

Study 8. Glory through resurrection **(Romans 6:1-14)**

Resurrection is at the heart of our faith, and, wonderfully, is a revelation of glory. God revealed his glory when he raised Jesus Christ from the dead. He is revealing his glory when he raises us up with Christ to live a new life. And he will reveal his glory when we are raised from the dead.

We must first speak of Christ's resurrection because everything derives from this (**Rom. 6:4-10**).

The raising of Christ is a revelation of glory because he was raised by the glory of the Father (v. 4). That is, it was to the Father's glory, and a revelation of who he is, to raise Jesus from the dead. Jesus had said it was necessary that he suffer and enter into his glory (Luke 24:26), and this glory must include his resurrection. It was as this resurrected person that Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father. Wicked men killed him, but God glorified him (Acts 3:13), that is, raised him from the dead and placed him at his right hand. Paul speaks about Jesus having a body of glory (Phil. 3:21) and having the power to subdue everything to himself.

We may ask what this all means, because God's glory is never 'for show' but to achieve his purpose among us. Our reading says that by Christ's death and resurrection, death and sin are now defeated (v. 9; also 2 Tim. 1:10). No one expected such an event but God manifested his surprising presence and action, his glory, in totally defeating death and all that had brought it about. God has 'swallowed up death' forever (Is. 25:8).

By this victory, Christ as Lord can administer all things with a view to their restitution and glory. And it is because of the glory given to the risen and ascended Christ that we have come to trust in God (1 Pet. 1:21). We are speaking, not just of the glory that did shine, back in history, but the glory that does shine from him now, revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. It may be something like this that Paul talks about when he says Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, *according to the Spirit of holiness* (Rom. 1:4). This ambiguous phrase seems to mean that the Spirit of holiness is the way we know of Christ's victorious presence beside the Father, know the holy glory that is coming to us.

The resurrection of Christ remains a revealing of glory regardless of the world's scepticism. God has appointed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness, through Jesus Christ, and given an assurance of this by raising him from the dead (Ac. 17:31). Under the Old Covenant, God made his glory evident to the world in the exodus particularly; under the New Covenant, the world has evidence of this glory in the resurrection.

We come now to a second way in which God's glory is being revealed, this time, in ourselves. Those who are joined to Christ in baptism, share in the good of his death and his resurrection, now. We have been raised to a new life characterised by righteousness and hope (**Rom. 6:1-14**).

We, together with Christ, may also live before the Father (vv. 4-5). Everything done in Christ has included us because it was for us: he was put to death for our sins and raised for our justification (4:25). As Paul says here, we have been raised with him to newness of life.

The raising of Jesus was a powerful display of God's glory in the flesh of Christ, but was also God's power being exercised towards us (Eph. 1:19-23).

We were crucified with Christ so the 'whole body of sin' would be 'rendered inoperative' (v. 6). The 'whole body of sin' must be what makes us feel our wretchedness (7:24). In other words, it is still making its presence felt, but, in fact has no actual power to control our actions or determine our future. Truly, this is an amazing accomplishment, a revelation of glory—not ours, but God's.

'Thus the one who has died, been buried and raised with Christ now has moral glory, for sin shall no longer have (the right to have) dominion over him (Rom. 6:12-14)' (G. Bingham, *All Cry Glory*, p. 52).

The reason for this is given as our being *justified* from sin (v. 7). Most translations render this as 'freedom' recognising that this is the effect of justification. But the emphasis here is on the cause: we are justified and this is what gives us freedom (cf. Ac. 13:39—where the same word is used). The power of sin is the law (1 Co. 15:56), that is, its power to condemn us. But, being justified, that is, being called righteous by God, neither sin nor death have dominion over us (vv. 6, 9, 11). This, indeed is freedom, and Paul speaks of this later (v. 22).

'Sin was the ground of Satan's dominion, the sphere of his power, and the secret of his strength; and no sooner was the guilt lying on us extinguished, than his throne was undermined, as Jesus Himself said (John 12:31). When the guilt of sin was abolished, Satan's dominion over God's people was ended; for the ground of his authority was the law which had been violated, and the guilt which had been incurred. All the mistakes have arisen from not perceiving with sufficient clearness how the triumph could be celebrated on His Cross' (George Smeaton, *The Apostles' Doctrine of the Atonement*, Edinburgh, pp. 307f, quoted in Ministry School 2011, p. 14.8).

Our present life is hidden with Christ in God, awaiting glory, so that is where our minds should be, and our actions (vv. 11-14; Col. 3:1-4). Christians do sin, but the thought is intolerable. If we do sin, we have an Advocate with the Father (1 John 2:2) and remain in the position of sin having no dominion over us. This is the moral power we need to live to God.

Resurrection glory is yet to be revealed in a third way. Christians await a future revelation of glory in the transformation of their bodies to be like Christ's body (**Rom. 8:17-25, 30**). It is yet to be revealed to us and in us (vv. 17-18), and so we await 'the freedom of the glory of the children of God' (v. 21). Glory is the revelation of God but God chooses to be revealed in his creatures, and in the day of our resurrection from the dead, this glory will be fully on display.

Paul speaks about this in numerous contexts: Christ is our hope of glory (Col. 1:27; 3:4; also Rev. 21:11); he is able to subject all things to himself (Phil. 3:20-21; also John 7:39). We will then have the image of the man of heaven (1 Cor. 15:43, 49). Not to have this hope leaves us pitiable (1 Cor. 15:19). Our present bodies will be sown (by death) in dishonour and raised in glory (1 Cor. 15:43). For the moment, we desire to be like him in his death (that means in love) so we may also share with him in his resurrection (Phil. 3:10; 2 Co. 1:5; Ro. 8:17; Col. 1:11). This hope of righteousness is our inspiration for practical righteousness now (2 Co. 15:58; Gal. 5:5) and so is indispensable.

Clearly, there are difficulties in knowing the glory of Christ's resurrection and yet being subject to this present world's futility, corruption and groaning. Wonderfully, the Holy Spirit enables this waiting, and is a foretaste of what is to come. The coming glory is so sure that Paul speaks of it as already settled in the plan of God (v. 30).

Paul says if Christ has not been raised, we are still in our sins, and we will not be raised from the dead either (1 Co. 15:3-4, 12-19). Paul also shows that through Christ resurrection, we have had a moral resurrection to a new life—life from the dead. Then, thirdly, our bodies will be raised to be like his. All of these actions of resurrection are manifestations of glory.

Jesus was raised up by the 'Spirit of holiness' (Rom. 1:4-5), suggesting that his rising is a moral victory of holiness over death and sin and Satan—again, a revelation of glory.

It was impossible for his flesh to be corrupted (Ps. 16:10 in Acts 2:27; 13:35, 37).

The death and resurrection of our Lord, together, constitute the great saving action of God on our behalf. It may help to understand what God has done if we say that if Christ's death is our 'Passover' (1 Co. 5:7), his resurrection is our 'exodus' from this present evil world (cf. Lk. 9:31 with Ex. 6:6-7). The two actions cannot be separated.

'The glorified Christ, as life-giving Spirit, is the source of the ongoing, transforming glorification of the Church (Dictionary of Paul, p. 349).

'Glory is always associated with authority and rule' (Von Almen?).