

A Short Resurrection Sunday Catena

Matthew 28:6a

6 "He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said.

Look around and it will be patently clear that Jesus is not here in the lives of most that draw breath in our life and time. Some have never heard of Him, others have turned away because they don't like what they hear, others turned back to the world's path having given a walk with Him a try, others squeeze out the joy of knowing Him through a conjured self-piety, and yet others vehemently try to destroy His impress wherever found. For these He is not here. For a few, however, Jesus is not here-that meaning entombed in the human sarcophagus of death-this body-for another reason; He is risen!

It is the content of His absence yet presence in the life of these that I offer in this 2010 celebration of Resurrection Day.

John 20:20-22

20 And when Jesus had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." 22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

Jesus' absence in the flesh and presence as raised brought the promise of fulfillment to all who would hear; hence, "Peace be with to you." The life that His resurrection portends is the life that anyone may eternally reflect upon hearing, rejoicing, and receiving the Holy Spirit. It is the resurrection that His Father sent Jesus to bring, it is the resurrection that makes the tomb empty, and it is the resurrection that breathes life into the living dead. Thus to those receiving the Holy Spirit, Jesus is not here bound to this world; He is risen.

John 20:26-28

26 After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." 28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

How does absence and presence come, it seems like such a contradiction? To the time bound mind saturated with the material operations of the world alone resurrection is admittedly improbable if not impossible. Nevertheless, to all trapped in this contradiction and the absence of Christ in their world, there is the Jesus who enters through the shut doors of their lives. He calls for them to reach out for the impossible. He challenges them to believe and His presence in that belief is oh so recognizable - for that heart cries out of in His presence saying: "My Lord and my God!"

Revelation 19:7-8

7 "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

To Christian hearts the specter of absence becomes hope in His presence. The empty tomb brings the presence of Christ raised in life. The risen Christ enlivens

the hearts of sinners turned saints. Each Spirit empowered act divines proof of purchase, proof of His resurrection, and proof of their resurrection to come.

1 Cor 15:42-44a

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body...

In certain sense the saint rejoins those who deny Christ's presence along with the angel. The perishable is not the life for which we long nor the life for which we were made. It is immortality, it is power, and it is glory that woos the heart of humanity. And so with the angel, the saint declares Jesus' absence yet presence to all who think they will find Him entombed: "He is risen!"

1 John 3:2

2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

Risen as what the seekers at the grave must wonder? Therein lies the mystery and the faith that works within as empowered by the Spirit. The Jesus which the saint shall be like, it is not that which is bound to this world's knowledge or its grave: "He is not here." His eternal appearance is nothing like that which is known to the shadow lands of this world or its grave.

Revelation 21:4-5a

4 Jesus will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." 5a And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new" ...

Limitations to what God intended us to be and the consequences that those limitations bring are all part of what the seekers of Christ-in-the-tomb expected to find: the tears, the death, the mourning, the crying, and the pain. The fact that Jesus was not there brought something different, something new, someOne risen.

Ephesians 4:23-24

... be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

The newness of His risen life empowers the newness of minds of the believer enlivened by the same Spirit that raises Jesus from the dead. Jesus' radiance shone upon the enlivened believer progressively reflects the joy, created bliss, and untainted purity in the likeness of Him who is risen. Some day, the day when Jesus returns, the reflection of a resurrected life will be complete. Yes, He is risen indeed...but for now may ...

Revelation 22:20

20 Jesus who testifies to these things and says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." He is risen indeed...May He come soon and raise us to reflect His glory forever. Even so come Lord Jesus!