

THE OUTCOME OF THE CROSS

I Corinthians 15:14

Introduction: What belongs last in the story of Golgotha? Was the story over when the man Jesus died? (Describe his death). Was the story over when two of this man's friend's claimed his body and placed him in a tomb? Where is meaning in all that took place on Golgotha? Either something more dramatic than the death and burial of a carpenter must take place or Calvary must be willing to be replaced by something that offers greater depths of meaning to man. Did something else happen?

I. TO SEE CLEARLY THE OUTCOME OF THE CROSS, DEATH MUST MAKE IT'S FULL IMPACT

1. Hope is stolen, the Son of God a human corpse. Dead, silent, in a tomb.
2. Despair all around. The giver of life, DEAD. Believers' hearts numbed.
3. A mother's son killed and buried. All dreams smashed. The world around the followers of the carpenter destroyed. There was nothing left to live for now.
4. The cross was God's finest effort to demonstrate His love, but who would stop to consider it now?
5. Were the cross the end of it all, one might some day stumble across an old ancient tomb and find inscribed, "Here Lies Jesus of Nazareth."
6. To be sure, that is where the cross leaves Him. Alone, dead in a tomb.

II. GOD WRITES A VICTORIOUS EPILOGUE TO THE CROSS

1. The resurrection of Jesus is the imperative of the Christian faith. Christ must be alive now or He cannot be Christ at all.
2. We are not Christians because there was a cross, but the outcome of the cross was the resurrection.
3. Either Christ has risen from the grave or we are fools for believing so.
4. Either Christ is alive or the cross was indeed a black hour for humanity.
5. Either the resurrection happened or the cross proved that Jesus was only a man and nothing more.
6. The resurrection seems unbelievable. It is beyond scientific understanding, yet it is not biological. It is illogical and cannot be proven objectively. Yet so imperative is the resurrection to our faith that Paul said that none can know salvation without believing it: ***"...that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved..."*** (Rom. 10:9)
7. Nobody believed Paul's speaking about the resurrection, they called him mad, they ignored him, chased him off, stoned him, imprisoned and whipped him, etc. IT WAS HARD TO BELIEVE THEN.....
 - It is hard to believe today even after 2,000 years of proof.
 - Women went to the tomb to finish burial preparations but found the tomb empty. The disciples didn't believe the women then Jesus appears to them. Suddenly it dawned upon them: JESUS WAS ALIVE.....
 - One disciple, Thomas wasn't there so Jesus appeared again when Thomas was present and he uttered those wonderful words: "My Lord and My God.."
8. Men will tell lies, but men will not die for lies. Hundreds of thousands have died through the centuries clinging to the unbelievable truth that Jesus had risen from the dead.

III. TOO OFTEN THE RESURRECTION IS SLIGHTED AS THE CROSS IS EMPHASIZED

1. Today's movie versions of the Passion of Christ give much detail to the cross and scenes surrounding it but we are rushed through the resurrection as if it was a "tacked on" event.
 - The impression is given that evil had won and God had been defeated.
2. The Easter message seems to end at the cross. We need to regain the forgotten imperative of lifting up the resurrection and make it the central truth in our beliefs and teachings.
3. Christ was dead for only three days but has been alive and at the right hand of God for over 2,000 years now.
 - We need to be telling everyone that CHRIST AROSE and is alive today.

CONCLUSION:

1. The resurrection meant triumph to those downcast apostles who had given Christ everything they had, including their very souls.
2. As the sun rose on that Easter morning, God was preparing to restore the crushed hopes of their lifeless lives.
3. Soon after sunrise there was a phrase echoing through the city - "HE'S ALIVE...HE'S ALIVE..."
4. Job's question, "If a man dies, shall he live again?" had been answered. It makes no matter how a person dies, even if in excruciating and torturous death. There is hope. Death has been defeated.
5. The resurrection offers people of every generation and race two things: Jesus is alive and Death is not a threat to the believer.
6. The outcome of the cross is that Jesus has overcome death. He is alive and He shall reign forever.
7. What do you believe about the Easter story?