark the night that the Lord passed through,
'Ere He found His sheep that was lost."

6. CHRIST'S HUMILIATION CONSISTED IN THE CURSED DEATH OF THE CROSS. "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." (Phil. 2:8) Here was indecenty, cruelty, suffering, ^{and} humiliation compounded! It is bad enough to suffer humiliation for something we deserve, but how much worse to suffer innocently. Yet here was voluntary disgrace. "For our sake God made Jesus to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (II Cor. 5:21)

"Remaining what He was, He became what He was not" (Williamson p. 109)

O sacred Head, now wounded, With grief and shame weighed down.
Now scornfully surrounded With thorns, Thine only crown;
O sacred Head, what glory, What bliss till now was Thine!
Yet, though despised and ~~glory~~, I joy to call Thee mine.

What Thou, My Lord, hast suffered Was all for sinners' gain.
Mine, mine was the transgression, But Thine the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Saviour! 'Tis I deserve Thy place;
Look on me with Thy favor, Vouchsafe to me Thy grace.

7. CHRIST'S HUMILIATION CONSISTED IN BEING BURIED. Far from lying in state in the imperial capitol, His body was laid by sorrowing friends quietly and hastily in a tomb borrowed from a wealthy but secret disciple. The stone rolled against the entrance sealed off light and air for the One who came from the celestial realm of light and life. In the bowels of the earth He was literally "cut off out of the land of the living." (Is. 53:8) "They made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth." (Is. 53:9)

8. CHRIST'S HUMILIATION CONSISTED IN HIS CONTINUING UNDER THE POWER OF DEATH FOR A TIME. "He entered the realm or state of the dead and remained there until the third day." (F. F. Bruce) The One who had said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" was dead. "I am the resurrection and the life," said He. "For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself." (Jn. 5:24) These claims of LIFE were perfectly true, but the complete humiliation came when He to whom life was so precious laid down His life! Another POWER controlled Him, and that power was DEATH! He was obedient unto that power...death! He descended into hell...He became death...the ultimate humiliation! WHY? He gave us His own answer; "The bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." (Jn. 6:51) * "God in Christ abandoned himself to our state and fate in order to be able to lay hold of us so that he might raise us up to his glory." (Wallace p. 53)

My wife likes to tell the story of one of her best friends in Korea. This lady had education and wealth, prestige in the community, active in her church, president of the Presbyterian ^{she is} beautiful, ~~and~~ well-groomed and fashionably dressed, the daughter of a ^{distinguished} ~~prominent~~ minister, ^{and} wife of a ^{prominent} ~~elder~~. She ran a financial institution herself, but was falsely accused of irregularities in the business by an underling ^{who was} disgruntled because he was not promoted. According to the law of that land where a suspect is considered guilty until proved innocent, she was put into the penitentiary. There behind bars with thieves and prostitutes and criminals of all kinds, she had to wear the rough blue uniform, share a cell with some 20 other women, eat their crude food and suffer all the indignities and shame of knowing that former friends now questioned her honesty and her failure to live as a Christian. But after her trial when she was

pronounced innocent, she told my wife how in previous visits to the prisoners she had felt no oneness with them at all, whereas afterwards she could relate to them in ways never possible before. ~~There had been~~ ^{with her had been} In the same cell, a "moo-dang"...what we would call a witch doctor, one of whom the other prisoners were in great fear because of her reputed contact with evil demons. She was filthy, unbathed, unkept...but this fine lady moved her blanket to lie beside her, she washed her body, she performed the ministry of a servant. ~~Isn't that what~~ ^{She followed the example of humbling herself as} Christ did for us, when He was crucified on the cross..and really and truly died for our sins!

Christ's humiliation consisted ^① in his being born, ^② and that in a low condition, ^③ made under the law, ^④ undergoing the miseries of this life, ^⑤ the wrath of God, ^⑥ and the cursed death of the cross, ^⑦ in being buried, ^⑧ and continuing under the power of death for a time." "HE DESCENDED INTO HELL."

CONCLUSION: Two important benefits come when we begin to understand the meaning of the humiliation of Christ.

First of all, we can see the cost of our salvation. God was not guilty of some ^{grand} ~~great~~ mix-up, some tragic waste of His Son's life! No! This was the price he was willing to pay for human sin because of His great love. The whole 33-year life of Christ on earth from leaving home in heaven to His descent into the realms of the dead was a humiliation to pay the price of our salvation!

There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven and let us in.

Secondly, the humiliation of Christ makes His exaltation more glorious. Every artist, or decorator, or musician knows how sharp contrasts can delineate and emphasize beauty. So against the dark background of Christ's humiliation comes the glorious exaltation of ~~the~~ ^{His} resurrection and ascension, expressed in a familiar hymn:

Low in the grave He lay...Jesus my Saviour!
Waiting the coming day...Jesus my Lord!
Up from the grave He arose, with a mighty triumph o'er His foes.
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Just as we trace His steps downward, so we see them upward in Christ's exaltation. ~~He~~ He arose from the dead, He ascended into heaven, He sits at the right hand of God...with the final stage of exaltation still to come when He returns again amid Hallelujahs and Amens of His saints and angels...our Christian hope so well expressed by Paul..."Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, and on

earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil:9-11).

1/2/77

Phainesthe hos Phōterres

Scripture reading: Phil. 2:12-18

Text: "That they may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." Phil. 2:15

About 5 miles from where we worship today there is a new church constructed less than 2 years ago. It lies in the so-called "green-belt" which has been declared around all major cities. For environmental reasons this is a worthy and commendable decree, but for those who live there and whose property was devalued, it seemed unreasonable and arbitrary, especially since new construction is ^{not} allowed. Because the church had existed in tent form before passage of the law, the authorities bent the regulations and gave a building permit for a church. But when a manse for the evangelist was needed, they would give no such consent. However, the evangelist went ahead and built his house next to the church, disregarding the laws. Three times the officials ordered that it be torn down. Finally, some official sympathetic perhaps to the church or perhaps with some inducement from a near-by new rice-hulling mill in the same predicament, offered a solution. "Take off the slate roofing and we will take a picture to show in our reports that the buildings are being torn down; then you can replace the roofing and everything will be all right." The rice-mill complied with this scheme and survived, but the evangelist took the roof off his toilet and not off his house which of course would be inconvenient. In short order, the authorities came and tore down the hou

Now I tell this true story because it illustrates with a relatively minor incident a situation in which no one was acting in the right. What bothers me is not that others were wrong, but that the one person who should have been acting according to what is morally right regardless of consequences failed...the evangelist! Even other Christians have tended to sympathize with him as though he was being persecuted for his faith, forgetting I Pet. 3:17, "For it is better to suffer for doing right if that should be God's will, than for doing wrong." On the contrary here was a clear case of one who forgot the admonition of Paul in Phil. 2:14-15: "Do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world," our text for today.

① No one disputes that we live in a crooked and perverse generation. When Paul wrote, he undoubtedly had in mind the last words of Moses speaking of the disobedience and waywardness and murmuring of his people in Deut. 32:5

"They have dealt corruptly with him
they are no longer his children because of their blemish
they are a perverse and crooked generation."

If Paul saw his generation as crooked and perverse like that of Moses, he would certainly not hesitate to use the same words to describe 1977. It is crooked---warped, bent...far out of alignment with the straight and true yard-stick which is God's standard. It is perverse, willfully turning aside from the right path, skillfully perverting and corrupting for its own wicked purposes that which God created and declared as "good." If Paul were living today perhaps he would be more conscious of the evils of this generation because modern means of communication make them wider known. He would note too a casual attitude towards sin, and a permissiveness in ^{scorning} flouting what is good and upright in the name of "tolerance."

Other places in the Bible use the word darkness to describe what Paul is talking about. We are accustomed to use this word with reference to uncivilized pagans, as in the case of "dark Africa." Yet today the word applies to some of the most brilliantly lighted spots on earth. There is a darkness even in some ^{of the most} sophisticated national capital cities, in the most splendid institutions of learning,

in the highest of high society, in the fantastically wealthy corporations. Perhaps an extreme example is that pathetic account of Howard Hughes in a recent Time Magazine, where perhaps ^{one of} the wealthiest men in history deliberately chose to surround himself with darkness.

This is the world into which Jesus came. He came to do something about it. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." John the Baptist, quoting Isaiah, predicted what the results of His coming would be:

"Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain & hill shall be brought low and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God" Lk 3:4-6 (smooth;

"An artist once drew a picture of a wintry twilight, the trees heavily laden with snow, and a dreary dark house, lonely and desolate, in the midst of the storm. It was a sad picture indeed. Then, with a quick stroke of yellow crayon, he put a light in one window. The effect was magical. The entire scene was transformed into a vision of comfort and good cheer. The birth of Christ was just such a light in a dark world!" (618)... a crooked and perverse generation.

2. Here is where Paul says we fit into the picture. We are to shine as lights in the world which he has just described as crooked and perverse. Too bad we don't speak Greek to catch the beauty of his words: "Phai-nes-the hos pho-ter-res," a good motto for a fraternity. The first word means to cause to shine, to shed light. The second means that which gives light, an illuminator, the same word used in Genesis 1 when God declared, "Let there be lights in the firmament." Some versions translate it as "stars." Paul tells us to shine like stars...the blacker the night the brighter they shine.

Perhaps Paul was thinking of many who had shone as lights in the midst of crooked and perverse generations. There was Joseph in Egypt, surrounded by temptation and evil, yet resisting and continuing to shine. There was Moses on Mt. Sinai, entrusted with the sacred laws of the Almighty, but facing a people gone mad with lust and idolatry. There was Daniel, a high official in a proud and pagan society, who braved a den of lions rather than yield his custom of daily prayer to the true God. There was Esther, a lone woman surrounded by the luxury and intrigue of an Asiatic monarch's harem, yet bravely pursuing the mission for which God had selected her. There was Lydia, convert of Paul in Philippi to which he addressed this letter...carrying on as a light in the business world of the city market, and the jailer who had the light shining in himself as he carried out his official responsibilities. We can think of individuals and small groups all about us here, in lonely and difficult and adverse circumstances, who are lights. I tell my Korean friends that the places at the right hand of the King of Heaven are going to be reserved for the hal-mon-ni chip-sas of little country churches...how many have almost single-handedly kept the light shining in the darkest places.

In this passage, Paul says that shining as lights involves three things, all good to remember as we begin a new year.

1. Do all things without grumbling or questioning.
2. Be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish.
3. Hold fast the word of life.

(a) Do all things without grumbling or questioning. How easy it is to curse the darkness. Somewhere I remember a quotation: "Rather than curse the darkness, it is better to light a candle." When the way is rough, people are uncooperative or ungrateful, circumstances are adverse, political or social environment seems impossible...the child of God shines simply by not griping. Here is the place to remember that God has a purpose for each of us, and that purpose may be merely to shine in the midst of difficulty. The best antidote when we are tempted to blame the darkness or to question God's goodness and wisdom in placing us in it, is to

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remember the verse just above (vs. 14) "For God is at work in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure."

(b) Be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish. That is a high standard, but remember that in the sermon on the mount Jesus told His disciples to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. "Blameless" "innocent" "without blemish"...just the opposite of a "crooked and perverse generation." Because of the sharp contrast between what is straight and what is crooked, what is light and what is dark, there will be antagonism. Jesus predicted this, "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you." (Jn. 15:18) "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you." (15:20). Peter wrote in his letter: "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a wrongdoer, or a mischief-maker; yet if one suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but under that name let him glorify God. (I Pet. 4:15-16). Remember that all the darkness in the world, cannot put out the light of one small candle. That is the calling to which we are called as Christians...to be as pure as light itself.

(c) Hold fast the word of life. The Word of Life is our standard of righteousness our way of life, and most of all our message to this crooked and perverse generation. Some versions translate this: "holding fast the word of life." It is our most precious possession for ourselves bringing knowledge of God's love and forgiveness in Christ, His promises for our protection and care, His assurance that our ways are in His providence. But other versions read, "holding forth the word of life, or proffer the word of life." which means it is something we extend to illumine the darkness around us. There is nothing more powerful, more brilliant against the world's darkness than a life which is "blameless and innocent and without blemish." which is "holding for the word of life." P Phillips translates these words: "For you hold in your hands the very word of life." We have something more precious than gold, more effective for the world's ills than the best medicines. Many years ago a man wrote these words....

"Some years ago I was sitting at dusk at the window of a house in Scotland so situated that it commanded the view of an entire street of the city. Suddenly there came out from the alleyway near the house a man with a lighted torch on the end of a stick. Going to a lamp-post nearby he thrust the torch to the nozzle of the gas-jet which immediately burst into light. He then went to the next post about the middle of the square where the flame from the little torch awakened another blaze of light. I sat there watching that lamp-lighter as he pursued his task, and long after his form became indistinguishable, I could trace his movements by the lamps he lighted and the long trail of lights that he left behind him. Your business and mine is to so live that after our personalities have become lost in the shadows, we shall leave behind us a trail of light that will ~~and~~ guide the steps of those who otherwise may walk in darkness." (p. 199)

Let me close with a little fantasy from the pen of Dr. Kenneth Foreman whom some of us knew and which perhaps I have used here before (Candles on the Glacier 182)

"A man and his angel stood beside the glacier of the world.

"It is cold," said the man.

"It is colder at night," said the angel.

"It would be easier traveling if this were a river," said the man.

"It is a river," the angel said, "It moves ever to the sunlit Sea."

"But there is no motion in it," said the man. "All things are as they were and as they must be."

"Yet it moves," said the angel, "Do you hear those sounds? The scouring of the mighty rocks, the crashing of yonder tower of ice, these things bespeak the motion the eye does not see."

"But it is cruel," said the man, "All this grinding and crushing of the valley floor."

"It is the sound of ~~in~~ preparation for green life in future ages," said the angel.

"And it is dangerous," the man said again, "A man may slip quickly to his death."

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"Many have done so. Many will do so."

"And the darkness is falling," cried the man.

"It is," the angel agreed. "No prayer delays the appointed dark."

"But look!" said the man. "I see lights upon the glacier, here and there. Sparks, pinpoints...What are these against the night?"

"They do not lighten the whole darkness," said the angel. "But they save lives. A man may guide his course by them. Each light marks the place of an explorer...poets, prophets, saints, heroes; voices in the icy silence, sparks of flame in the freezing dark."

"But men still stumble, out there on the glacier."

"Yes, and many fall. But by those same small lights they rise again."

"Do the lights hasten the dawn?" asked the man.

"Time, and the Glacier," said the angel, "hasten for no man's welcome, flee for no man's curse. Dawn will come only in its time."

"Those lights are so few," the man said.

"The more room for yours," said the angel.

"What is one light on all the black and bitter ice?"

"What can all the darkness in the world do to one light?"

"But where is fire?" cried the man. "Without fire I can light no candle."

So the angel held out to him, all unexpected, a burning coal from the altar of the INvisible; whereat the man lighted his short candle and set it, in fear and trembling, out upon the Glacier. And some who passed, weary and marrow-cold, were thereby lighted past one danger, and were set forward with good cheer upon their journey to the hidden Dawn."

① 그리스도께서 **확실한 증거**가 뒤였다.

② 교회가 생명을 얻게 되었다.

③ 그리스도인들이 **부활의 권능** 승리 하였다.

Reading Phil. 3: 8-21

Text Phil 3:10 내가 그리스도 와 그 부활의 권능과

그 고난에 참여함을 알려하여, 그의 죽으심을 본받아

Christianity is a religion of power. ^{God} Greatest show of power was resurrection of Christ from the dead. As He ascended into

heaven, Jesus promised disciples "성령이 너희에게 임하시면

너희가 권능을" 받겠단다. ^{Acts 1:8} Paul wrote: "내가 복음을 부끄러워 하지

아니하노니, 이 복음은 모든 믿는 자에게 구원을 주시는 하나님의

능력이 되리라" Rom 1:16 Also Eph 1:19 그의 힘이 강력으로

역사 하심을 따라, 믿는 우리에게 베푸신 능력의 지극히

크심이 어떠한 것을 너희로 알게 하시기를 구하노라.

Without res. what would these words mean. Without demonstration

of power at garden tomb would there have been outpouring of

power at Pentecost? Without having met risen Lord on Damascus

road, could Paul have discredited (바리새교) everything in order

to know the Lord and the power of His resurrection? Power

through each person of the Trinity. But God is One, and

greatest evidence of power in resurrection. **TEXT** By that

power Christ Vindicated. ^{그리스도께서 확실한 증거가 뒤였다} Church Vitalized

교회가 생명을 얻게 되었다. Christian Victorious. ^{그리스도인들이 승리 하였다}

Christ Vindicated. ^{돌라운} 그리스도께서 **확실한 증거**가 뒤였다.

He is risen. Astounding news. First reaction of Christians

Vindicated. All He said was true. Cp with 3 days before.

We remember predictions. Only by power of Almighty God.

Claim = 주장 (하다). Peter's key claim at Pentecost. Acts 2:32 이 예수를 하나님

이 살리신 것이라. 우리가 다 이 일에 증인으로 다. Cited David's

prophecy in Psalm 16... 이는 그가 사마리아에 매여 있을 수

없었습니다. Importance in early church to being witnesses

of the resurrection. Like a court scene.

With one voice... Jesus is what He claimed to be. ^{백경에} 재판

Phil. 3 reflects Paul's conversion. Paul proud of his

righteousness and prestige (명성). Knew all about

Jesus, but did not know Jesus. Refused claims. Confronted

with living Christ, got to know Him and power of His resur-

rection. Only such power could move him from unbelief to

belief. Like a "tojang" I Cor. 15:14 그리스도께서 만일 다

살지 못하셨으면, 우리의 전파하는 것도 헛것이고, 또 너희

의 믿음도 헛것이며. KIMJE ILLUSTRATION 유교 학자

부활의 권능

(2)

1. 그리스도께서 확실한 증거가 되었다

→ 우리를 살려 주신다

No.

I Church Vitalized. 교회가 생명을 얻게 되었다.

흔들고
실망
주장

By Power of Res. Jerus. Ch transformed (변형시키다)
Like pushing electrical switch. Power of Holy Spirit, and
of Saving Gospel soon to be shown, but resurrection turned
wavering downcast disciples into believers who accepted
claims of Christ, committed lives to Him, obeyed His commands
to wait for power to go out to witness. Church came alive
with the resurrection.

History and existence of church is proof of resurrection
Watergate Scandal illustration. No cover-up possible by
the early disciples. Falsehood = 허위

Church convinced of God's power became primarily witnesses
of the resurrection. Selection of replacement for Judas
First sermons proclaimed resurrection. Created hostility
and persecution.

부활
강요
되

Because the head of the church, Christ, died and is alive
for evermore, His body, the church received life from him.
Without resurrection church would not have been born, with-
out living head could not have grown. Ch. of Korea alive
because Christ is alive. Little bands of Christians appear
unexpectedly. Weak churches become strong. New church
every 4 hours. 4 new churches opened a week in China.
Resurrected Christ continues to vitalize church.

Rev. 1:17-18 두려워 말라 나는 처음이요 나중이니

곧 산 자라, 내가 전에 죽었었노라. 볼지어다 이제
세세로 살았느니라, 사망과 음부의 열쇠를 가졌노라

III Christian Victorious. 그리스도인들이 승리 한다 (하였다)

Almost every Easter sermon will proclaim same hope I Cor. 6:11

하나님이 우리를 다시 살리셨고, 또한 그의 권능으로 우리를
다시 살리시리라. Most quoted: I Cor. 15:20 그러나 이제

그리스도께서 죽은 자 가운데서 다시 살아, 잠자는 자들의
첫 열매가 되셨도다. We all believe this and so affirm

in Apostles Creed.. 몸이 다시 사는 것과, 영원히 사는
것을 믿사옵나이다.

We too will be victorious over death

1. 그리스도께서 확실한 증거가 뒤였다. ③ 부활의 권능
2. 교회가 생명을 얻게 되었다. (되어 있다)
3. 그리스도인들이 승리 하였다 (한다)

No. _____

장내

Today want to speak of Easter power not just in future but for today. II Cor. 13:4

그리스도께서 약하심으로 십자가에 못 박히셨으나, 오직 하나님께서 능력으로 살으셨으니, 우리도 저의 안에서 약하나 너희를 향하여 하나님의 능력으로리와 함께 살리라. In New Testament, esp. Paul, connection between resurrection and suffering (고통, 고난). TEXT 내가

그리스도와 그 부활의 권능과 그 고난에 참여함을 알려하여 그의 죽으심을 본받아. From moment of conversion, Paul knew he must suffer for His Lord in life. But knowing His Lord was alive he could say Phil. 4:13 내게 능력 주시는 자 안에서 내가 모든 것을 할 수 있느니라.

Because Christ rose and lives, we can have victorious living (이긴 승리 생활). Mt. 28:20 내가 ~~세상~~ 세상에

끝날까지 너희와 항상 함께 있으리라. Also John 14:19 이는 내가 살았고, 너희도 살것임이라

Amid sufferings, persecutions we can be victorious. We are no longer citizens of this world but already citizens of heaven. Phil 3:20-21

오직 우리의 시민권은 하늘에 있는 지라. 거기로서 구원하는 자 곧 주 예수 그리스도를 기다리노니, 그가 만민을 자기에게 복종케 하실 수 있는 자의 역사로 우리의 낡은 몸을 자기 영광의 몸의 형체와 같이 변케 하시리라. Old Leger illustration (소생 ch).

Thanks be to God who gives us the victory thru our hard work. 1 Cor 15:57

우리주 예수 그리스도로 말미암아, 우리에게 이 기쁨을 주는 하나님께 감사하노라.

EASTER POWER

Scripture Reading: Philippians 3:8-21

Text: "...that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection..." (Phil. 3:10)

Christianity is a religion of power. As Jesus ascended into heaven, He promised His disciples: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." Paul spoke of power some 50 or 60 times in his letters. "I am not ashamed of the gospel, he wrote Christians living in Rome, the center of power in his day, "for it is the power of God for salvation." (Rom. 1:16) He spoke of the "surpassing greatness of (God's) power toward us who believe." (Eph. 1:19) But these words are meaningless without the greatest of all demonstrations of power which was the resurrection of Jesus Christ Himself from the dead.

Would there have been an outpouring of power at Pentecost without that astonishing miracle at the garden tomb? Without having met the risen and glorified Christ could Paul gladly have thrown overboard his entire past in order to know that Lord, and the power of His resurrection? Easter Power was the supreme act of God, the Almighty, who is One and yet Tri-une. Irresistible power surged through each Person of the Trinity: the power of Christ to save sinners by His death, the power of God to raise Christ from the dead, and the power of the Holy Spirit through believers to witness. This is the power of which Paul wrote in Philippians 3:10 desiring "that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection." By this Easter Power, Christ was Vindicated, the Church was Vitalized, and every Christian is Victorious."

I. CHRIST WAS VINDICATED. "He is risen!" was the glorious, astounding, unbelievable news racing through the Christian community in Jerusalem that first Easter morning. "Our Teacher and Master has risen!" At that moment those first Christians could not have realized all that this meant to the extent to which they soon became aware in succeeding days. They could not know what 2000 years of building on the foundation of that event has taught us today. Their initial reaction must only have been: "By God's power every claim made by our beloved Jesus is vindicated! All that He said and which we failed to comprehend was true! Three days ago we saw Him crucified; we laid His mutilated body in a tomb; all our hopes were dashed in the conviction that our faith in Him as God's Messiah was mistaken and all was over! But now...what a reversal! We remember how He predicted: "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised again on the third day." (Matt. 17:22-23) Only the power of Almighty God could accomplish such an amazing miracle. This confirms that our Master really is the Messiah, the long-expected One, Our King, our Lord!

Several weeks later, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter preached a stirring sermon where his key claim was: "This Jesus God raised up again." (Acts 2:32) Like a lawyer putting a witness on a stand, Peter summoned David who had prophesied in Psalm 16 that death would not be able to hold in its grasp the One whom God by superior power had made Lord and Christ. He cited the miracles and wonders and signs God had performed through this man of Nazareth. Then Peter rebuked all challengers by affirming the resurrection of Christ itself: "Know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36) Those electrified Jerusalem Christians took up the cry that shook the whole world: "Jesus is who He claimed to be! God has confirmed this by an act of His power...what greater vindication than the power of His resurrection?"

Philippians, chapter 3, reflects Paul's conversion experience on the Damascus road. He had heard accounts of what Jesus had done and said. He knew about His crucifixion and the claims that He had risen from the dead. But He did not "know Him." Rejecting all reports about the resurrection, he had left Jerusalem in a fiery crusade to continue extermination of the Christian movement in faraway Damascus. Confronted on the way by the living Christ Himself, undeniably alive and speaking to him, Paul in a flash had acquired that knowledge...he had come to "know Christ." The original words in Phil. 3:10 are "got to know Christ." Then and there, in that very instant, Paul "got to know Christ, and the power of his resurrection." Here was what he called "the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" in verse 8.

Knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection became Paul's personal and blessed gnosis, the fundamental knowledge and truth on which he would base his whole future life. With the living proof of God's power, came his understanding of the meaning of the suffering and death of Christ. It was the final, certain, and official confirmation of God's acceptance of that ransom for our sin. That power of the resurrection moved Paul from defiance to defense of Christ...from total rejection to complete submission to His Savior...even to the point of participating in His sufferings by enduring the hatred of the unbelieving world. He went out to proclaim: "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith is vain...But now Christ has been raised from the dead!" (I Cor. 15:17 & 20) For Peter and Paul and for all Christians ever since, including millions around the globe this morning, Easter power means that all that Jesus said and did are vindicated.

II. THE CHURCH WAS VITALIZED. The infant church of Jerusalem was instantly transformed by the "power of the resurrection." "He is risen!" they cried. The effect was like pushing some giant electrical switch to allow unlimited energy to flow through the transmission lines of a world-wide power grid. The power of the Holy

Spirit, and the power of the saving Gospel were soon to be fully realized too, but the resurrection was the power to transform doubting and wavering and downcast disciples into zealous believers who now accepted all the claims of Christ, who were willing to commit their lives unreservedly to Him, and who obeyed His commands to wait for that promised further infusion of the power of the Holy Spirit enabling them to go out and turn the world upside down with the Gospel. With Easter power the Church came alive!

The 2000-year history of the Church and her existence today as a living body is evidence of the resurrection of Christ as an actual event and is irrefutable proof of its power. In his book "Loving God" Charles Colson applies his legal skills to demonstrate that the existence of the Church rests upon the power of the resurrection. Colson was special counsel to President Nixon, involved in the Watergate Scandal, found the Lord while in prison, and founded the Prison Fellowship ministry. The problem with Watergate was not so much the initial crime as the conspiracy to cover it up. Colson points out that if he and all those high-powered lawyers, Ehrlichman, Haldeman, Mitchell, and the President himself, with all their enormous prestige, influence, and power could not successfully cover up a rather minor crime, how in the world would eleven men with the complicity of up to 500 more have succeeded in covering up a "faked" resurrection...a business far more vulnerable to public skepticism and rejection? As Colson puts it (p. 68), "to subscribe to this argument (of a cover-up), one must also be ready to believe that each disciple was willing to be ostracized by friends and family, live in daily fear of death, endure prisons, live penniless and hungry, sacrifice family, be tortured without mercy, and ultimately die...all without ever renouncing that Jesus had risen from the dead."

Some years ago a pastor phoned to ask me to speak on missions at a Sunday morning service. As we went down the calendar we found that every Sunday was already scheduled until April 22 when I said we had no appointment. "Oh, that won't do," he replied, "that's Easter Sunday!" No missionary sermon will do on Easter! I'm sure he didn't mean that the way they struck my ears. He was thinking of Easter as the spring day when flowers begin to bloom, the birds sing, and the church is better filled than on any of the past 51 Sundays with happy people in colorful new outfits assembled to listen to glorious choir music and a sermon about the events of Christ's resurrection. But missions? No! Could he have forgotten that the good news of Easter Power was the heart of the first missionary proclamation? Utterly convinced of God's power to raise a crucified Savior from the dead, those first Christians went everywhere primarily to witness to the resurrection. The replacement for Judas Iscariot was selected on the basis of one who could become "a witness with us of His resurrection." The first sermons of Peter and others proclaimed the resurrection! Excitement over the

resurrection stirred the church to instant intense activity. Of course this created violent objections, hostility, and persecution. Yet the gates of hell itself could not prevail against a church vitalized, made alive, and witnessing to Easter Power.

Because the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, died and is alive forever more, His body, the church, derives its life from Him. Without Easter Power the church would never have been born; without her living Head she could not have grown through the ages; without His presence at the right hand of God today there would not be a single church in all the world. There is astonishing vitality in the church. Little bands of Christians appear unexpectedly out of nowhere like saplings sprouting from the roots of a tree many yards away. Seemingly lifeless little cells in the body of Christ suddenly flourish overnight without visible cause. The resurrected Christ still vitalizes His church. "Do not be afraid," he says, "I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." (Rev. 1:17-18)

III. THE CHRISTIAN IS VICTORIOUS. By the power of the resurrection, Christ is Vindicated, and the Church is Vitalized, and the Christian is Victorious. Every Easter sermon today will proclaim our victory over death because of Easter Power. "Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power." (I Cor. 6:14) Most quoted will be I Cor. 15:20, "But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep." We affirm this hope in the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in...the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting." Easter Power means power over death for us too!

But Easter Power is not just "pie in the sky" in the future, but power for today...power for victorious living today. Paul drew a parallel between the experience of Christ and of us Christians in II Cor. 13:4; "For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, yet we shall live with Him because of the power of God directed toward you." There is a strong connection between suffering and resurrection in Paul's words here. Somehow Paul saw the resurrection of Christ, His victory over suffering and death, as something we too share. Ever since his conversion on the road to Damascus, when he "got to know the power of the resurrection," Paul also knew that he would be subjected to suffering. God had said of Paul, "He is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake." (Acts 9:15-16) Knowing God's power to raise Christ from the dead, Paul felt that he could carry out his God-given mission to the world with the confidence expressed in Philipians 4:13, "I can

do all things through Him who strengthens me."

Because Christ lives, He is with us, and we claim His promise: "Behold, I am with you always." (Matt.28:20) Easter power energizes victorious living no matter what temptation and suffering and fear surrounds us in this world.

1. Easter power brings victory over sin. Just as Jesus died for our sins, and rose again, so in submitting ourselves through faith to Him as our Savior, we nail our sins to His cross, bury them through His forgiveness, and then rise again in newness of life because, as Paul says repeatedly, we are "in Him." He who has received "all power in heaven and earth" imparts His own life to those in fellowship with Himself. Christians not only live physically, but "Christ liveth in" them.

2. Easter power brings victory over suffering. None of us, no matter how saintly, is exempt from suffering. For some it is the suffering of persecution...the ridicule, the sneers, the snubbing, the prejudice, the discrimination of the non-believing world. For some it is physical suffering, pain of body or mind, the results of accident or ^{injury} ~~age~~, or the effects of long and strenuous toil. For some it is suffering because of tensions within our society, in our families, among our friends. Yet amid all the problems, distresses, frustrations, boredoms, and afflictions of all kinds, there is victorious living because we already belong to a Kingdom whose Sovereign has won the victory.

3. Easter power brings victory over death. Because of the bodily resurrection of our Lord, we have the assurance that we too will receive new bodies...different from our present ones just as the resurrected Christ was somehow different from the Jesus who walked the shores of Galilee...and yet the same in some mysterious form. His was now a spiritual body of eternal dimensions. Easter power is the basis of our faith to affirm in our creed that we believe in "the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting." With Paul we know that "Our citizenship is (even now) in heaven, from which also we eagerly await for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory by the exertion of the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself." (Phil. 3:20-21)

CONCLUSION: Hallelujah! What a Savior! Easter power, the power of the resurrection is past, present and future...an historical event of the past, a present power to live, and a future hope to which we may cling. "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Cor. 15:58)

I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today;
I know that He is living, whatever men may say;
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer,
And just the time I need Him He's always near.

In all the world around me I see His loving care,
And tho' my heart grows weary I never will despair;
I know that He is leading, thru all the stormy blast,
The day of His appearing will come at last.

Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian, lift up your voice and sing
Eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ the King!
The Hope of all who seek Him, the Help of all who find,
None other is so loving, so good and kind.

He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart.

4/1/79

The Resurrection of the Body

Scripture reading: I Cor. 15:35-53; Phil. 3:20-21

Text: "The Lord Jesus Christ.....will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory." (Phil. 3:20-21)

"The resurrection does not mean the continued existence of the soul after death." (Hodge III, 771). Don't let that statement shock you! "The distinctive teaching of Christianity about the future is not that the soul is immortal. Paganism teaches that. It is that there is a resurrection of the body. We are to be human beings in the world to come. A disembodied spirit is not a complete human being. A human being consists of an embodied spirit. The body of the future will be the resurrection body. 'The new man in Christ is made complete only by the resurrection body.'" (W.W.White, The Resurrection Body, p. 15)

For some time I have been thinking of the meaning of the phrase in the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the resurrection of the body." Note the omission of "soul" or "spirit"...only the resurrection of the body is clearly affirmed. ^{this is because} Belief in the immortality of the soul was taken for granted when the creed was formulated. Christians believe that each of us has a soul which will never die. But the resurrection of the body was denied by some, overlooked by others, and grossly distorted by still others. That was true in New Testament times, and when the Creed was composed 4 centuries later, and is also the situation today.

Look at these words: "the resurrection of the body." The word "body" was not used in the English version of the creed until 1543, but had read: "I believe in the resurrection of the flesh"...a literal translation of the Greek and Latin words of the original. The Bible itself does not use the phrase "resurrection of the body" or "resurrection of the flesh" at all. But the teaching is plainly there and is found in our text today, Phil. 3:20-21: "The Lord Jesus Christ...will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subiect all things to Himself."

The other word is resurrection. This does not mean reanimation or resuscitation as was the case with Lazarus (who resumed life after 4 days in the tomb) with the identical body he had always had, subject to all its normal human limitations, and eventually dying in the usual way. "The stone was required to be rolled away to permit Lazarus to come out of the tomb. Jesus did not require the stone to be rolled away in order that He might come forth. The angel rolled the stone from the door to let the outsiders in, not to let Jesus out. Lazarus brought with him out of the tomb the wrappings of the grave that were about him. Jesus came forth from the tomb without the winding sheets of death. He did not need to be loosed and let go." (White, 16). The word resurrection comes from a Greek word "anastasis" occurring about 40 times in the New Testament. It means to raise up, to stand up. In the Bible and in Christian usage, this word means raising up a body with a completely transformed nature just as Jesus Himself was raised. In the Creed we affirm

* that what happened to Jesus body will happen to our own bodies. Resurrection!

TEXT

Our thoughts today are limited to this one credal phrase, are based on the assumption that all of us here accept the historical fact of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are trying to answer these three questions:

1. Why do we believe in the resurrection of the body?
2. What will be the nature of the resurrection body?
3. What blessings are ours because of this belief?

1 Why do we believe in the resurrection of the body? Most of us will immediately answer, "Because Jesus rose from the dead with a body which could be seen and touched, and which could eat and talk with the disciples." Here is the foundation of our belief in the resurrection of the body. When Lazarus died, Jesus did not

own "oneness" with Christ in His resurrection

correct Martha when she said, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." He directed her faith towards Himself: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies." (Jn. 11:25-26). The reference is plainly to a "rising" after physical death. Jesus spoke too of "abiding in Him" and that He is in us and we are in Him. This speaks of an identification of the Christian with Jesus, and with His experience both now and in the hereafter. "I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (Jn. 14:3). Inseparable! He rose in the body; we shall rise bodily!

8. A second answer to our question is, "Because the Apostles taught so firmly the resurrection of the body." We can only touch highlights of the abundant evidence. "Jesus Christ is risen from the dead" was the key point of Apostolic preaching. It stirred the bitterest persecution. It was required as a part of the confession of believers: "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved." (Rom. 10:9) This was the explosive charge that set the church in motion. The Apostolic teaching that the resurrection of Jesus was a pattern to be followed by all believers gave it double significance. "He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you." (2 Cor. 4:14). The familiar fifteen chapter of I Corinthians begins with affirmation of Christ's resurrection and moves logically to a sublime conclusion that we shall all be changed (vs. 52) so that what has been a "natural body" will be raised as a "spiritual body." (vs. 42-44).

9. A third answer to the question: "Why do we believe in the resurrection of the body?" is the Biblical teaching that we will be saved as a whole. There is nothing fractional about our salvation...no part of what is "me" will be left out. Not just soul, not merely personality...all of me. Jesus was concerned about the total man, both that which can be called physical or material and that which is spiritual. Greeks despised the body, but Christians believed that man is made in the image of God whose workmanship we cannot despise. The body is the "temple of the Holy Spirit" they said. True, Jesus had said that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" But that was unregenerate flesh before the Holy Spirit took up residence in the body to prepare it for the resurrection. In Rom. 8:23, Paul speaks of the "redemption of our body". There are no gaps in the plan of God...not part of us, but all of us are objects of His love, His saving grace, and His power to resurrect. The function of the Saviour, having reconciled all things to Himself through the blood of His cross (Col. 1:20), is to present us "Holy and blameless and beyond reproach" to His Father. "We shall be like Him when we see Him as He is." (I Jn. 3:2)

10. What will be the nature of the resurrection body? For 2000 years there has been much conjecture, some of it rather bizarre. Whenever a loved one is laid to rest, we wonder about this. Those who ridicule the whole idea of a bodily resurrection ask how bodies, disappearing in a fire, or destroyed in the seas, or eaten by cannibals could be reassembled into bodily form. Yet for those with faith to accept God's Word, there are ample clues to satisfy our curiosity.

11. At least three figures of speech in the Bible describe what happens: sleeping and waking, a seed planted in the ground, and shedding an old garment and putting on a new. Our word "cemetery" comes from the first of these...a "sleeping place." When Lazarus died, Jesus said: "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go, that I may awaken him out of sleep." (Jn. 11:11). Stephen under a hail of stones "fell asleep." (Acts 7:60) Paul used this expression 3 times in a short passage in I Thes. 4, promising that "God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus." (vs. 14) The Westminster Shorter Catechism borrows the same expression: "The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection." (#37A). Here are words we can understand...a person asleep is in repose, resting, at peace, no longer burdened or pained. Note too that that

body is still

that body is still ^{"asleep in Jesus"} in Christ, united with Him, waiting to be awakened... ^{"awakened in Jesus"}

B. Then, there is the figure of seed in the ground. Jesus used it of His own death and resurrection: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (Jn. 12:24). Paul answers the question before us in I Cor. 15 so graphically it needs no exposition. In this case I will make an exception to my usual criticism of the Living Bible to quote from it: "But someone may ask, 'How will the dead be brought back to life again? What kind of bodies will they have?' What a foolish question! You will find the answer in your own garden! When you put a seed into the ground it doesn't grow into a plant unless it 'dies' first. And when the green shoot comes up out of the seed, it is very different from the seed you first planted. For all you put into the ground is a dry little seed of wheat, or whatever it is you are planting, then God gives it a beautiful new body...just the kind he wants it to have; a different kind of plant grows from each kind of seed." (vs. 35-38). I like the expression "just the kind He wants it to have." What better kind of body could anybody want?

C. The third figure is putting on a new garment. Paul tells us, "We shall be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal, must put on immortality." (I Cor. 15:52-53). Again: "For indeed in this house we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life." (II Cor. 5:2-4). We shall be changed. That is the work begun by the Holy Spirit when He puts saving faith into our hearts, and completed when He clothes us with the new bodies fit for existence in heaven and fellowship with God. I see in these three figures the work of the Triune God: Asleep in Jesus...identification with the abiding Saviour, with a body just like God ^{and already resurrected} wants us to have...the perfect will of God, Almighty accomplished, clothed with our dwelling from heaven...the completion of the work of the Holy Spirit.

D. Far more can be said to answer our question about the nature of the resurrection body. Like the resurrected Jesus we will be the same, yet different, perfected, glorified. We will be recognizable, and yet not subject to the same laws of nature but to those of a higher order whose laws and dimensions we cannot imagine. Our bodies are now adapted to needs and functions demanded by earthly order; over there they will be adapted to whatever it takes to live and act in fellowship with the Heavenly Father. I believe that, to all who have faith in the assurance of God's Word that this will be so, no further speculation is called for. "The Lord Jesus Christ will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory."

3. What blessings are ours because of this belief? I cite three out of many. The first blessing is a proper respect for the bodies God has given us. The greatest compliment ever paid to the human body was for the Son of God Himself to take one. God regarded that body in death on a cross as sufficient sacrifice for the sin of all who repent and believe. This body of ours is "the temple of the Holy Spirit." It is the material which God will remold into spiritual bodies fit to live with Himself. Surely that requires that we give due regard to keeping our bodies clean, healthy, and functionally active for Him. It means proper and respectful treatment at death. Let not the excesses and expense which we abhor in many modern burials obscure the fact that this body from which God has temporarily withdrawn the breath of life is something God has created, in His own image...something which is now asleep in Jesus, something which God plans to reuse in a glorified state. No funerals are recorded in the New Testament, but the bodies of John the Baptist, of Dorcas (the good woman of Joppa) and of Jesus Himself were treated with love, and care and respect, and we Christians can do no less.

B. A second blessing is our eternal hope for ourselves and the comfort when our loved ones depart this life. For this reason Paul tells us "not to grieve, as do the rest who have no hope" (I Thess. 4:13) but to "comfort one another with these words." (vs.

18) and to say with him: "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Cor. 15:57). Some of you have heard me tell of examining a man at the Soh-seng-won leprosy colony near Chunju for baptism many years ago. He was blind, the disease had eaten away his hair, parts of his face, his fingers and feet. I asked: "What kind of body will you have when you get to heaven?" People with that disease have little facial expression, but even his horrible features lit up as he replied, "Not a body like this one, but one like Jesus?"

C. The third blessing is that the resurrection of our bodies again demonstrates the power of God. If horsepower is our unit of energy, remember that "the resurrection of Jesus is the New Testament unit of power." (White 83). God who created the farthest reaches of the universe, who put together innumerable components of our bodies, will once again demonstrate His infinite power in refashioning our bodies! We can safely predict that scientists will never discover all the secrets of God's power, but that ^{The resurrection event} heaven will show that power multiplied to the nth degree beyond all they discover. Here is what we affirm twice in the Apostles' Creed... ^{God the Father} He is Almighty. "He is the Almighty Creator. He never grows weary. For Him nothing is impossible. "Is anything too hard for Jehovah?" (White 83) And it is the will of the Father to direct "the surpassing greatness of His power" (Eph. 1:19) to attaining His ultimate purpose of consummating all things in Christ His Son...and that includes the heavenly state of all His children.

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself."