

Celebrating Immortality

Today I am going to talk about Immortality. I am going to talk about the power of the Resurrection and the impact it has on our life; for eternity and also for right here and now. The Resurrection of Jesus gives us God's perspective. We get to see into the Faith of God and let it shape our thoughts and our hearts and our actions.

God's faith, the way He believes, the way He sees things is so important and has the power to impact our lives daily. Many years ago God told me it wasn't what happened to me that caused a problem, it was what I thought about what happened that caused a problem. So what we think is the problem (our circumstances) isn't really the problem!! The real problem is what we think about the circumstances!!!

That is really hard to get our hearts around sometimes. In fact, it takes a revelation from God to persuade us it is true. As we watch what His Resurrection power does with the death that comes at us, we get a full view of God's immortality and its ability to unwind death and bury it!

Imagine if we really believed that was true!!! What would that mean? We would always have the desire to see everything from God's perspective. We would have no fear about what could happen, because what happens isn't the real problem!!! Having God's perspective would fill us with love and joy and peace!!

If you have a wrong diagnosis, you won't find the right solution. Isn't that what we see today? Theologies and doctrines have been invented by man to try to escape the corruption in this world, when that isn't the real problem. Why not? It looks like it is the problem!!! It isn't the problem because God has already taken care of the corruption in this world!!! That problem has already been solved!!!

Now you might disagree when you look around the world today!! I have struggled with that too!! God has given me many revelations to persuade my heart of this truth. I am sure He has done the same thing with you. Sometimes God's persuasion comes in a tender suggestion; other times its power can knock you off your feet!

I used denial in much of my life to try to suppress the pain that was in my heart. It seemed to work for a while...but then some circumstance would bring those heartbreaking beliefs to the surface. In one of these revelations God gave me a picture of my grandfather, me and Jesus in like a football huddle in his room. My grandfather and I had our heads hung down, in guilt and shame. It seemed like the pain and guilt and shame were beyond consolation, beyond repair.

My grandfather had gotten involved in Satanic rituals in the little town he lived in. He and the town priest and doctor were the leaders. My parents sent me to live with my grandparents for 3 years when I was a small child. So guess what happened to me? I was programmed, not only to be a breeder but eventually a high priestess, making my babies extremely valuable sacrifices, with the hope of bringing the leaders more power in the realm of darkness.

That was the cause of our shame and guilt and pain. Horrible memories too awful to speak of; our minds and hearts tormented constantly. Well, in this picture, I see Jesus in the huddle also. His head isn't hanging down. He has His arms around my Grandfather and I and He is throwing His head back and laughing.

The whole scene caught me off guard. How could He think anything about this was funny?? I asked Him how can you laugh at this? How could You possibly think this is funny? Jesus just looked at me and said "When you see what I do with all of this you are going to laugh too"!!!

What? What could He do with all of it, I thought? It was already over and yes I was rescued after 3 years, but I was left with all the fear, guilt, shame, and torment. The fear of death had me in a choke hold and would not let go.

What perspective did Jesus have that was different than mine? How could the same situation make me hang my head in fear and guilt and yet cause Jesus to laugh??

IMMORTALITY!! That is what!! The perspective God has is shaped and exists by His life...IMMORTALITY!!! I was looking at what happened to me and judging it was not repairable. I was looking at my situation through the perspective of death.

Jesus was not looking at the tribulation the same way I was. He was not looking at what had happened to me. He was not looking at the shame and guilt we felt. He was not looking at death. He was looking at all the good He was going to do with those things that happened. He had a totally different perspective!! My grandfather and I were looking at death and Jesus was looking at life!!

What life! His life! He was looking at immortality!! He was seeing the incorruptible swallowing up the corruptible!! He was seeing His Resurrection power wiping out death and its power.

Guess what? JESUS WAS RIGHT! You know God is never wrong! I mean we say we know that but we sure do have a hard time trusting Him sometimes!!! Both my grandparents got saved!! They will live forever in immortal bodies!! I will get to enjoy life with them free from all that death. My children the enemy had destined for sacrifice are all talking to Jesus!! He gave me beauty for ashes!! He turned my mourning into dancing!!

Did God undo the rituals I went through? No! Did He stop me from going to live with my grandparents? No! Then how did He remove the effects of those experiences without undoing the circumstances? He is God!!

He can heal all that stuff by changing my perspective to His!! His life has already overcome the death in this world. There is **nothing** that death has to offer that can keep us from the love of God and His life!!!

This morning I am going to spread the death that is in the world before you briefly so you can experience what looking at that does to you, but then we will allow the light to enter into the darkness and experience first- hand what immortality and incorruption does to mortality and corruption; what happens when light enters the darkness. So we can see the power of immortality at work.

2 Cor 4:6 displays the power of God's immortality and its effect on death
For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

God can bring the light or His life, His immortality out of the darkness. He did it in Jesus, in the tomb behind the stone that blocked the doorway, with soldiers guarding the area. Just imagine, men trying to contain God's power with mortal strength!!

There is NO mortal power that can supersede God's immortality!! No stone, no guards, no not anything, not even death!!!

It didn't matter what I experienced as that little girl living with my grandparents. Nothing could stop God's resurrection power from coming forth out of that darkness to save and rescue me!!! Not only out of the situation, but also out of all the death those circumstances tried to keep me tied to.

We also see God's display of immortality in Psalm 23:4
"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; you anoint my head with oil, my cup runs over."

This scripture says we can be in the presence of our enemies, with death around us and still have no fear, be comforted by God, and have the abundance of God's life!!!

Did you hear that? Let me say it again...

We can be in the presence of our enemies, with death all around us and still have no fear, be comforted by God, and have the abundance of God's life!!

That is the power of immortality!! That is Resurrection Power!

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...

That word valley evokes a picture in our minds that existed before we ever read this verse. We talk about that a lot in this church. We bring our pre-existing beliefs into the scriptures and interpret them according to our reasoning and not the reasoning of God!!

This causes us to misinterpret scriptures and also to miss the deep meaning that is being conveyed by the Holy Spirit.

So the picture in our minds is of a deep gorge that has either hills or mountains rising up on both sides. It is a place of being lower. Now let's look at the bible definition of this valley.

Valley- a narrow gorge; exaltation

As you continue to go to the root word gaah (gaw-aw) it means to mount up; to rise, be majestic, gloriously, grow up, increase, be risen, triumph

It isn't a place that you remain in. It isn't a place of defeat! It is a place of victory! It is a place that you rise out of in triumph!! Just like light rising out of the darkness.

We are more than conquerors through Jesus and His life!!

Romans 8 assures us that no distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or sword can separate us from God's love, His comfort. Our enemies don't win! God's immortality wins!!

Shadow of death- shade of death, grave, hovering over, begin to be dark, sink, a phantom, illusion, resemblance, pestilence, ruin, death, to die, a representative figure, an idol

Death comes at us in many forms- the death of our corruptible bodies, the fruit that death brings- fear, guilt, shame, unworthiness, really any belief that is contrary to the life and light that is in God.

I will fear no evil...

Can you imagine never feeling fear? Can you imagine feeling no fear when something bad is happening? Can you imagine feeling peace and joy in the middle of some terrible tribulation? How could that be possible?

Stephen experienced it!! I think being stoned to death fits in the category of a terrible tribulation, don't you? Not too many of us have experienced that!!

Just imagine... you are the center of the town's anger and hatred! You are publicly ridiculed. Acts 6:9 says there arose certain of the synagogue, the Libertines, the Cyrenians, The Alexandrians and those of Cilicia and Asia that came against Stephen.

And why are they coming against Stephen? Is it because Stephen is a criminal? What is he guilty of? Preaching the gospel to them! He was compelled by the love of God to care about them more than himself. He was compelled to preach the true gospel to them so they could receive eternal life. He was doing good!!

They caught him and brought him before the elders and scribes and the council. They set up false witnesses to testify against him. How would you feel if someone lies about you? In public? In a formal gathering?

Then the council allows Stephen to have his say. Stephen takes them through all the scriptures they would already know by heart- through Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Moses- showing them God's heart for His people and their rejection of Him.

Stephen tells them they are stiff-necked, uncircumcised in their hearts and ears, just as their fathers were. He accuses them of resisting the Holy Spirit. He calls them betrayers and murderers of the Just One, Jesus. He accuses them of receiving the law, but not keeping it. He says everything he can to knock the blinders off of their eyes and hearts.

The phrase "Have I become your enemy because I tell you the truth" comes to mind. Stephen's desire for them was pure. He wanted them to know the love of God, to be set free from death's system.

The bible says they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke. Their lies could not stand against the truth he was speaking. They got the opportunity to choose life instead of death. But sadly, they chose death.

Things were getting ugly there. It says they were cut to the heart and they gnashed on him with their teeth. They rose up out of reasoning and brute passion begins to take over. And what does it say about Stephen? Is he moved by their hatred? Is he gripped with fear? Why not? It says he was full of the Holy Ghost. He looked up steadfastly into heaven. (gaze intently, fasten) He saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.

He didn't look at the crowds, or the death that was coming at him. He kept his eyes on the Resurrected Jesus!!

Wow! The heavens opened so Stephen could see inside! He saw immortality and glory. It outshined, overwhelmed and conquered any corruptible thing coming against him.

Stephen told the people that He saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. It put them in a frenzy and they drug him off and stoned him.

Listen to what Stephen says as they are stoning him: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. Sounds like what Jesus said right before He died on the cross doesn't it??

The same life of God that was ministering to Jesus on the cross was the same life that was ministering to Stephen as he was being killed. It is the same life that ministers to us when we are in tribulation!!!! It is IMMORTALITY!!!

When we face some tribulation, God's immortality, His resurrection comes to set us free from the death that is trying to swallow us up. God's life swallows up death!!

Now we all know the story of Stephen. We have heard it many times. It might be easy to overlook the power that is being manifested. I want to give you that little twist that I told you about earlier. I want to make something that is so familiar to you a little more real.

I want to help you feel the severity of the situation Stephen was in.

What if Stephen was your son, your only son? What if you are in the crowd of people? What if you are watching everyone wrongly accuse him? What if you see he is only trying to bring them to Jesus? And then you see the mob mercilessly stone your only son to death?

Immortality was strong enough to conquer fear of death in Stephen! But is it strong enough to conquer the fruit of death when you are his Mom, his Dad?

What if immortality conquers, overcomes and gets the victory over death? It does doesn't it? What if immortality began to look bigger to us than death? What if when we looked at death, what we saw was immortality, as Stephen did?

What if you weren't afraid of death when it came at you?

What if you weren't afraid of death when it came at your children? What if immortality has the power to shrink death to a light affliction and make it the doorway to glory?

I am going to suggest that the fear of death is affected by our perspective. Can God change our perspective? Does our perspective need to be changed?

Yes, death is God's enemy, so our enemy also. God hates death; it is against everything He is. It is a real enemy, not one to be pushed aside and put in denial. I am not talking about denial here. I am talking about obliteration!!!! I am talking about the death of death. I am talking about life bursting forth out of death, I am talking about light bursting forth out of darkness. The Bible says Jesus came to set us free from the fear of death.

The enemy has attempted to keep immortality veiled. How? By keeping us distracted, by keeping our eyes on carnal, temporal things. By keeping us focused on those things that are earthly. By keeping us focused on what's wrong with us, what's wrong in this world, what's wrong with each other and what's wrong with Him!!!

We can only be captivated by one thing at a time!! It is either going to be life or death. The world offers us so many opportunities to see what it has to offer. The world pushes it's platter of death in our face.

But at that same table with all the corruption in front of us, God sets His life in front of us. He offers us His love and peace and joy, His rest as we behold His resurrected Son Jesus. This is yours! It belongs to you! I resisted all the death and sin in the world for you, God says. I resisted it all for you because I hate how it tries to rob you of life.

Rick Sarver

The Gospel of Christ will tell you that you are secure and complete in Christ and will deliver you from all fear including the fear of death and lack .

That is what the Gospel produces in our hearts. It is the seed that is planted that brings God's life, His perspective so we can live our life in His life, intertwined as one together.

This word contained in Christ through the Gospel will lift you up from the corruption that is in this world. It will cause the hidden treasure of God that's already in you to manifest in and through your mortal flesh.

Matt 4:16

The people who sat in darkness saw great light; to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

There is the gospel lifting us out of the valley of the shadow of death bringing us into the victory. What victory? IMMORTALITY! THE LIFE OF GOD!

It is Beauty for ashes!

It brings Mourning to dancing!

We have been given an inheritance! It is already ours!

Let's say you have very rich parents. One day when they leave this earth you will get rich because of their efforts. It is a free gift, a blessing.

But what if you fall on hard times while they are still living? Wouldn't it be nice to have some of that inheritance to fall back on now?

In God's inheritance to you, His immortality, there is this: "I need to make a withdrawal right now"!! Yes we will receive our full portion when Jesus returns, but what about right now? What about the needs I have right now?

Well, God wrote into His will the RIGHT NOW clause!! This is how it reads: John 16:33 In this world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer I have overcome the world.

Who did He overcome the world for? YOU!!!

How did He overcome the world? With His life, with His immortality, His inheritance is for you right now.

That is why Paul said He was determined not to know anything among them, save Jesus and Him crucified. Paul was living in God's inheritance!! In God's life, His perspective, His immortality! Paul was celebrating immortality, living in the inheritance God had given him.

In Him, we live and move and have our being!!!

In Who do we live and move and have our being? in Jesus and His life, His immortality that God raised Him from the dead with! That is the place we live and move and have our being.

Paul continues on to say "the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Immortality, God's inheritance, His life, His perspective IS FOR YOU, TODAY, RIGHT NOW!!!

This amazing inheritance is living, active, powerful, it is a person!!! Our inheritance is the fullness of God, dwelling in and with us, supplying all the life within Himself. It is for us everyday, yes for all eternity, but also for now!!!

We know it manifests in love and joy and peace, not like the world gives but in the fullness of God's life, regardless of life circumstances.

Let's take a quick look at this immortality in its ability to bring us life in a world filled with death. We are living in changing times. The world is always changing generation after generation. I think everyone would agree that we are seeing situations that we have never seen before in our life.

Our way of life has been sort of disrupted by corruption, political decisions, lies and man's reasoning, all forms of death. We are seeing it world wide thanks to social media. If we let our minds and hearts get focused on it, it can take a toll on us. If we get our eyes on the death in this world the fruit of death can manifest is us...fear, anger, frustration, agitation.

We are seeing intolerance and hate at an all-time high, but it has existed from the garden. We see fear gripping the world. We see offense increasing. There seems to be less patience and compassion.

We see people judging people for their thoughts, beliefs and actions. Now this judging I am talking about is not the day of judgment that Greg talked about last week. It is not God bringing restoration of everything to God's original intent. It is not God revealing His judgment of man's righteous.

The judging I am talking right now is man making unrighteous judgments about other people and then taking it upon themselves to execute punishment.

The definition of judge in Matt 7 is:
To distinguish, to try, condemn, punish, avenge, condemn, call into question, sentence to

Matt 7:1 says
Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged: and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again.

There was a time we interpreted this scripture bass ackwards! You know what I mean! Exactly the opposite of what it really means!
This is NOT saying if you judge someone then God's gonna judge you. This is not saying If you think bad of someone, bad "karma" is going to come on you!!

It is really showing us the condition of our heart and how our heart operates. If we judge another person, it's because we already have judgment in our heart against ourselves. The fruit of death is manifesting in us and against us. It then manifests against others.

This judging one man by another is the fruit of death. It is contagious, it spreads... what happens when someone judges you; you turn right around and judge them. It can spread like a wild fire.

Don't think that I am preaching out of a place of complete victory here! Friday I went to the grocery and I was standing in line waiting to be checked out by the cashier. She was almost finished with the lady that was in front of me. When another woman got in line behind me, she was so frustrated. She began complaining loudly that she had to wait in line and why weren't there more cashiers open.

I turned around to see why she was complaining and making all this fuss and only one word came to my mind. And I gotta tell you it isn't a word I can speak from the pulpit because it would be inappropriate!

What was wrong with this woman that she couldn't wait 10 minutes to get her groceries checked out and bagged? I mean, how ridiculous!! As I was turning around to return to minding my own business, my eyes glanced into her basket and BOOM out of nowhere came more judgments. Well maybe if she ate something besides junk food she might be a little nicer!!! Whoa! Where did that come from? It was the fruit of death!!

It came from a life of judging myself as something other than righteous. It just surfaced effortlessly. Who shall save me from this body of death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is His life, His resurrection that sets me free from death and all its fruit!

Imagine living your life without judging yourself. When you think of yourself you only think of righteousness, goodness, worthiness. You know you are the apple of God's eye and you rest in that truth!! You can rest in who you are and enjoy who you are. That is the perspective that immortality gives you!

Imagine living your life without ever judging another person. You see them as God sees them. They are as righteous as He is. They are a beautiful reflection of Who God is.

Imagine living your life without ever judging God!!! Never wondering why He didn't come up with a better plan to save us! Think of how peaceful and relaxing life would be. That would eliminate so much stress from our lives.

God's immortality, God's inheritance, His life sets us free from these judgments!! He assures us we have no reason to judge against ourselves. He tells us what His judgment of us is: righteous!!

This immortality swallows up all sin and death.

Recently God woke me up with a memory that I have tried to stuff most of my life. It produced fear in me most of my life. I saw myself as a little girl about 4 years old. A person had been killed and I was told it was my fault. Then these men took me and tied me to the dead body.

I was freaking out and couldn't get away. I won't go into any greater detail because that isn't the important part.

I saw God come and cut me from that dead body and tie me to Jesus' dead body. But I had peace and then I saw Jesus raised from the dead. I saw Him raised up in resurrection power and I was still tied to Him.

I saw myself separated from sin and death. I saw myself crucified with Christ, buried and raised from the dead!!! I saw all death conquered and swallowed up for me!!!

And then I saw the most amazing thing happen. I saw the men that had killed that person and tied me to their dead body. I saw that they were tied to death. I saw them unable to get free from it. I saw them struggling to be free but couldn't free themselves. I saw them in the trap of death, victims of sin.

And then I saw OUR JESUS come and cut the ropes that had them tied to death. I saw them free to be the wonderful people that they had always been. I saw light burst out of darkness, love burst forth where there once was hate.

And I saw Immortality conquer it all!!! I saw immortality swallow up death! We were in Jesus together! Set free from death and I understood God's perspective!! I saw what He saw.

I saw humanity caught in the vicious trap of death, that caused the fruit of death to manifest from the flesh of men. And I saw God's life, immortality conquer everything, ALL death for us!! I saw the value and beauty of mankind. I saw God's judgment of mankind: righteous!!!

Now we have all been tied to death. Our situations may have been different but we have all experienced the effects of sin and death in some way.

Have you tried to separate yourself from death in your own strength? How has that worked for you? You tried so hard to forgive someone and couldn't? You tried to control your anger, your fear, your anxiety and couldn't get free from it?

God set us free from this sin and death through the resurrection life that He poured out on Jesus. He joined us with Jesus...on the cross, in the grave, and resurrected and seated at His right hand. We are connected to Him, braided together with Him, tied to Him, one with Him forever.

This immortality silences the shouts of death. God's life comes and fills us with His perspective when we can't seem to make our way out of a paper bag. He takes our ashes and turns them into beauty. He turns our mourning into dancing.

How do we celebrate immortality?

- We allow God's life to fill us each day, in every circumstance.
- We let Him show us His perspective and produce His life in us!!!
- We focus on His resurrection power
- We allow Him to show us His life swallowing up death

Immortality is God's inheritance to you. It satisfies all our desires. It brings us to rest and peace. It envelopes us in His love and joy.