

Knowing God in the Cycle of Death and Resurrection

By Mallory Patrick

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death...”

Philippians 3:10

Herein lies the path of the believer’s walk: death and resurrection, over and over, again and again. Our walk is not progressive, then, but cyclical. As we identify with the Lord in His death, we will experience His resurrection. That new influx of life will motivate us to pour out our souls unto death, which will in turn lead to resurrection, and so on. This is life eternal!

The flesh’s is not His death, but power. Flesh skirts death. The carnal Christian tries to abide in Christ in resurrection without going down into His death because flesh is afraid of it. It is afraid of death hurting, afraid of it being too hard. Or when a carnal Christian attempts to experience death, it is usually his own, so it is painful, and no resurrection follows.

But the Lamb is always given over to death. The Son is always poured out. Since we are one with Him, we can walk the path of the Lamb. It is the same over and over: handed over to death that there might be life. When we know that this should be the state of the normal Christian, we will be afraid of death no longer! If it is true that the deeper the death, the greater the resurrection, then I want to go as deeply down into death as I am able.

It is not that we have to die. It is that we enter into His death. We partake of His sufferings instead of experiencing sufferings of our own. The latter is tormenting, and there is no resurrection. But if we enter into the death of the Lamb, we will experience His sufferings, but He bore the unbearable, so I am simply pouring out my soul to death. And there is guaranteed resurrection, because the Son is always exalted.

Conformity to His death is not a spiritual way of saying that we have to suffer a lot. It is yielding to the reality of Christ’s death, and allowing that reality to work in our hearts and minds.

When we begin to enter into this understanding of the Lord, our eyes are opened to see that the entire Bible declares this very thing. This little booklet is a compilation of studies that examine different aspects of our relationship with God that only exist within the borders of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. This cycle is declared repeatedly throughout the Bible, from Genesis through Revelation. Unfortunately, the church world has taken to interpreting the Scriptures with the carnal mind, and much of the Lord’s view on our fellowship with Him has been lost. These studies address many well known passages of Scripture, which will hopefully be set in order, thus lining them up with the heart and mind of God, which will, in turn, gather up these verses and their contained truths into Christ. Perhaps this will provide the reader with an opportunity to enter into truly *living* the eternal life on a daily basis.

Death and Resurrection: Feasting at the Table

The Lord has bidden us to partake of His table, to eat what He eats, to break bread with Him in communion. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit already feast at this very table; now the Cross has made it possible to take our place at the table, as well. What is set before us at the table of the Lord? In one passage of Scripture, Jesus commanded us to eat His flesh and drink His blood (see Jn. 6:53-58), and in another place, Paul tells us that to partake of Christ in this way is the Lord's table (see I Cor. 10:16-21). Finally, John speaks of the marriage supper of the Lamb (see Rev. 19:9). Those who eat at this table partake of (and therefore commune in) the very elements that sustain God Himself.

As we eat that which the Lord has provided for us, we will find ourselves more and more in the image of Christ, for the cycle of death and resurrection is the fellowship of the Father and the Son. It is the image of Christ to which we are conformed, and it is the feast that is prepared at the marriage supper of the Lamb. It is, in short, our total involvement with the Lord.

Along these lines, there are many rather surprising ways that this death and resurrection works out in our lives, as we partake of the Lord's table, and it is described in the Scriptures.

“And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.”

Luke 15:21-22

The prodigal son, who recognized his true state of sinfulness and separation, confessed it to his father. This was death, and from it he was placed as a son, which is resurrection.

“First cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then thou shalt see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brother's eye.”

Matthew 7:5

Letting the Lord deal with your lack of Christ first, admitting the wrong, and getting forgiveness – this is the death. Then you are raised up, and from that high place in Christ you can come down from heaven and see clearly to help you brother.

“Blessed are the poor... they that mourn... the meek... they who do hunger and thirst...”

Matthew 5:3-6

All of this lack and emptiness is a position of death assumed by the believer. Naturally, we cover ourselves up. To admit our poverty, to mourn over our lack, to meekly receive God's Word, to hunger and thirst in faith, this is all a death-stance. All of these positions of low degree are blessed, because in fellowshiping with Christ in His death, those who find themselves in such a state shall possess the kingdom, be comforted, inherit the earth, and be filled, all of which is resurrection.

“Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”

Matthew 11:29

This verse declares that we find Jesus in His death. If you want to find Jesus, you must go to the lowest place. When you are learning of Him, you are being made conformable to His death.

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”

James 4:10

The Father sees Jesus. Humbling yourself is death. The Lord lifting you up is resurrection.

“Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted. But the rich, in that he is made low, because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.”

James 1:9-10

All of us must be made low – death – to have what God considers to be exaltation, which is resurrection.

“For it is better that it be said unto thee, Come up hither, than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.”

Proverbs 25:7

—Along With—

“But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place, that, when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher... for whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

Luke 14:10-11

This last verse just says it. We are not supposed to take the lowest seat to show how spiritual we are, or so that we can feed our ego when we are asked to move up. Taking the lowest seat is entering into death. The Father, then, will ask us to come up, because He raised His Son from the dead. Asking us to come up is resurrection.

“Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all, but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the Father.”

Galatians 4:1-2

Son-placing is resurrection. It is the Father acknowledging the heir who has entered into death.

“Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low...”

Isaiah 49:4

Death — the low places — come out into resurrection, and then are poured out into death once again.

The Cycle of Death and Resurrection in Salvation

When Christians think of salvation, our minds go back to that very special time in our lives when we asked Jesus to come into our hearts and wash away our sins. As great a work as this is, however, salvation encompasses so much more! God never meant it to be a one-time experience that we leave behind as we become more spiritual. No, Jesus has become our Joshua, our salvation. All through the Psalms, David rejoices in the God who is salvation. This does not speak of a happy experience in our past, but a relationship with a Person whose state of being is salvation. As our minds are renewed from the realm of the flesh unto the realm of the Spirit, as we enter into union anew and afresh so that the river of Christ's life is free to cut new channels through our souls, as we gain the ascendancy over our senses and the old nature, we are even then relating to the God who is salvation.

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.”

Zechariah 9:9

Salvation is not found in a mighty, powerful king. It is found in a meek and lowly king. He is both just and lowly. If we want to be saved – delivered – we must go to where He is. He is meek and lowly, and only the meek and lowly will find Him.

The problem for so many Christians is that they are trying to get up into Christ. But getting up into Christ is a very difficult thing to do. In fact, it is impossible. You can strive and strive to enter into Christ, but you will always feel like you are falling short.

What we must come to understand is that being able to abide in Christ *is* resurrection, and for resurrection to take place, there must be a death. The “death” that we experience in order to abide in Christ is a breaking, a bringing down of ourselves, a realization of what we are apart from Christ, and the understanding of our blindness. This is where the Lord meets us. This is where salvation begins. When we are low, the king who has salvation will come to us there, riding upon an ass.

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.”

Philippians 3:10

This verse is saying that we know the Lord by union when we are made conformable to His death. We enter into knowing Him when we are made conformable to His death.

“For judgment I am come into the world, that they who see not, might see; and they who see, might be made blind.”

John 9:39

The death is realizing that we are blind, and not justifying it, or passing it over. For a believer, many times death is simply admitting lack, and not moving from the place of lack until the Lord raises him up.

“Verily, verily I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.”

John 5:25

This verse is saying the same thing as the one directly before it. When we realize that we are dead to the Lord in ourselves, He can speak life to us.

“My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

II Corinthians 12:4

Again, we see salvation coming to us when we are where the lowly King can find us, and us being made conformable to His death. Permitting weakness is death, the strength of the Lord, the power of Christ, is resurrection.

“Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.”

Matthew 5:6

The Lord does not fill a believer at random. We must first be hungry. If we are not hungry for Him alone, He cannot fill us because we are full of other things. Hunger means emptiness, and emptiness means lack. Again, for a person to be lacking is kind of death in that it means the end of the flesh’s strength.

“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he (the Husbandman) taketh up.”

John 15:2

To admit fruitlessness, to admit attachments to the earth, and to trust the Lord to tend to us requires a holding back on our part, which is death, for we desire to fix ourselves by our own efforts. However, if we lay ourselves, earthly attachments and all, into the arms of the Husbandman, He will cut us away from the earth and lift us up, which is resurrection.

What we as believers must understand is that freedom from darkness and selfishness are not an experience in and of themselves, but once again the resulting resurrection that finds its beginning in the death of Christ. To find such a deliverance, we must be willing to go low, very low, for it is deep down in death that new life will spring forth. Instead of trying to extract the darkness from our minds and the selfishness from our souls, we need simply to be baptized into Christ’s death. At the set time, you will come forth from the grave unto life eternal, having left behind all that is not Christ.

The Resurrection Part of the Cycle as Healing

The Lord does not want to heal the old creation. He does not want to heal the carnal soul. He wants us to go down into death and allow the eternal life that comes forth in resurrection to be the healing. To the Lord, healing is not a repairing of the old, but a bringing forth of something new, uninjured, and without the corruptible elements that allow it to be injured. We want the Lord to patch up the parts of us that hurt: diseased bodies, broken hearts, severed relationships. But even when the Lord does this for us, the potential for injury and decay remains as long as we live after the flesh. God can heal us, but what then? What will keep us from being offended, injured, or diseased once more?

In John 11, the Lord did not heal Lazarus. Instead, the Lord waited for Lazarus to die, and then raised him from the dead. This is but a picture of what happened to us at the Cross. Jesus took upon Himself our frailty and propensity to corruption by putting to death the old creation, the very seed-bed of corruption.

We can ask God to patch us up over and over, or we can ask the Holy Spirit to lead us into the death and resurrection of Christ. When we are raised up in Christ, we will find ourselves in a Person who is not prone to injury, offense, or decay, and as we find ourselves in Him, we will see that we have been healed, or made whole. If you are wounded, resist the temptation to ask for healing. Instead, ask to be made conformable to Christ's death, that you might know the power of His resurrection!

"God be merciful to us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us; Selah. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations."

Psalm 67:1-2

We have already discussed how salvation comes out of resurrection, for Christ's life is salvation. This verse equates resurrection with healing.

"...and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

Revelation 22:2

The living Christ heals. The wounds we receive by living as an individual in the earth are completely washed away by letting Christ live in us. His life cleanses, binds up, and removes altogether any infection or decay by the inherent regeneration present in any seed of life. As we let Christ live His selfless, loving life, we will experience the complete removal of all the injury that our old nature and the old nature of others has inflicted upon us.

"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings..."

Malachi 4:2

Healing comes in the resurrection, and we experience that healing at the revelation of Christ, when the day dawns, and the daystar arises in our hearts.

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed."

James 5:16

Making yourself low by confessing your sins and placing yourself under the brethren for forgiveness and ministry will result in resurrection, the life of Christ being released through you, which is healing.

When We Are Made Small, He Is Made Great

The Lord has been showing me the necessity of receiving from younger members of the body, or members that I somehow consider lower than or less than me. This has showed up pride to its deepest core in me. Leviathan does not want to bow to anyone, least of all somebody he considers less than himself, which is just about everybody else.

Nevertheless, I see over and over in the Scriptures that those men who really knew the Lord had to receive from people who were “lower” than themselves. If I want to know Jesus, then I must receive from those who are “lower” than I.

Paul did this. When the Lord appeared to him, he had to go to “ordinary” believers (as opposed to famous or high-up ones) for instructions. Paul had to submit to people who before that point he considered lower than himself. I believe that this is one of the reasons why he was an apostle. Because he was willing to be made low, the Lord was able to raise him up to oversee the founding of the Gentile churches.

Job had to receive correction from Elihu before being in the proper position to see the Lord. The Lord used Elihu to humble Job, to bring him down to a low enough place that he would be receptive to the Lord. When Job received correction from this humble vessel, he had lowered himself enough and positioned his heart to be able to not only hear from the Lord, but to see Him, as well.

The Lord has shown me how I have been so opposite of this. I have lifted myself up over everybody I know. I have assumed that I am greater and more important to God than most people. It is ugly, and I am ashamed of it. I need to put myself under everybody, and feed on what everybody has to say. I need to take the lowest seat at the table.

Nebuchadnezzar failed to do this very thing, and the Lord had to bring down the king of all the world for seven years before he would humble himself.

If we humble ourselves before our brother, if we choose to drink what God serves us from the cup of His choosing, then we become a prepared vessel, fit for bringing God’s eternal reality into the earth.

Forgiving the Offense

“For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.”

II Corinthians 4:11-12

Forgiving the offense is God’s way of releasing life into the earth. Honoring the undeserving is the same thing. This cannot be done from a place of pride or self-righteousness. This cannot be done from a position of “I am right and you are wrong.” It can only be done as we bring ourselves low, for to forgive and honor others requires that death be first working in us. This is what Jesus did when He was incarnated. He was made low for the purpose of forgiving the offense and honoring the undeserving. And what an impact He had in the earth!

As we enter into death for the sake of others, as we cover the sins of others despite the inconvenience this brings to us, as we forgive the shortcomings of others to our own detriment, we will see new life begin to flow. It will flow through us as we cease to live for ourselves, and it will flow through or impact those to whom such forgiveness has been extended. In this way, we are not only experiencing the fellowship of death and resurrection for ourselves; we have extended that very fellowship that others might be gathered in, as well.

Wheels Within Wheels

“Now, as I beheld the living creatures, behold, one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with its four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like the color of a beryl; and they four had one likeness; and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides; and they turned not when they went. As for their rims, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rims were full of eyes round about them four. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. Wherever the spirit was to go, they went, there was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up beside them; for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.”

Ezekiel 1:15-21

The spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. The living creatures are the new creation, and they are completely heavenly in nature. The wheels, which are beside each of the four living creatures, bear the Lord where he desires to go, for He is seated in the midst of these creatures. The living creatures have no contact with the earth, but the wheels were so high that they were dreadful – they spanned both heaven and earth.

The wheels are the cycle of death and resurrection, which is the experience of the saints. It is this cycling through death and resurrection that moves the Lord wherever He has a mind to go. The Spirit of the living creatures is Christ, so the Spirit that is in the wheels is Christ. It is the Spirit in the wheels that moves them. Even so, it is Christ in us who knows what we ought to do and where we are to go for the sake of and increase of God’s glory in the earth.

Not only do the wheels represent the believer’s experience of going down into death and up into resurrection; it also speaks of the fact that different believers who have entered into this reality are all at different places in their experience of death and resurrection. While some are soaring on new heights of resurrection at the top of the wheel, others are making their way down into death at the bottom of the wheel. It is necessary for each individual believer and each local fellowship to continue in this cycle, for the whole plan of God depends upon it. Each part of the wheel must continue to cycle through death and resurrection if there is to be the spread of His kingdom, and if the increase of His government is to have no end.

Do you feel like you are all alone, and no one is traveling your path with you? Hold your place on the wheel! Does it seem like you are always left behind, left out, passed over, forgotten, and in last place? Hold your place at the wheel! The increase of Christ depends upon it. These are the wheels that move the presence of God and His government wherever He wills. If we cease to flow in this precious cycle, His movement by Life is vastly restricted!

We feel the pull of temptation to stop moving forward – going down into death – because the five senses and the carnal mind mistake such an entering into death for failure, obscurity, unimportance, and not being a part. We get especially concerned when we are going down and someone else is going up! How we wish that we had their good fortune to be soaring on the wings of blessing! But there must be a constant movement of the wheels for the Lord to continue taking ground. We must allow ourselves to go down and release others to go up, and rejoice in Christ’s resurrection being made manifest in His body, even if we are not experiencing it at the moment.

The rims of the wheels are covered with eyes, so no matter what your condition, no matter what part of the cycle you are experiencing at the moment, you can look at Jesus. This cycle, after all, is Who the Lord is and how He fellowships. To be moving with Him, then, requires seeing Him. There is no power of resurrection, no knowing the fellowship of His sufferings without seeing Him. Indeed, there is no being made conformable to His death until we see Him. All fellowship with God, all increase of Christ, all moving as One with Him requires the eyes of our heart to be fastened upon Him at every moment.

An important element in the turning of the wheels is the sharing of the Word. If you are on the top of the wheel, then your sharing will bring the bottom of the wheel up out of death. This is because “the dead hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live” (Jn. 5:25). The reality that is shared from the top of the wheel is Christ. But your sharing will pour you out, and propel you forward into death, which is Christ’s death. It is important for the bottom of the wheel to enter into and receive the sharing of the top of the wheel, for hearing the Word will quicken you unto life. Do not become proud and think that you have no need of what someone has to offer. Humility is the only way into death, it is true, but it is also your only way out of death. Do not become introspective and self-condemned, thinking that something is wrong when somebody has something share. Humble yourself boldly, below the very least of God’s vessels, and receive His Word. It will bring life!

How important it is for us to maintain our unearthly relationship with our heavenly Father, where we are complete, highly favored, and in union by Christ. If we do not remain there, the experience of being at the bottom of the wheel will be too much for us, and we will leave the cycle to relieve our flesh and carnal mind of offense. But to look at the things which are not seen will permit the Lord to work a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Conclusion

The question that now lies before each precious saint who has read this little booklet through is, what is our calling? We are called unto the fellowship of God's Son (I Cor. 1:9). To some, entering into such a vast and heavenly relationship may seem intimidating, even impossible, but there is no need to fear! Whoever asks, receives; whoever seeks, finds; and whoever knocks, it will be opened unto him. Even though Jesus manifested death and resurrection once for all for the purposes of redemption, and even though we can fellowship in that completed work, we must understand that what at the Cross He also manifested Who He Is. Jesus will always make Himself lower for the sake of others, and the Father is always exalting Jesus, over and over, that there might be increase, honor, and glory to His name.

As glorious as this is, it is not enough for the Godhead to unceasingly repeat this cycle by Themselves; the Godhead longs for fellowship. It is not a matter of whether or not you are able to move with Him through death, burial and resurrection, but whether you will recognize that Jesus is always going down and coming up, and you with Him, for you have been joined, even knit with Him, and it will be so for eternity.