

HP JHB, November, 2008

Resurrection life

Intro: me waiting to 'start' life when I 'just got past this one trial'.

For a long time it had seemed to me that **life was about to begin** - real life. But there was always some obstacle in the way. Something to be got through first, some unfinished business, time still to be served, a debt to be paid. Then life would begin. At last it dawned on me that these obstacles were my life. -- Fr. Alfred D'Souza

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (abundant life)

What is abundant life?

- **Significant**
 - **John 6:27** Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval." NIV
 - I still believe that standing up for the truth of God is the greatest thing in the world. This is the end (purpose) of life. The end of life is not to be happy. The end of life is not to achieve pleasure and avoid pain. The end of life is to do the will of God, come what may. --Martin Luther King, Jr.
 - I don't fear failure, rather succeeding at something that doesn't matter - anonymous
- **Secure**
 - Security is something that we all strive for and want to varying degrees. The problem is that we often sacrifice other important things for the sake of security. Most commonly we sacrifice, significance and destiny in order to feel safe. Insecure people have to spend time making life 'safe' for themselves. Secure people have the freedom to risk stepping out into new endeavours because inside they feel safe. The only true security is in God and His never ending love for us.
 - **Rom 8:38-39** For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. NIV

Many Christians estimate difficulty in the light of their own resources, and thus they attempt very little and they always fail. All giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on His power and presence to be with them.

- **James Hudson Taylor** -

- **Satisfied**
 - **John 4:34** "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. NIV
 - **Ps 63:5** My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. NIV
 - Analogy of waiter offering dog biscuit after sumptuous meal.
- **Selfless**
 - Phil 2:3-4 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. NIV
 - The greatest use of a life is to spend it for something that will outlast it.—Anonymous

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. NIV

How do we get this abundant life?

Matt 16:24-25 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. NIV

Pictures from ENLI

Resurrection life is the best kind of life, life after death is better than life before death. Whenever God wants to give you 'abundant life, life to the full' He must take you through a death to the old first – filling up a bottle with something new.

Dying to self means laying down of old motives, desires and will. (Holiness = thinking the thoughts of God, willing the will of God, doing the work of God) . To take up the desires and will of God with motive of glorifying Him. – Jesus in Gethsemane.

We must stress that Christian growth is about death and resurrection, not self-improvement. If it is improvement what are we improving? We can't improve the flesh because there is nothing good in the flesh to improve upon (improving the flesh would just make us better sinners!) Nor can we improve our new nature, because God's work is perfect. Instead our responsibility is to crucify what is already dead, and to live in what is already true. ENLI The process of change.

Boy and Pellet gun analogy.

Who we are cannot be improved into what God wants for us. God's desire is to give us something way above what we can generally conceive. If we could have gotten there on our own, by self-improvement then there would have been no reason for Christ to die on the cross. And believe you me if there was any other way, Our Heavenly Father would have found it! Christ in Gethsemane – if this cup may pass from me... none the less, not my will but yours.

Phil 2:5-9 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death- even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, NIV

John 11:1-44

11:1 Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair. 3 So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." 4 When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." 5 Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.

- **Jesus loved Mary, Martha and Lazarus** – We are often under a mistaken impression of God; who He is and what He thinks about us. Perhaps greatest exercise a person can ever do is to set their heart to find out who God is. Religion, academia often paint a very distorted picture of who He is. When we are going through a hard

time it is often easy to feel that God is angry with us, punishing us, has abandoned us or does not love us.

- **All of the above are not true.** As Christians God is not angry with us – He chose to vent His anger on His son so that you did not have to have it, He is not punishing us – He chose to punish His son so that He did not have to punish us. He has not abandoned us – He chose to abandon His son for a moment so that He did not have to abandon us. At all times His love for us is never-ending... nothing can separate us from it. Rom 8:38,39 For I am convinced that...
- **Jesus waited 2 more days - !!!!** This must have taken a serious amount of self-discipline on His behalf, but He was after something more than just the healing of Lazarus, but the resurrection of Lazarus! I believe that Him waiting was not so much for Lazarus's death but for a death to self in the hearts of those who were with Him. Healing was common place in His circles but resurrection wasn't – He wanted those to see something more so that their faith would be more!!! He knew what would face us and He needed us to see Him raise the dead so that we would believe Him for it in time and generations to come.

7 Then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." 8 "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you are going back there?"

- **Jesus wasn't afraid of His own death**, because He knew that man did not hold it... no one takes my life...no one can snatch them out of my hand.
- **He wasn't afraid of suffering** because He knew that as He yielded to the will of God it would produce life.
- **1 Peter 4:1-2** Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. 2 As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. NIV

9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? A man who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by this world's light. 10 It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has no light." 11 After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."

12 His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." 13 Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

14 So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, 15 and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

16 Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

17 On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. 18 Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, 19 and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort

them in the loss of their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

21 "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

24 Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

- **Vague, distant hope**

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;

- Our hope is not in some theological truth, or principle but in a person! Who is true and faithful and able.

26 and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

- **Specific faith.** Brings her to a place of specific, now, faith. Faith accumulates (corporate – assurance of salvation, baptism in HS. Personal) through the word and through experience.

27 "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

28 And after she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you." 29 When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. 31 When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

32 When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 34 "Where have you laid him?" he asked.

"Come and see, Lord," they replied.

35 Jesus wept.

- **God is not emotionally distant from our suffering.** When Jesus said that He would be with us till the end, He meant through thick and thin, good and bad. Our suffering moves God's heart – Israelites in Egypt.

36 Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

37 But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

38 Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. 39 "Take away the stone," he said.

"But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odour, for he has been there four days."

40 Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

41 So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

God is not holding out on us. Like some crazy dictator, enjoying the suffering of his subjects. God is truly interested in our success, joy and biblical prosperity. He just knows that human will-power, self-righteousness and human motivation do not build a container able to contain His blessing. These things weave a ramshackle net at best whereas God(if yielded to) is able to build a watertight reservoir that is able to irrigate the surrounding fields of humanity and that he is always in process of topping up and causing to overflow.