

Can These Bones Live?

**~Believing God for the
Impossible**

Fresh Oil Releases

The Impossible breaks Forth!

A long time ago, a precious older saint said something to me which has never left me. It has become like a permanent message pinned on the notice-board of my mind. This is what she said:

'When God wants to do something great, He starts with something difficult;
When He wants to do something very wonderful, He starts with something impossible!'

Over and over again in my own life, I can testify to the truth of these words. However, more recently I have found that all these occurrences were dress-rehearsals for a situation I am now facing. Just as David had his dress-rehearsals killing the lion and the bear in order to prepare his heart to face Goliath, so too the Father takes us through training sessions; smaller battles which build our faith and knowledge of His character so that we may not only stand but triumph in the day we face our Goliath.

Many people find themselves in situations where they are hard-pressed on every side. Although they have faith that God will come through for them and even have promises concerning His intentions toward them, the time of waiting is a real test. Recently, the Holy Spirit began to minister to me about doubting God's wisdom and timing. He led me to the story of Martha and Mary dealing with their brother's illness (John 11).

Martha and Mary had a strong friendship with Jesus. They had spent much time with Him. They knew He loved them. They also knew that He had healed numerous people. So when their brother Lazarus became sick, their first instinct was to call for Jesus to come to their aid. They were confident that He would respond just as He had in many other instances and restore Lazarus to health.

Yet He did not come. Day after day they watched their brother getting worse and their

eyes scanned the horizon, trying to make out if each approaching figure was their beloved Jesus. They no doubt encouraged one another by recalling other instances in which He had touched the sick and they had been instantly healed. They comforted Lazarus by saying, "not much longer, Jesus is on the way. When He comes everything will be alright!" But yet another day passed and there was no sign of him. Doubt and confusion began to set in. Did Jesus really care? Had he got the message? Why was He taking so long to come to their aid? 'Hope deferred makes the heart sick', the Word tells us and as the reality of the situation before their eyes became more and more hopeless, confusion was replaced by anger and somewhere in-between these two raging emotions, faith was desperately trying to keep its head above the stormy waters.

Martha and Mary were in a crisis of faith. They believed Jesus was the Son of God. They remembered His words and His deeds. They trusted in His character. Yet still no response arrived in answer to their desperate request. Beloved, is that not where many of us find ourselves. We are friends of Jesus, not casual enquirers. We have years of genuine relationship with God on our spiritual resumes. We have seen and heard of His mighty acts on behalf of others facing the very same situation we now wrestle with. We have sent urgent prayers to the Father calling for help. We have confidently expressed our certainty that Jesus will come to our aid. Not only our own faith but our testimony is at stake here.

As each day has passed and the situation before us has grown steadily worse, we have encouraged ourselves by remembering the mighty works of the Lord on behalf of His people. We have recalled His words over and over. Each day as we have attended the worsening situation, we have scanned the horizon, trying to catch sight of a sign that Jesus is indeed on the way. We have prophesied to our 'Lazarus' that life and healing are certain.

Yet, to date, Jesus has not arrived to bring restoration. Nor is there any sign that He will

come before it is too late. This is the dark night of the soul; the season when we are required to keep believing in God's goodness even when we don't understand His delay. We have the choice of succumbing to the suggestions of the enemy that God doesn't care; that He is punishing us; that we have brought this upon ourselves; that we are presumptuous to believe He wants to heal the situation - or we can choose, like Job, to say, "though He slay me, yet will I trust Him".

In Martha and Mary's case, they finally had to pull the sheet over Lazarus' face and begin the funeral arrangements. Their hearts were reeling from the shock and the accusations of the enemy were ringing in their ears as they numbly went through the motions of their brother's burial. The hardest thing was that they didn't understand why Jesus hadn't come to save them from this. They had no doubt that he had the power to heal. So what was the reason for His absence. Their identical statements to Jesus when He finally arrived show they doubted His wisdom and timing - "Lord, if You had been here, our brother would not have died".

Lazarus means 'God is my Helper'. Imagine how embarrassed Lazarus felt as he deteriorated day by day in full view of everyone who knew what his name declared. His life appeared to be a direct contradiction of what he was called. I read of a man in America today who has changed his name to 'In God we Trust'. This is much like Lazarus - his parents called him this because they believed God would help in time of need; yet Lazarus died. How the critics must have had a field day with that bit of news! His Christian testimony was wiped out by the reality of the situation.

Beloved, there are keys which we must lay hold of in this narrative. Martha and Mary did not misunderstand Jesus' heart towards them. He did love them and Lazarus - and He fully intended to come to their aid. His response on hearing of Lazarus' illness was this:

Joh 11:4 When Jesus heard, He said, This sickness is not to death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God might be glorified

by it.

However, this is a statement that can be misinterpreted and Martha and Mary expected an answer in line with their own mindsets about how Jesus operated. They had seen Him heal the sick. This was within their frame of reference. In their minds, there was no need for the situation to go to the place of death and beyond. Jesus was within walking distance of their house. All He had to do was arrive and take Lazarus by the hand and raise him up. They were full of faith that this was going to happen.

BUT God was planning to do something far beyond what they had hoped, dreamed or imagined. He was planning to shatter their narrow mindsets concerning the limits of His power.

He was planning the IMPOSSIBLE!

This is the reason for the statement found in verse 6:

Joh 11:6 Therefore, when He had heard that he was sick, then indeed He remained two days longer in the place where He was.

It is hard for us to conceive that Someone Who loves us would deliberately dig His heels in and hold back His response for two days! We expect an immediate urgent answer, like when we dial 911! Yet Jesus WANTED the situation to go beyond the range of normal help. He WANTED the crisis to escalate and completely shake the structure of their belief system. He PURPOSELY delayed His answer because he wanted to do something BIGGER THAN HEALING OR RESTORATION. He intended right from the moment the crisis broke out to demonstrate God's goodness - this sickness was for the glory of God. But Martha and Mary's understanding of what this meant was limited by their experience.

Beloved, we must remember that God's delay in response to our situation is a sign that He wants to do something FAR BIGGER than healing or restoration. He is willing to allow the shaking of

our faith and will allow the situation to go far beyond death and even burial of hopes and dreams....because

He is planning RESURRECTION!

However, for those in Martha and Mary's shoes, there comes first the days of gazing at the horizon in hope, the deterioration of the situation, the feelings of abandonment and helplessness, anger and confusion, the struggle to keep believing in God's goodness - followed by the death of someone or something very precious, the days of mourning, the loss and coming to terms with the reality of the situation, the facing of questions which one has no answers for, the Job's comforters who come to offer their 'pearls' of earthly wisdom. All these things must be faced and surmounted.

When God is intending to demonstrate resurrection power in your life, there is no avoiding this valley of the shadow of death. There is no short-cut, no painless microwave version of this meal He would have us consume. The whole scroll must be eaten even though it is bitter in one's stomach - because out of this experience you are going to prophesy words of life that affect nations and kingdoms and people groups. And for those of us who have declared that 'God is our helper' like Lazarus, God is not intending for you to be remembered as just another of the many He healed. From that time on, Lazarus was known as 'the one Jesus raised from the dead'.

Joh 12:1 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was (who had died, whom He raised from the dead)

Joh 12:9 Then a great crowd of the Jews learned that He was there. And they did not come for Jesus' sake only, but also that they might see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.

His name and resurrection went together from then on! But first Lazarus had to go through death and four days in the tomb!!

The resurrection of Lazarus profoundly changed not only the life of Mary and Martha, but many Jews also came to faith in Jesus as a result of what they witnessed. Jesus has more than just your situation's restoration and healing in mind. This is what has caused Him to delay the answer until it is too late for all intents and purposes! His purpose is BIGGER than your need or request. It goes far beyond the boundaries of your immediate family or house; beyond just your own purpose and life. God's ultimate purpose is to bring as much glory to His Name as possible. So He begins with something completely IMPOSSIBLE! He wants to expand your understanding and give you a personal testimony of just Who He really is - the Resurrection and the Life! He wants to impact regions and cities and nations through your life!

Has your situation moved beyond the point of sickness, past the time where even life-support is helpful? Have you gone beyond the wrestlings to the place of finality and the funeral parlor? Perhaps you are even sitting in the house weeping, surrounded by Job's comforters, feeling betrayed and abandoned by the One you still love so dearly. Beloved, even if you have reached the stage where if the situation were to be opened up again, the stench of decay would be overwhelming, the God of the Impossible is about to demonstrate His resurrection power before your eyes! Dear much-maligned Martha had faith for this - she said to Jesus when He arrived:

Joh 11:22 But I know that even now, whatever You will ask of God, God will give You.

Let us no longer doubt God's wisdom or His timing. Nor must we allow the lack of visible signs of His presence to shipwreck our faith. Let us wait in hope, confident that our Jesus is about to demonstrate His very nature in our midst - that we too may follow in the footsteps of those first disciples. It is one thing to know theoretically this God of Resurrection Life - but His purpose in delaying is to give us a first-hand testimony that will radically affect the very cities we live in!

Act 4:33 And the apostles gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power. And great grace was on them all.

It is time for the world to see that our God is a God of Resurrection power. Yet how will we have the faith to pray for the dead to be raised if we have no personal knowledge that the grave has lost its victory and death has lost its sting? Beloved, for this very reason, Jesus has waited two days longer before setting in motion your answer.

They shall not be put to shame who wait for the Lord.

Selah



Lazarus, Come Forth!

When I wrote the article on the impossible breaking forth, I did not realize that the Spirit had a further lesson in mind. In the days following its release He began to unveil yet another key hidden in the folds of the narrative.

Leading me right into the center of the story, He began to compare the responses of Martha and Mary to the response of Jesus, when they were confronted by the death of Lazarus. For days, the two sisters had nursed and encouraged Lazarus on his sick-bed. They spoke words in faith, boldly declaring that because they were loved by Jesus help would arrive in time.

However, to their horror, He did not arrive before it was too late. Death came - and now they were left with the lifeless body to deal with. What did they do?

They finally accepted the harsh facts which were staring them in the face and began to make the funeral and burial arrangements. They had so hoped that Lazarus would be healed. They had called out to God for help. They had trusted and encouraged one another, reminding themselves of His faithfulness and love for them...but now in the midst of this confusing circumstance, they must come to terms with reality and get on with what needed doing. Beloved, what was the dividing line which turned their hearts from faith and hope to resignation and calm acceptance?

It was DEATH!

The arrival of Death immediately severed the cord of their faith. While they could still observe signs of life in their beloved Lazarus, hope still flickered valiantly and faith carried them. However, when the stone-cold reality of death paraded before their eyes, their hearts surrendered and embraced the reality of the situation. When somebody made the announcement that Lazarus had breathed his last, the behavior of all involved went from encouragement to comfort; from faith to acceptance; from hope to despair. Instead of speaking words of Life - "Jesus is coming; you will be healed; this will pass; God loves you; He will not abandon you" - they began to speak words of Death - "it is over; he is gone; we must accept what we cannot understand; God is trying to teach you something through this; his purpose on earth was finished; suffering purifies us!" DEATH began to reign both within their hearts and in their house. They all submitted to its power and began to adjust their behavior accordingly; beginning by adjusting the way they spoke.

The important thing to notice is they did what came NATURALLY. They did what was LOGICAL in the circumstances. They behaved SENSIBLY - after all, according to their five senses, the

situation had come to an end. It was not the end they had hoped or believed for - but it was an end nevertheless! According to the decree of those who had superior knowledge in such matters (probably the doctor in this case) the matter was settled. They had moved from being motivated by their faith and what the eyes of their heart saw to being controlled by their natural sight and the words of others. Hope deferred makes the heart sick - and a sick heart is in no condition to rule and reign in life.

Beloved, this is the very battle we find ourselves in whenever we face any crisis of faith. The eyes of our heart become engaged in a wrestling match with our natural eyes. For a season it seems the eyes of our heart have the victory; but as the situation worsens and our natural ears hear the verdicts and words of death and defeat spoken from external sources, it becomes harder and harder for the ears of our hearts to hear the assurance of Jesus:

This sickness is not to death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God might be glorified by it.

One minute our natural eyes are underneath, pinned down by the strength and faith of the eyes of our hearts - the next minute, the positions are reversed and our natural senses are ruling! Round and round, over and under the battle goes! Exhaustion begins to settle in. yet still hope flares up in the depths of our hearts. However, the deciding factor; the final blow that decides the victor in this battle is the pronouncement that DEATH has arrived. This settles it for practically all of us. We accept defeat, feeling ashamed and thinking that perhaps there was something amiss in the way we prayed. After all, there is nothing wrong with God... so we must be the problem - and this adds guilt to the pile of heavy burdens we are staggering under.

Death in any situation seems to possess the ability to act like a Judge's hammer. It is settled - and every warrior who has previously been fighting for life and health and freedom mysteriously bows its knee at Death's

appearance. Is this not strange, considering we believe that Jesus conquered death? We blithely quote, 'o grave where is your victory; o death, where is your sting?' and yet interpret it in a way that infers that this just means death doesn't hurt.

What nonsense! The reason the grave has no victory is that Jesus Christ could not be held by the grave. When He wrestled with Death, He came out on top! Death could not keep Him down. Why? Because He IS the Resurrection and the Life. It is not that He performs a resurrection now and again - it is the SUBSTANCE of who He is. In the same way, God is Love. It is not that He shows love - He IS Love. Therefore He can express nothing but LOVE in His every action. It is the essence of Who He is! Therefore, because Jesus is the RESURRECTION and the LIFE, His every action and word is permeated by and exudes this same Resurrection Life.

He does not bow His knee when Death enters the room!

Death must bow before Him!

Let us look at the response of Jesus to this scenario. Even as He journeys toward the place of death, He is speaking words of Life:

"Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep. I'm going to wake him up."

He declares this situation is temporary and will soon pass. Sleep is a temporary state from which all men rise. Death, in their mindsets, was permanent. Already, before He even shows Himself to Martha and Mary, He is opposing the decree of Death's hammer. He, Jesus, will enter the situation and change it irrevocably and restore Lazarus to the state he was in before this happened! Not only is He challenging Death's decree, he is also communicating to the disciples that the situation is not really as dreadful as it appears. It will pass and Lazarus will continue where he left off before the season of suffering came upon him.

This is important to those of us who are facing situations where Death seems to have the upper hand. Jesus is saying, " this situation is not as bad as it appears. Do not be afraid. I am coming to restore it to what it was before the crisis!"

Then He meets Martha as he comes to the outskirts of Bethany and once again He speaks words of Resurrection and Life:

Joh 11:23 Jesus said to her, Your brother shall rise again.

Mary is sitting still in the house. This is the same place where she sat at the feet of Jesus but He is not there any longer. She is full of grief and grappling to come to terms with the reality of the situation. She remembers fondly the days when the presence of Jesus was in the house and longs for the days of old. Beloved, some of us are sitting in this place, where once the presence of God was strongly felt. We are dwelling in the memories of yesterday, when things were so much brighter. Surrounded by sounds of grief intermingled with words of comfort, we allow our minds to wander back to happier days and the phrase 'if only' repeats itself through our hearts constantly.

However, where is Jesus now? The past is gone and can never be accessed again. Memories of the moves of God in yesteryear will not help us now. We must find out where Jesus is going now and get up and position ourselves in that place.

Then when Mary had come where Jesus was, seeing Him, Mary fell down at His feet, saying to Him, Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. Joh 11:33 Then when He saw her weeping, and also the Jews who came with her weeping, Jesus groaned in the spirit and troubled Himself.

'When Mary had come to where Jesus was' - when Mary moved herself from the place of grief and acceptance of the facts to the position where Jesus was; when she moved herself and began to pour out her heart to the One she loved, it MOVED Jesus. Jesus did not groan in His spirit when He encountered Martha

on the road. It was only when He saw the one who had so often sat at His feet, choosing the good portion, weeping, yet once again taking up her position at His feet, that He was galvanized into action.

Beloved, don't sit staring into the past and remembering Jesus' past words any more. Get up and move to where He is now. He is on the way to address the issue face to face - and you must resume your position at His feet once again. The circumstances and harsh realities have robbed you of that position but now you must personally take it back again. His feet have moved - but you have stayed behind, grieving your loss. Get up and come to where Jesus is. Even though the Job's comforters follow you, not understanding the reason for your movement, take up your place at His feet again. Your movement will trigger the beginning of something bigger than you could ever have imagined!

The first thing Jesus does in His face to face encounter with Death is to command every barrier to be removed.

Joh 11:39 Jesus said, Take away the stone.

Remember this, Beloved - Jesus was not ruled by his natural senses when He walked the earth AND He definitely isn't now! When He came to the tomb of Lazarus, he told them to open it. He was not intimidated or put off by the stench of decay. He knew He was the resurrection and the Life and so the smell assaulting His nostrils did not sway Him at all! He was not moved by the fact that four days had passed and the tomb had been long sealed. It did not deter Him that a closed door was in His face. He just spoke and commanded it to be opened!

Then, with the overwhelming odor of rotting flesh rolling in waves from the open tomb, He issued yet another decree:

Joh 11:43 ... he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

And Death bowed its knee and gave up its hold on Lazarus! He came out fully alive, fully

restored, just as he had been before the sickness entered his life! When Jesus said 'Lazarus, come forth'. He was actually commanding something that was impossible in the natural. Lazarus was dead. He couldn't hear, much less respond to this order. Yet, Jesus was not intimidated by the impossible. He did not limit His commands to the realm of what was possible to man. He did not tell those standing around to go in and carry Lazarus out. That would have been SENSIBLE. That would have been the LOGICAL thing to do. That would have taken into account the fact that Lazarus was wrapped tightly in grave-wrappings. Surely if you are going to raise someone from the dead, it would be helpful to take the grave-clothes off first...?

But Jesus is not governed by the NATURAL senses

Jesus is not controlled by the FACTS

Jesus does not function according to the UNDERSTANDING OF MAN

Jesus is motivated by Who He is

Jesus speaks according to His knowledge of God's intentions

Jesus speaks Words which manifest those intentions!

Saints, the Father is wanting to raise up in the earth a people who are not governed by their natural senses. He is forming a company conformed to the image of His Son. Jesus was able to stare death and decay in the face and be completely unswayed from His course of action. The sealed tomb did not cause Him to hesitate. The stench of decay did not make Him flinch and turn His face away. The eyes of His heart saw Lazarus waking up. The ears of His heart heard the declaration of the Father and the words of His mouth were declarations of TRUTH. The words of His mouth were DECREES that commanded obedience.

The words of His mouth created LIFE from a death situation.

In the beginning, God said, "let there be Light" AND THERE WAS LIGHT. In this situation,

Jesus said, "let there be resurrection Life" and there WAS Resurrection Life. One of the reasons that God has allowed you to find yourself in this situation of death and decay is in order to train you to come up higher.

He wants you to move from a place of being governed by your natural senses to being moved only by what you hear the Father saying and see Him doing. We are sons of the Resurrection. He wants us to begin living in that seated place. He wants to bring you to a place where you are able to stare death in the face and yet decree resurrection Life. He wants you to look at every barrier of stone that stands in your way and command its removal. He wants you to see every closed door in front of you and in the authority of the Name of Him Who conquered Death, command it to be opened. He wants you to come to a place where it doesn't matter how bad the stench of decay is in the situation, You will rise up undaunted and confidently command in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth!' He wants you to begin to operate in the authority purchased for you by the cross of Calvary, the place where Jesus made a public spectacle of principalities and powers!

The last enemy to be destroyed is Death. You have been through much training and preparation. The last enemy that must be put under your feet is death. In the past you learnt in measure that sickness had to bow its knee. Now God has you in the final training session for the purpose that awaits you. It is time for the eyes of your heart to completely triumph over your natural eyes. The only way to accomplish this is to harness the power God has put into your tongue. Proverbs tells us:

Pro 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it shall eat the fruit of it.

The question is, 'do you want death or life?' Whichever one you choose to embrace and love, will determine the fruit you experience. In the situation you face, the action of your tongue will determine whether the reality of heaven or the reality of earth wins. We pray 'let your kingdom

come on earth as it is in heaven' - this is a declaration more than a request. It is like saying, 'let there be light'. Do we see with the eyes of our hearts the realities of the Kingdom, or are we submitted to what our natural eyes are showing us. We must move beyond declaring the facts of the situation to speaking the future- to declaring what will be!

There is an untapped power within our own tongues to create Life by the anointed spoken word. Yet our tongues can only speak out of the treasury of our hearts. So it is imperative to fill our hearts with the Truth of God's Word. It is important to understand His intentions towards us. Jesus declared God's intentions once and for all when He said:

Joh 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come so that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Beloved, please clear up your thinking on this matter. Any area in your life where you have been robbed in any way, any instance where there has been destruction or death, is the work of the enemy. God does not make you sick to teach you something. God does not break up marriages or take away people's emotional or physical health. Jesus came that we might have LIFE in EVERY area. Whatever you are facing, if death is at work you know you are facing the thief. Even if it be at bone or marrow level, if Life is not in evidence, then the enemy is at work. Once the source is clarified, you have confidence to rise up as a son of the Resurrection and begin to command and decree Resurrection Life. It doesn't matter what your eyes and ears tell you; it doesn't matter what the counselors tell you; it doesn't matter what the doctor or the mortician tells you. What matters is what the Father says.

Mat 19:26 But Jesus looked on them and said to them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Luk 1:37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

It doesn't matter whether you are facing a barren womb or a closed tomb, He Who is the Resurrection and the Life dwells within you. Rise up and stare Death in the face and begin to decree Life!

Sometimes the first barrier, the first place the stone has to be removed is from the earthen tomb of our own vessels. Jesus is within us, yet somehow the religious spirit has managed to roll the stone across the opening and seal it. We find ourselves unable to speak words of Life because we have been in the situation too long. Our tongues betray the state of our inner hearts, which are sick because of deferred hope.

Jam 3:9 By this we bless God, even the Father. And by this we curse men, who have come into being according to the image of God. Jam 3:10 Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Jam 3:11 Does a fountain send forth at the same hole the sweet and the bitter?

Beloved, in order to be a son of the Resurrection, we must deal with every bitter root that has sprung up in our hearts. Bitter words are words of death and cynicism. Only once those bitter roots are removed, will the spring that flows from our heart give sweet water of Life.

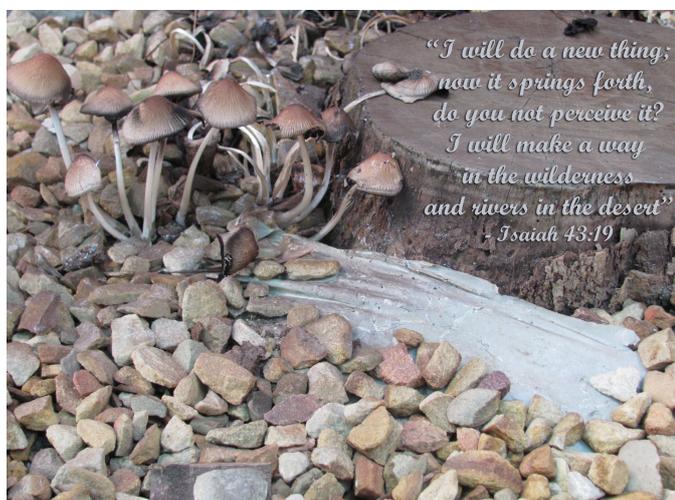
Pro 15:4 A wholesome tongue is a tree of life

The word 'wholesome' here means 'curative, delivering, medicinal'. Our tongues must be released to speak words that heal and deliver and are as medicine. So let us allow the Spirit of God to reveal and heal any bitter springs within our hearts. We must release the bitterness we feel because this situation has touched our life. In Exodus 15, at the waters of Marah (which means 'bitter') Moses was instructed to throw a tree into the waters and they became sweet. Today, if the waters of our hearts are bitter, only the tree of Calvary will make them sweet. Jesus took our pain and bitterness upon Himself at the cross. We need hold onto it no longer. Let the sweet waters of resurrection Life begin to

flow to your own heart first. Let every dead place come back to life again as you understand that this situation you face is intended for the glory of God. You have not read the last chapter of the story. Even now Jesus is moving to the place of confrontation with the Death that has permeated your experience. Go with Him; Hear His declared intention - your brother shall rise again - and begin to rise up and boldly decree Life. Then watch Death bow its knee and begin to retreat!

This sickness is not to death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God might be glorified by it.

THIS IS HEAVEN'S DECLARATION!



Do You Really Want to Raise This Corpse?

In this last week, I have become aware that many are struggling to stare death in the face and decree Resurrection Life. One of the reasons for this is the condition and parameters of what we see before us. We look at this decaying, stinking, dead situation and are not too sure any more if we really want life to be infused into it again. Perhaps it would be better to leave it behind and move on to new beginnings and fresh opportunities. There are too many painful memories attached to this particular corpse! The enemy will capitalise on our indecision and continue to whisper in our ears, "you're flogging a dead horse" and point out any decaying spots we may have missed!

However, we must not allow ourselves to be ruled by our emotional struggles and bad

memories. So let us return to the Word of Life and learn again the principles of resurrection found in 1 Corinthians 15. Paul explains:

1Co 15:42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: 1Co 15:43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: 1Co 15:44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

So here we see that something is sown in corruption, dishonour and weakness, in a natural form. Yet it is raised incorruptible, with glory and power, in a spiritual form. The key here is to remember that when a seed is sown it has a totally different form to the tree that emerges from the earth. A seed has a hard outer casing and no resemblance to that which erupts from within its depths. A seed has no beauty or attractiveness. The beauty is reserved for the tree that is to come forth from the death and burial of this seed. Let us look at the words that Paul used to describe the state of a dead seed that is sown.

The word 'corruption' means 'physical or moral decay, ruin' and comes from a root word meaning 'to lead away a Christian church from that state of knowledge and holiness in which it ought to abide, to be destroyed, to perish, in an ethical sense, to corrupt, deprave'. Are you facing a situation where this is happening? This is a case where resurrection power is needed.

'Dishonor' means 'disgrace, reproach, shame' and comes from a root meaning 'despised'. Is your situation like this? Then it is a seed, which contains in its inmost being the DNA for a resurrection miracle. Beauty will sprout out of ashes! If you cut a seed open with a knife, there is no evidence inside of the plant that is intended to sprout from its innards. In the same way, dissecting your dead situation will not yield any signs of what God is planning. You have to just look at this seed and understand that resurrection is going to yield something completely different to what you are currently facing.

The word 'weakness' means 'infirmity of body or soul, lack of strength needed to understand a thing or to do things great and glorious, or to restrain corrupt desires'. Are you staring at a situation where any of these things are evident? Well, you are looking at the outer seed covering. This hard dry seed-situation hides within it a very great miracle that God intends to bring forth. This is the wonderful truth, Beloved! It does not matter how hard, how dry, how weak, decayed or corrupted your situation is. In its inmost parts where only the eye of God can see, the DNA for a resurrection miracle is waiting.

We may ask why God did not choose to heal and restore the situation before it reached this stage? The answer is that if God had just healed it as we asked, it would have remained in its original form. Paul says, 'it is sown a natural (or sensual) body and raised a spiritual (non-carnal) body. Your situation had to die in order for God to be able to resurrect it in a different form. God did not restore the first Adam. He had to die in Christ on the cross in order to be able to become a being full of the life of God. Death is necessary in order to completely change the form and nature of a situation. If we desire the supernatural life of God to be the prevailing force in our situation, it is necessary to pass through the valley of the shadow of death. In order for sensuality and carnality to be removed, death must be experienced. If we desire an answer that is incorruptible, full of glory and power, then the passageway of the grave is a necessary part of the journey.

Consider the caterpillar. It enters the cocoon and emerges a butterfly. It is completely transformed into a form that is unrelated to its stumpy caterpillar body. God could have just made the caterpillar sprout wings at a certain point in its life - but then it would be just that, a caterpillar with wings! In order to produce a butterfly the caterpillar must enter the tomb and have its old structure completely dismantled. Apparently it becomes totally liquid in that hidden place. There must be no transfer of caterpillar structure or characteristics to mar the butterfly! Once completely dismantled, God takes the basic elements and constructs

something new and radically different from the old form. In the same way, Beloved, God did not want to make your natural, sensual, corrupted, ugly situation sprout wings! His intention is to produce a different form, a construction of beauty and glory and power - one in which His resurrection life is plainly evident!

Now that you can look at your situation and all its corruption and realize it bears absolutely no resemblance to that which God intends to bring forth from its liquid depths, let us examine the qualities of a resurrection body. Paul says that when resurrection has taken place, there is incorruption, glory and power evident.

The word 'incorruption' means 'purity, sincerity, genuineness, immortality'. Your situation is going to be transformed into one in which death has no more power. The quickening life of God will continually keep it pure, vibrant and fruitful. Begin to see it with the eyes of your heart as you decree resurrection!

The word 'glory' also conveys the sense of 'splendor, brightness, magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace'. In the place where disgrace, reproach and shame have caused a stench in this situation, the glory of God will burst forth from its depths, and cause praise and glory to be lifted to His Name.

'Power' carries the sense of 'abundance, might, strength, power for performing miracles, moral power and excellence of soul, the power and influence which belong to riches and wealth' - no more frailty of body or soul! Can you see it with the eye of faith?

Remember Mary, the one who sat at Jesus' feet? She stood and watched as Jesus died a slow torturous death on the cross. She saw his mangled body being wrapped and placed in the tomb. When she went to the garden early on the third day, she was not expecting resurrection. She had gone to mourn and pay her respects. Her last memory of the One she loved was of a face marred more than any man's. This is why she didn't recognise Him when he met her at the tomb. She had no expectation for

resurrection AND all she could see before her were the mangled remains of what had once been. Yet He stood before her in His resurrection glory, whole and pulsing with life. Beloved, we must not be like Mary, continually expecting only a corpse and a closed tomb. We must let go of the torturous memories of the past season, along with its smell of decay. When resurrection occurs, there are not even any grave clothes on the body - Jesus folded up His grave clothes and left them in the tomb. He wore new garments. There was no smell of death and decay upon Him.

Even though Mary had seen Jesus resurrect her brother Lazarus, she somehow did not understand that He could not be held by the grave either. Her numbed brain couldn't accept what the angels told them - "He is risen." Death must first let go of our own minds and hearts before we are able to believe and receive resurrection in our situation. Some of us have been living with death for so long that its odour has permeated our thought-life. We must take the grave-clothes off our own thoughts first and foremost in order to be a part of decreeing resurrection in others.

We must begin to fix our eyes upon the presently unseen in order to boldly speak it into being. When our eyes rest upon the state of the situation before us, let a mighty joy rise up in our hearts as we comprehend that the earthly comes before the heavenly and that we are co-labouring with God, decreeing resurrection life in the face of death and decay! The seed-form we see now bears no resemblance to that which God is determined to bring forth. Now arise and decree with confidence!

God doesn't want us to dwell on what has passed by, all the water that has gone under the bridge. Nor must we sit and examine our battle scars. Look forward - He is about to do the impossible!

Isa 43:18 MSG "Forget about what's happened; don't keep going over old history. Isa 43:19 Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand-new. It's bursting out! Don't you see it? There it is!

Just as we become a new creation in Christ when His life enters our spirit, so too He is planning to create something completely new out of the disintegrated liquid contents of your tomb cocoon. He has broken down in order to build up something of beauty and glory and grace.

Now arise and call it forth, Beloved!



Veils and Tombs...

Still meditating in the subject of death and resurrection, I came upon a portion of scripture in Matthew:

Mat 27:50-53 And crying again with a loud voice, Jesus released His spirit. And, behold! The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And the earth quaked, and the rocks were sheared, and the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep arose, and coming out of the tomb after His resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

When Jesus cried out in a loud voice, the words He spoke were, "It is finished (accomplished, desired purpose achieved)". His appointed time of suffering was at an end and had achieved the desired result. No more suffering was necessary. He then released His spirit into the hands of the Father. Matthew records for us that at that very moment, two things happened - the veil of the temple was torn in two and secondly there was an earthquake and many saints came back to life!

These two occurrences were very significant for two different groups of people. Firstly, let us look at the tearing of the veil. This very thick piece of woven fabric separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies in the temple. The only person who got to venture beyond that veil was the High Priest and this only happened once a year on Yom Kippur, when he went to pour out a blood offering upon the mercy seat for the sins of the whole nation of Israel. Everybody else involved in the temple saw him disappear and re-emerge a short while later. What went on behind the curtain, they could only guess at but they knew it was a very very holy encounter.

When the veil was torn as Jesus declared the project accomplished, God tore that thick curtain completely in two, in much the same way as He tore open the water of the Red Sea. The two pieces of the sea were completely separated from each other so that the people who had been held in bondage could journey safely to the other side, away from slavery and towards their inheritance. Now the amazing fact about the incident at the time of Jesus' death is this - normally the removal of the veil would have revealed the Ark of the Covenant residing inside the Holy of Holies. However, some 600 years earlier in the time of Jeremiah, during the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, some of the priests took the ark out of the Holy of Holies and hid it in a safe place. From that time on, the ritual at Yom Kippur was carried out but the ark was not present behind the curtain. To everyone watching the High Priest go into the Holy of Holies, things looked like they were proceeding as normal and they all breathed a sigh of relief when he reappeared because they knew their sins were atoned for. However, it had become an empty ritual because the ark of God' presence was no longer there. The ordinary people just didn't know this!

So when God tore the veil from top to bottom, the sight that greeted the priests going about their daily business in the temple was an empty room! Sometimes a visual depiction is worth a thousand words - God was clearly showing them that they were involved in a system where God was no longer present. He was busy outside the

city walls, beyond the framework their mindsets dwelt in. What they were involved in was empty and had just become obsolete! The shout that Jesus gave, declaring the completion of the appointed time of suffering, set in motion a removal of the veil that obscured the Truth. Until that veil was removed, those who were in the service of God were completely ignorant that God had left the building. They carried on faithfully doing their appointed duties year in, year out for 600 years, unaware that they were only serving people and helping to keep up a massive cover-up! The announcement 'it is finished' declared the end of that cover-up and the exposure of the secret that was hidden behind that veil! It was time for that which was hidden to be revealed. For those who really had a hunger for the reality of God's presence, there was given an opportunity to take stock of the place they were in and to move to the place where God's presence really was -in a Body, not a building.

The second thing that happened as Jesus made His announcement was that there was a great earthquake and many saints who were lying in the grave were resurrected. These people had died in faith, looking for the fulfillment of promises, yet not experiencing them before death took them. Here is a picture of those who have known 'the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death' (Phil 3:10). They have been waiting in the dust for the announcement 'it is finished' and have risen full of resurrection power and life.

Isa 26:19 Your dead ones shall live, the dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust; for your dew is as the dew of sparkling light, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

So the shout 'it is finished' also announces the end of a season in the grave for those who have been waiting. Those who are in the prison of preparation like Joseph hear a royal shout 'it's time for release' and they are catapulted out of their earthen tombs. Once again the announcement of the King of Kings that the required result is accomplished, causes the

hidden things to be revealed. The earth is forced to give up those it has been holding in the grave.

Before, all was quiet in the cemetery. People only came to visit and change the flower arrangements at the tombs of their beloveds. Now suddenly it has become the scene of vibrant overflowing life! There is an impromptu fellowship meeting of saints from different locations and dispensations who find themselves face to face at God's appointed season of connection. Think of the valley of dry bones and how the bones began to come together bone on bone in Ezekiel 37. See the network of divine connections occurring all at once in God's garden of Remembrance! Just as the Lord remembered Noah in the ark and sent a wind to stop the flood; just as the king remembered Mordecai's righteous deeds and rewarded him; just as God remembered His promise to Abraham and then brought his descendants out of slavery and into the Promised Land, so too God remembers His Word to you and will bring it to fulfillment.

The interesting thing is that Jesus' appointed season of suffering was for the sake of both those trapped in activities that they believed were valuable and God-ordained (in the temple) AND those saints who had come to the place of death. I believe what God is saying is that both these categories of people are embodied in His present-day Church, and the work of revealing will be evidenced on three different levels.

Firstly on the level of the whole Body, some are under the yoke of a religious spirit, spending their lifeblood on activities that they believe God wants them to be involved with. Yet this is error. There has been a thick veil before their eyes, preventing them from seeing what is hidden; blinding their eyes to the Truth that God is not involved at all in what they are yoked to. However the time has come for that veil to be torn. Ezekiel 13:18-21 records God's dealings with the seductive spirits that take His people captive, veiling their understanding and using them for profit. He declares He will tear the veils:

Eze 13:21 Your veils also will I tear, and deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand to be hunted; and you shall know that I am the LORD.

At Body level, the King of Kings is declaring it is time for hidden things to be revealed. Veils will be torn from top to bottom and there will be no opportunity for man to patch them up. People's eyes are going to be opened to the emptiness of what they are involved in and they will have a chance to choose Life and separate themselves from that which is dead and of a past season and cleave to that which God is doing presently. Sadly at the time of Jesus' death, temple worship continued for another 35 years before the temple was finally destroyed in 70AD. Those who choose to remain joined to activities where death is at work will in the not too distant future, find themselves destroyed along with that which they have clung to.

During the shaking that causes hidden things to be revealed, saints who have been waiting and prepared for such a time as this, will suddenly be released into plain sight. Matthew tells us they went into the city and appeared to many! This new season is a time for the results of God's handiwork in His hidden ones to be revealed so all the glory may go to Him. Those who are in the dust will awake and sing for joy because there is an announcement ringing out in the heavens 'it is finished!'

The second level where this sudden rending and revealing will play out will be in the soul and spirit realm within each of us. There are things that we have been emotionally involved with, that are in fact holding us captive. We just have been unable to see it because of the thick veil obscuring our view. This has enabled the enemy to keep us pouring out our efforts into endeavors and relationships that His stamp of approval are no longer on. Yet we have been unable to discern the true nature of the situation because of the veil over our understanding. When God tears the veil, immediately revelation and understanding of our position will flood in and cause us to flee those things which the Father has not appointed us to

be joined to. Any area of idolatry and bondage will be broken as heavenly light enters the situation.

The result of deliverance in the soul realm will be a release in the realm of our spirits. At that same moment as any deception is torn wide open in the realm of our emotions and mind, that which He has been working in our spirits, though death to self, will come to fruition and be released from our earthen vessel, where it was previously entombed. The tomb stone placed there by the spirit of religion will be thrown aside and that which Christ has forged in us will step out and begin to be manifest to many!

The third level on which this revealing will take place is for those of us who have undergone a season of trial and suffering for the perfecting or maturing of our faith.

Jam 1:2 My brothers, count it all joy when you fall into different kinds of trials, Jam 1:3 knowing that the trying of your faith works patience. Jam 1:4 But let patience have its perfect work, so that you may be perfect (of full age, manhood) and entire (complete), lacking nothing.

The cross season, the time of suffering at the hands of our brethren, the very people we are undergoing the trial for, is a very painful time. The buffeting with cruel groundless accusations, the curses like nails that are hammered deep; the working of grace in one's heart until one is able to say, "Father, forgive them, they don't know what they do" - all these experiences are limited to a measured season. Finally, the goldsmith can see His face in the mirror-surface of our molten hearts and announces the trial is at an end - 'it is finished' - the express purpose is accomplished. Patience has had her perfect work and manhood has been attained. At this moment there is a surrender into the hands of the Father of Lights who brought us to this appointment.

And at that moment, those we have been carrying in intercession are touched by a divine hand. Those in deception, joined to that which is

ministering death to them, suddenly have their eyes opened to see where they are. Light bursts in. Because of His great mercy, a light from on High visits those in darkness and shows their feet the path to peace (Luke 1). Others who have been lying in the grave along with their dead promises will suddenly be restored to life and function and run with their stories. For those of us who have suffered for such a long season, we will share the same joy as Jesus: Isa 53:11 He shall see the fruit of the travail of His soul. He shall be fully satisfied.

Those who have gone out weeping, carrying the burden of intercession, will come again with rejoicing, carrying their sheaves with them. We will see the fruit of the travail of our soul and be fully satisfied, knowing that though death was at work in us, life is at work in others!

On mount Zion a feast will be celebrated as people come out of religion and experience the wine of His presence. For those in the grave, death will be swallowed up in victory, and their reproach will be removed. Much glory will go to the Lord because of the tearing of the veils and the opening of the tombs. It will be celebration time for God's people:

Isa 25:6 And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

Isa 25:7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. Isa 25:8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. Isa 25:9 And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

I hear a shout resounding in Heaven's atmosphere 'it is finished'. Hear it over your life, over your circumstance, over every prayer situation, in every place where sin and sickness

has held court. The Throne-room has issued an announcement - the desired purpose is accomplished and now every hidden thing must be revealed. Let every veil of deception be torn. Let every tombstone covering one of His saints be cracked wide open! Let Truth be revealed in and through and around His saints! The King of Kings has spoken and judgment is being issued in favor of the saints!

God is not a man, that He should tell or act a lie, neither the son of man, that He should feel repentance or compunction [for what He has promised]. Has He said and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken and shall He not make it good? ~ Num 23:19

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Though mountains rise before me
I choose to still believe
You're able to break down those walls
As easy as You please!
When trials come and harsh winds blow
Nothing comes my way I know
Unless You let it be.
So I will have faith in Your Word
And heed the still small voice I heard
Knowing what You've said will be
You will fulfill Your plans for me
And lead me safely through
I'll walk by faith and not by sight
I will not doubt You in the night
The Word You spoke will be my light
And faith will keep it burning bright
Until that Word comes true!

~0~0~0~0~0~0~0~0~0~0

Sometimes God
calms the storm...
sometimes He lets
the storm rage and
calms His child

