

Light that Carries a Shadow

Thomas Robinson, *Light of the World 2*, April 15, 2018

2 Corinthians 4:1-15

¹ Therefore, since we have received this ministry by God showing mercy to us, we don't become discouraged. ² Rather we've rejected anything hidden and shameful, not practicing any deception or distorting the word (*logos*) of God. but by **open proclamation of the truth** we commend ourselves to **everyone's conscience** in the presence of **God**.

³ But if the Good News we tell is hidden by a veil, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ There, the god of this age blinded the minds of those who don't believe so they can't see **the light** of the Good News of **the glory of the Messiah**, who is **God's image**.

⁵ For we are not proclaiming ourselves, but rather **Jesus Messiah as Lord**, but ourselves as your **slaves because of Jesus**, ⁶ because it is the **God** who said, "**Light shall shine out of darkness**," who **shone in our hearts** for **illumination** of the **knowledge** of the **glory of God** in the **face of Jesus Messiah**.

⁷ But we have this **treasure in jars of clay**, in order that the extraordinary quality of the **power** may be **God's own**, and **not from us**. ⁸ We have it as we're **pressed by trouble** on every side, but are **not crushed**; as we're **perplexed**, but **not** pushed to **despair**; as we're **persecuted**, but **not forsaken**, as we're **knocked down** but **not destroyed**, as we're always carrying **the dying of Jesus** in this **body**, in order that the **life of Jesus** may be revealed in our **body**.

¹¹ For always **we who are living** are being handed over to death because of Jesus, in order that the **life of Jesus** also may be revealed in our mortal flesh. ¹² So **death is at work in us, but life in you**.

¹³ Since we have the same **Spirit of faith** according to what has been written, *"I believed, and for that reason I spoke,"* [Psa 116:10] we also **believe**, and so we also **speak**, ¹⁴ **knowing** that **he who raised the Lord Jesus** will also **raise us** with **Jesus** and present **us** with **you**. ¹⁵ For it is **all for your sake**, in order that **grace**, as it multiplies **thanksgiving** through more and more people, may abound to the **glory of God**.

Psalms 116:8-10

⁸ Yes, LORD, you rescued my life from death, and kept my feet from stumbling. ⁹ I will serve the LORD in the land of the living. ¹⁰ I had faith, therefore I said, "I am severely oppressed."

Acts 9:3-5

³ Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" ⁵ He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

Philippians 2:5-11

⁵ Think this among yourselves, which also means in Messiah Jesus: ⁶ "Though he was in the form of God, | he did not consider that equality with God | a thing to be exploited, | ⁷ rather he emptied himself, | by taking the form of a slave, | being born in human likeness. | ⁸ And being found in human shape, | he humbled himself | by becoming obedient to the point of death, | even death on a cross. | ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him | and graced him with the name | that is above every name, | ¹⁰ so that at Jesus' name | every knee should bow, | of all in heaven and on earth and under earth, | ¹¹ and every tongue confess | that "Jesus Messiah is LORD," | to the glory of God the Father."

I Corinthians 15:20-26

²⁰ But in fact the Messiah has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in the Messiah all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Firstfruit is the Messiah. Then with his presence those who belong to the Messiah. ²⁴ Then is the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, when he has rendered powerless every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet. [Psa 110:1] ²⁶ The last enemy to be rendered powerless is death.

The Light and Darkness of Resurrection Life

We're focusing on the light of Resurrection life. John tells of the Logos, creator of life, light shining in darkness, showing God's glory, full of grace and truth. It all sounds very good, but he leads us through all that Jesus endured into crucifixion and then resurrection.

Resurrection is a challenge to believe as an event – like Thomas. But that's just the start.

Once I know it's real, then comes the challenge of seeing everything through its lens.

Resurrection life is new, in Jesus: the union of human physical life with God's life. But it is life on the other side of death, incorporating death, conquering death. But God brings it into our world, our history in Jesus so that it shapes our life, values, and purposes, now.

In incarnation, Jesus brings God's life into ours, takes our limitations – humble, suffering, all the signs of mortality we experience – dies with us. In resurrection, he takes our life into God's life, shows how great God's love is, builds hope and meaning into our life. Our lives now are shaped by the love embodied in his cross and the vibrant hope of his Life.

We live in a society fascinated with death, fearful of death. We spend almost without limit to extend youth and life. We dread anyone with no fear of death. But mortality is all around us. Rome made it entertainment in theaters and amphitheaters. So do we. It's very hard for us to think about suffering, pain, physical and emotional. Pleasure often defines good.

The Revolution of Resurrection

Paul is writing to Christians in the Roman colony in the Greek city of Corinth. Jewish and pagan backgrounds that he has always lived with. Reflecting on his ministry: Vv 6-7: God's word creating light: we've experienced that. Seeing the glory of God in the face of Jesus. This is a great treasure that we carry in jars of clay – ourselves. Power is God's not ours. It's a beautiful vision, experience. We like treasure, power in jars of clay. We jars of clay must be pretty great. Great apostle, beloved, elect saints. Health and wealth – we like!

But that's not Paul's reality. The light is the face of Jesus. His reality is reality. He emptied himself, took the form of a slave, becoming us all the way to death. That's God's glory. His life shows real life centered in love. We are "*your slaves because of Jesus*." In Roman society, Paul's statement is almost unimaginable, a reversal of all values. What we're engaged in is God's work, God's gift. No place for deception: Jesus crucified is Lord.

Suffering and the Light of Resurrection

Every human experiences suffering of some sort. It goes with living in our world, but we make it worse. Paul had been through a lot: mental, emotional, physical, legal, etc. It's really hard. It hurts. There's no explaining it away. It is human experience that has now been illuminated by God suffering with us in Jesus. We carry his dying in ourselves.

In Jesus' dying we see the light of his ultimate conquest of death, his gracious love taking it on himself. That love defines our engagement, our hope, our light of life.