



Independence Church Of Christ

Sharing The Freedom That Is In Christ

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LESSON FOR SUNDAY, APRIL 5th, 2020

THE RESURRECTION MEANS THAT WE ARE JUSTIFIED BEFORE GOD!

Recently I had a dream. You might be able to identify with it.

I dreamed that a worldwide pandemic fell upon the whole population of the earth. No one was spared the curse of contracting the disease. Every single man, woman and child had contracted the dreaded curse and the end result was to be death to all. There was no vaccine and those remedies that were used were of only limited benefit. The whole of earth was destined to die.

Then a stranger came upon the scene. He came to announce a cure and he did this from a humble clinic located in Northern Israel. He claimed to be a physician with insights that no other physicians possessed and that his *healing* was the answer to the whole world's need.

As the preposterous claim went out in the region around his clinic, thousands began to show up to learn how they might be cured. Claims began to be heard that this physician could do amazing things – unexplainable things – and many began to believe in his powers, claiming they had been *healed* by this truly great physician.

Over time, his claims and renown reached every country. Clinics began popping up in every land, each proclaiming the power of this physician's cure. Of course, many were doubtful. Many railed against the physician and his supposed cure. Some went so far as to ban his clinics and his practice. Still, even in those countries, many began to come to him clandestinely. His clinics surfaced in these places in secret and continued to cure people everywhere.

Articles and exposes' and books began emerging about this physician and his cure. Many found his methods and teaching about the cure illogical, calling it *foolishness* and *cultish mind control*. Many could not believe that an unknown physician from a tiny province in the Middle East could have invented such a cure on his own. Some were unbelieving. Some were just skeptical. Some wanted to believe but just couldn't bring themselves to accept his cure. Some even tried to counterfeit his success by founding competing clinics that were seeking only to make money off their fraudulent claims of a cure. This went on for some time and, in the process, millions of people continued to die from their complications of the disease.

In my dream I decided to investigate this *cure*. I had numerous symptoms and was convinced that without some help I was going to die from the disease. So, I went to one of the clinics and began to inquire. There I was taught the life story of this physician and, eventually, was asked if I believed he could cure me. In my heart I realized that I did believe. I believed that my situation was hopeless and that, without help – *his help*, I was going to die from the disease. Based on my statement of belief in this kind and healing physician, I was taken to a pool. Now, this was unexpected. I asked what we were doing there and was told that the healing would take place *in the pool*. I pushed back at the concept. I cried out, "*I thought the Great Physician was going to heal me of my disease!*". I was told that I was correct. The physician was going to heal me, but that he would do it *in the pool*. I was stunned. I could tell that the pool possessed no special qualities. It was regular tap water, at best. Was this a *con*? Had I been tricked? I was told – even exhorted – to just *believe* and my cure would be forthcoming. So, with an unexplainable belief in the physician and his cure, I stepped into the pool where one of his assistants submerged me. As I came up out of the pool, I could tell something was different. I couldn't put my finger on it right away, but I knew that something was very different about *me*. A brief moment passed, and I began to wonder, "*Could I have been cured?*". As I began conversing with other cured believers, I realized I was now a part of something *bigger*. This was something the world needed to know was *real*. There was a cure for what was destroying the population of earth and I needed to be out there proclaiming this cure. To not do so would be incomprehensible, inhumane, and selfish.

It was then I woke up and began to ponder my dream.

Lesson Verses:

Is there no medicine in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why is there no healing for the wounds of my people? – Jeremiah 8:22 (NLT)

He [Jesus] was handed over to die because of our sins, and He was raised to life to make us right with God. – Romans 4:25 (NLT)

Justification means to “to be put right with”. Because of our sins, humanity is separated from God and incapable of a relationship with Him (Romans 6:28, Isaiah 59:2).

Scripture calls us “objects of wrath” because God must exert His wrath on those who break His law (Ephesians 2:3). Without someone stepping in to correct this situation, we cannot have the relationship with God that He intended. In the death of Jesus on the cross, God put our punishment on Christ so that we could be justified before Him.

The resurrection of Jesus confirms that God accepted Christ’s sacrifice for our sin – *yours and mine* - on the cross and gives us access to a right relationship with Him.

Consider these scriptures:

*For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. – Romans 3:23 (**dts** – we are all – the entire human race – infected with sin)*

*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. – Romans 6:23 (**dts** – infected with sin, the consequences are that we must die, but our Great Physician has a cure)*

²⁰ Abraham never wavered in believing God’s promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. ²¹ He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever He promises. ²² And because of Abraham’s faith, God counted him as righteous. ²³ And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn’t just for Abraham’s benefit. It was recorded ²⁴ for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in Him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. ²⁵ He was handed over to die because of our sins, and He was raised to life to make us right with God. – Romans 4:20-25 (NLT)

¹ Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

² Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved

privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

³ We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. ⁴ And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. ⁵ And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because He has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love.

⁶ When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. ⁷ Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. ⁸ But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. ⁹ And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, He will certainly save us from God's condemnation. ¹⁰ For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of His Son while we were still His enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of His Son. ¹¹ So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God. – Romans 5:1-11 (NLT)

²⁰ God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant. ²¹ So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. – Romans 5:20-21 (NLT)

¹ Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of His wonderful grace? ² Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? ³ Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined Him in His death? ⁴ For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

⁵ Since we have been united with Him in His death, we will also be raised to life as He was. ⁶ We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. ⁷ For when we died with Christ, we were set free from the power of sin. ⁸ And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with Him. ⁹ We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and He will never die again.

Death no longer has any power over Him. ¹⁰ When He died, He died once to break the power of sin. But now that He lives, He lives for the glory of God. ¹¹ So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. – Romans 6:1-11 (NLT)

THIS IS GOOD NEWS

Sin is a Pandemic worse than that which we are now under. No one is immune. All will die as a result of the sin in their lives. There is only ONE CURE. If there were a cure for the Covid-19 virus that plagues our world right now and it was universally and readily available, do you think there would be anyone not interested in getting in line to receive that cure? There is something worse than Covid-19 that plagues mankind. *All have sinned and fallen short of God's standard!* All means everyone. And the penalty for the sin that we all have committed is *death!* But there is no panic in the streets over this curse. People are not rushing to their places of worship or kneeling in prayer at their bedsides over this issue – *other issues maybe, but not this one.* Jesus' resurrection means that we can be assured of the cure from this evil that hangs over our heads. His death, burial and resurrection have brought to us God's Justification. We can be inoculated from sin's curse by proclaiming our faith in Jesus as the answer (our Great Physician) and letting Him make us whole again through our submission to Him in baptism.

The cure seems so simple we wonder why there are not lengthy lines waiting to get that cure. We will wait in line for drive-thru testing of a Virus, or to buy toilet paper and bottled water at a store, but not to be cured from our sins. Can't you just imagine the chagrin in heaven as the Trinity and their angels stare in disbelief at the warped sense of priorities of humanity? Let's attempt to do something about that. Soon! Before all humanity is lost.