

His Resurrection GIVES US HOPE

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Our 34-year-old son died in a truck accident in 1999. Four months later, tests revealed I had a terminal lung disease. A few years later my wife learned she had breast cancer. Such events test one's faith and hope. Facing death makes one think seriously about the meaning of life and the life to come. You ask, "Is my faith real? Is my hope solid" Do I really believe what I say I believed?"

2 We grieved deeply because of the loss of our son, but not as those “who have no hope” (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Our LIVING HOPE based on Christ’s resurrection gave us the courage to face these realities.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF HOPE

In dealing with our son’s death, because our faith in the crucified Savior and resurrected Christ gave us hope we did not question God. A week after Mark’s death, I resumed my teaching in Bible college with the reassuring topic of the resurrection of Jesus.

In 2000, I learned that I had idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF). Doctors gave me three years to live. Of those proven to have this disease, less than 1 percent receive a transplant and survive IPF. Medical research has not identified a cause nor discovered a cure. I prepared to die. Our faith in the risen Christ gives strength each day and confident hope for life beyond the grave. As Christians we have a perspective for facing life’s challenges.

Medical science and God’s healing hand gave me a double-lung transplant on June 15, 2004, providing me an extended lease on life. In 2005 we encountered another serious challenge—Barbara’s breast cancer. She had surgery and three months of chemotherapy. We live in a fallen world. We do not blame God when bad things happen to us. We trust Him and depend on Him to give us strength and peace. The reality of Christ’s resurrection provides a rock-solid foundation demonstrating the truth of the Christian faith. Peter reminds us:

1 Peter 1:3-5 – 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The death and resurrection of Christ not only ensures our future home in Heaven, but also reminds us that we live as heavenly citizens while in this life (Philippians 3:20,21).

Hope gives a long-range perspective. “For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come” (Hebrews 13:14). When we lose a believing loved one we have a greater investment in Heaven and an increasing anticipation of Heaven. In the midst of hardships, Paul says, “For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.” (2 Corinthians 4:17,18). Christ’s resurrection demonstrates the reality of eternal life and enables us to approach life with an eternal perspective.

THE ASSURANCE OF HOPE

Fears and anxieties about death haunt those who have no hope. Because of our hope in the risen Christ, we have confidence in eternal life. Our Lord assured us, “Because I live, you also will live” (John 14:19). He declared, “Everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I

4 will raise him up on the last day” (John 6:40). I knew if I died I would have the best deal and I wanted the best for Barbara if that happened. Our resurrection faith gives us that stability and hope.

In the late Middle Ages men speculated about the possibility of a sea route to India. Could one navigate around the south tip of Africa? No one knew for sure. Attempts to round the cape had failed. Many wrecks occurred in the treacherous area where the Atlantic and Indian oceans met. Sailors called it the Cape of Storms. At last, Vasco da Gama successfully rounded the cape and reached the East. They renamed the cape the “Cape of Good Hope.” Michael Green draws this comparison:

Up to the time when Jesus died and rose again, death was, like that of the Cape of Storms, littered with wrecks. Until His successful rounding of that Cape and return, men had nothing to go on but speculation about the afterlife. His resurrection has turned it into the Cape of Good Hope. He has opened up for His people a way to a new and rich land which He has shown exists. And because He has satisfactorily rounded that perilous Cape, He is well equipped to act as pilot to others.

The truth of Christian faith and hope stands verified by Jesus’ resurrection from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:1-20). Because Christ lives, we have assurance that His death saves us from our sins, and we have a certain hope in life beyond the grave. In death we step through the doorway into our ultimate victory.

This blessed hope guaranteed by our resurrected Lord empowers us to face life's challenges. 5

THE REALITY OF HOPE

Sigmund Freud saw the Christian faith and hope as an escapist illusion resulting from people wanting a happy future to replace a painful present. It represented wish fulfillment, not reality, created by the need for security to overcome their helplessness.

We do not believe the Christian hope because we want it to be true. We believe it because Christ came to earth teaching truth about life and death and demonstrating by rising from the dead that He holds the power over life and death. Our hope is not a product of our subjective feelings and desires. It has an objective factual basis. Because it is true, it does have satisfying subjective benefits in our lives.

We have spiritual longings that this world cannot satisfy. C. S. Lewis observed,

“If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. If none of my earthly pleasures satisfy it, that does not prove that the universe is a fraud. Probably earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it but only to arouse it, to suggest the real thing . . . I must keep alive in myself the desire for my true country, which I shall never find till after death; I must never let it get snowed under or turned aside; I must make it the main object of life to press on to that other country and to help others do the same.”

Instead of illusion created by an overactive imagination, these desires indicate these longings will be

6 fulfilled. God has put eternity in our hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Christ's resurrection guarantees our resurrection from the dead and eternal life.

In spite of disappointments in this world, our living hope gives deep spiritual joy. Our joyful hope does not remove the trials and heartaches in this fallen world, but it enables us to see beyond hopeless situations. Our convinced faith, certain hope, and eternal perspective give peace as we daily live for Christ.

Ray recommends the reading of a "devotional" book about Revelation by Matt Proctor. Printed by College Press of Joplin, MO, the book Victorious encourages the reading of John's Revelation and points out many helpful things about the Revelation.

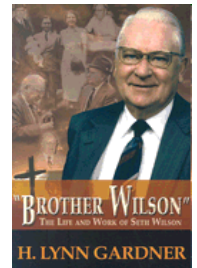
Other brief Bible studies like this one are also available from Mission Outreach: [NB-B01](#) "How to ENTER Christ's Way," [NB-B02](#) "Preface to 'Were You BURIED with Christ?'," [NB-B03](#) "Introducing 'Do Peter's KEYS still open the Way?'," [CD-Co4](#) "What Does Jesus Say About Himself?" [CD-Go1](#) – "What About False Teachers?" [CD-Co5](#) – "What About True Apostles?"

All currently available Viewpoint tracts & booklets are linked at <http://missionoutreach.org/CUGo1.pdf>. Topics are: CD-Doctrines of Jesus & His apostles, CE-Evangelism by Christians, CU-Unity IN CHRIST, CW-Worship of the Christ (It's by serving Him), DL-Daily Living by Christians, FA-Salvation Is Not by Faith Alone, HS-Holy Spirit Working in Christians, NB-New Birth INTO Christ's church, and PB-Proper Bible Understanding.

Your attention is invited to booklets on becoming a Christian. One title is “Three Times Peter used the KEYS of the Kingdom” (Viewpoint study [NB-K01](#)). You may also be interested in “We are invited to enter into COVENANT with God,” by Boyce Mouton (Viewpoint study [CD-F03](#)). As does this study, it speaks of freedom in Christ based on love of truth and love of the unity Jesus planned for us.

[CW-L02](#) is a study by Erwin Bishop and others, “When You Come Together.” It addresses the fact that our worship should be lifelong and constant rather than only when we are “in church” with other Christians. [CD-D21](#) is “Concerning FELLOWSHIP in the Supper of Remembrance.” And [PB-W01](#) is “Were You RAISED With Christ?” At amazon.com on the internet you could purchase the book, RAISED INTO NEW LIFE, by Ray Downen (Viewpoint study [PB-Z01](#)). Or “Should Any CHRISTIAN Ever Be Baptized?” ([NB-O01](#)).

Or one of the interesting books written by H. Lynn Gardner: About SETH WILSON, loved by many who were blessed to know him, “Brother Wilson. Seth Wilson, long time Academic Dean at Ozark Bible College.” I was also blessed to know and admire both Seth Wilson and Don Earl Boatman. Both Lynn and I were students at OBC during the ministry of these fine men.



Concerning a book soon to be published about DON EARL BOATMAN: “After reading this book, people should be able to say, ‘Now I feel like I know Brother Boatman.’” Sam E. Stone, former editor of Christian Standard, Ozark alumnus.

8 “What an enjoyable, nostalgic read! Having known the Boatmans since 1952, we are thrilled to see them honored in this way.” James and Marje Taylor, minister and counselor, Ozark alumni.

“Dr. Lynn Gardner has done us a great service by documenting and articulating the convictions and servant leadership of Brother Boatman—the essence of his legacy.” Ken Idleman, Ozark Christian College President, 1979-2006.

“Theology is at its best as biography, when we see God’s truth lived. Dr. Gardner has shown us in the life of Brother Boatman what Christlike service looks like.” Matt Proctor, Ozark Christian College President, 2006 to present.

The newest book will be available from the web site of Lynn Gardner (<http://lynngardner.info>). And the Seth Wilson book is available from [College Press](#), Joplin, MO.

Jesus built a “family of faith” (the word we use is “church”) where those who believe in Him gather to help one another in the Way which leads to life. Please join us in a Christian church. Ray is a member of Blendville Christian Church which meets at 2201 S Picher Ave in Joplin, MO. Ray says it’s one of the many fine churches in the Joplin area. He also recommends Villa Heights Christian, Mt. Hope Church of Christ, 26th & Connecticut Church of Christ, and others too numerous to mention.



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A Viewpoint
Brief Bible Study
from Ray Downen

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