

Experiencing Joy

Scripture Reading — Philippians 3:7-14

I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his res-urrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

—Philippians 3:10 —

The apostle Paul made clear that his greatest joy was found in knowing Jesus. Even more specifically, his rejoicing was in Jesus' death and resurrection, noting "participation in his sufferings." Another Bible version refers to this as "the fellowship of his sufferings." Paul wanted to know how Jesus had suffered for sin, and how he had then also conquered death.

Jesus' death and resurrection go hand in hand. Without the resurrection, the cross wouldn't mean anything. Jesus would be just another of the countless people put to death by the Romans.

But in raising Jesus from the dead, God was saying, "I accept his sacrifice. His death was the 'once for all' payment for sin [see Hebrews 7:27]. The fact that I've raised him from the dead is my stamp of approval on his sacrifice."

Without the resurrection, we're left with nothing. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:14: "If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith." And just a few lines later he adds, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile ... we are of all people most to be pitied" (1 Corinthians 15:17, 19).

Keeping Sabbath is about experiencing the joy of Jesus' death and resurrection!

Prayer

Thank you, God, for Jesus. In his death my sin has been paid for; and in raising him from the dead, you have promised me new life. Help me rejoice in his suffering and resurrection. Amen.

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