

The God Life Part 1: "Sharing The Divine Nature" 04.08.12

Scripture: Luke 24:36-49 / 2 Peter 1:3-4 NIV

Intro: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! We come to this Resurrection Day celebrating the hope we all enjoy because of the miracle of Jesus' resurrection. The son of God died on the cross, was buried and on the third day He rose again. Jesus' life after death was witnessed by Mary, Peter, John, all the disciples, plus 500 other followers. In fact, we discover that being a witness was the first order of business from Jesus.

#1. Christ's Resurrection: I am be His WITNESS.

"You are witnesses of these things." Luke 24:48 ESV

Consider that Jesus spent another 40 days on the Planet Earth before He ascended into Heaven. The "proof" of His resurrection rested on those who witnessed his post-resurrection life. These same men, who scattered in fear when Jesus died, found the courage to change the world when Jesus was resurrected.

For us today we should realize that Jesus resurrection is **the beginning of the story**, not the end. If we were reading a novel about our Christian lives, Jesus resurrection would not be the conclusion. It would be the preface! Jesus' resurrection is that change that changes everything!

Jesus instructions to his followers two millennia ago, "You are witnesses of these things," are still his instructions to his followers now. We are to be today's witnesses of Jesus' resurrection. How do we do this? You might think that those first 500 had an advantage. They "saw" Jesus. They could testify about the man once dead now walking. But that was never the way of their witness; nor is it ours.

#2. Christ's Resurrection: The beginning of THE GOD LIFE.

The witness that mattered to the world was the change that happened in the lives of these men and women afterward. The religious leaders who heard Peter and the others preach with such power and persuasion asked where these guys came up with such learning? Weren't they mere fishermen? These men had been changed. They were living a different life now... the God life!

Jesus was clear in his instructions to his followers. They were to wait for the Helper, the Promise, the Holy Spirit to come to them. Here is Jesus instruction the night before his crucifixion:

"It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you."
John 16:7 ESV

And after Jesus' resurrection:

"And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you."
Luke 24:49a ESV

"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised ... in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."
Acts 4b, 5b NIV

This is **THE BIG DIFFERENCE** between the Christian faith and all the other religions and philosophies of our culture. Everyone wants the good life, right? Everyone wants to be able to improve their situation, to enjoy great relationships, to be able to live their lives to the fullest. The Christian faith makes it possible. Because of the resurrection! That's why Christ's resurrection is the beginning of everything for us - not the ending point. It's because of Jesus' resurrection that we can live the good life...

Because we have the God life! The Divine Nature - God Himself - is alive and well in the life of every authentic Christ follower. That is what we will be talking about over the next seven weeks. (Hold up flyer and go over titles to the talks: "Living The Good Life," "Learning To Be My Own Boss," "Keeping My Eye On The Ball," "Love Is More Than A Feeling," "What If I Produce More Like Me?" "Holding On To the Eternal Ticket.")

Let's be clear. This will not be some self-improvement course. We will be talking about a **changed** Christian life that *is only possible because of the Divine Nature infused into our lives*. **Without God's Spirit, without the God-life, we wouldn't have the power to change... we wouldn't have the power to live out the promise!**

#3. Christ's Resurrection:

Provides the P POWER of the P PROMISE.

This is the significance of Easter for us today. This is what makes it real. This is what makes it personal. We can talk about the Christian faith *in theory*. We can say we *believe* that Christ rose again. But that doesn't change us. That theory, that belief doesn't make the difference in our lives that makes anyone else stand up and notice.

Consider this! If it were possible for us to be changed, for us to enjoy the Divine Nature, for us to live the God-life without Jesus' death and resurrection, then that's what would have happened. That wasn't God's plan. What was it that happened to Jesus' followers - as a result of the resurrection - that made them such **powerful witnesses?**

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:8 ESV

It was the Divine Nature of God - His Holy Spirit - infused into their lives that gave them the power to live out the teachings of Jesus. They weren't *just people* talking about God. They were changed *God+persons* talking to people! They had the power of change to live out what they talked about. It changed them and it will change us.

No one was more changed and empowered than Peter. Notice what Peter writes to us near the end of his own life about God's power and nature in his own life:

"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature." 2 Peter 1:3-4a ESV

Everything about these verses shout out to us about the kind of good life the God-life provides. Do you see it? Peter is writing about *all things that pertain to life and godliness*, about being able to live out God's *glory and excellence*, about how God has already granted to us his *precious and very great promises*.

And how are we told that God keeps these promises? We see it at the beginning and end. *His divine power* to live out the good life and to be witnesses that change the world come from *becoming partakers of the divine nature!*

This is not written by the Peter, who was so fearful that he denied even knowing Jesus. This is written decades later as Peter faces his own martyrdom. This is written by the Peter, who not only had heard Jesus' teaching, but also lived out his teaching with the power of the divine nature living inside him.

Conclusion: This is where we are going over the next seven weeks. We will be reading the rest of this first chapter of 2nd Peter as well as Jesus teaching in Luke. We'll see not only what Jesus taught, but how Peter says he lived it out. We'll discover the **good life** made possible by the **God-life**.

Illustration - Why It Matters: Tell Earl's story of the snotty "Christians" who came to his restaurant this morning. They called themselves "Christians" without the power of the God-life changing them. Even Earl said, "It would have been better if they called themselves something else, like steel-worker union members!" If we don't know about and participate in the God-life, we can actually do damage to our faith. We can become *anti-witnesses*.

This is Resurrection Day... not just for us, but for everyone we come into contact with. We are to be witnesses. Jesus' resurrection is not just the end of the story. It is the beginning of the story - for us and everyone we come into contact with.

Prayer.

Christy sings, "Oh Glorious Day."

Communion.