
The Present Greatness of Christ

By David Wilkerson

March 15, 2010 Dearly Beloved:

FEELING TRAPPED

I have excerpted the following letter from one of our readers. I believe it describes feelings that many Christians are experiencing right now.

Pastor David:

Your blog has been of great comfort these past few months. My family was dealt a devastating blow yesterday that has left us staggering under pain and confusion about God's promises to us.

My parents have spent the last thirty years following God. When they married they offered their all to the Lord. This path has led them down a rough road. Their belief and great desire was ultimately to return to their hometown and create a place where God would allow them to minister to people who were weary and at the end of their strength.

Just as they finally seemed close to entering God's promises to them, earlier this year my mother was diagnosed with bowel cancer. We continued to believe that God had his hand on the situation – even until yesterday, when she died from the disease.

My brother and I have been closely linked with our parents' pain. As we have watched, it has been a testing place for our faith as to the provision and faithfulness of God. We know that God is the Lord over all, but it seems as though an iron sky of Satan's control robs people of God's blessing and life. People are trapped in pain and hopelessness, with no expectation of God's miraculous protection or offer of life.

It is as though we are like elderly Abraham – only our son Isaac has been sacrificed, and after many long years we have no Option B. We held onto the hope that God would see us through, but this blow has robbed us and sent all of God's promises spinning. After relying on the Lord, it feels as if he has left us in a place of uncertainty. We don't know if we were deceived or how to handle the collapse of the future. Great fear and concern swirls around us. If you could pray for us, I would be very grateful.

I know this woman speaks for many burdened believers. Here is how I answer her and all others who face similar confusion and pain:

I too have friends and family who feel trapped in pain and hopelessness, without expectation of deliverance. They still love God but they are convinced all their options are gone. They feel destined to a life robbed of hope or change.

Perhaps you know what I'm talking about. We run out of words to describe our pain. Sometimes we can't even pray, as if we are beyond all feelings. Yet deep inside our soul cries out for a word from God. We can't hear another sermon or another word from man; what we hunger for is a clear personal word from the Lord. We know that this alone can bring us peace and assurance: just one

word from his throne.

Let me share with you the word God has given me: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.... For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:12, 14).

Enter into his rest. You are sharing in the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our thanks to all who remember our missions to the poor, fatherless, widows and orphans around the world. For information on these many outreaches visit our website:

www.worldchallenge.org/missions .

In Christ,
DAVID WILKERSON

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Newsletter: The Present Greatness of Christ

March 15, 2010 I want you to consider a prayer that Paul expressed for the church of Jesus Christ. He prayed, "May God reveal to you not just the past greatness of Christ but his *present greatness*."

Here is Paul's specific prayer: "That ye may know... what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power" (Ephesians 1:18-19).

The church today has a great reverence for the Jesus who walked on earth. I'm referring to the Galilean, the son of Mary, the teacher and miracle worker. We never grow weary of hearing and telling of the greatness of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

We love to remind ourselves of how this Jesus chased demons and stood strong against all temptations. He opened blind eyes, unstopped deaf ears, caused paralytics to leap, restored withered arms, healed lepers. He turned water into wine, fed multitudes with just a few loaves and fishes, and on more than one occasion he raised the dead.

Yet, at some point in history, Christians began to limit the present power of our great, miracle-working Savior. The church developed a theology that made Christ God of the spiritual but not of the natural.

Let me give you an example. In the present day, we believe Jesus can forgive our sins and relieve our guilt. We believe he can provide us with peace and joy and even give us eternal life. And he does all of this in the unseen, invisible world.

But not many of us know Jesus as God of the natural world we live in. We often don't know him as Lord over our everyday affairs, as God of our home, our children and marriage, our job and bills.

Paul is telling us we need a revelation of Jesus' power since the time Christ was raised from the dead. And right now Jesus is set at the right hand of God, with all power given to him in heaven and on earth. "(God) hath put all things under his feet" (1:22).

As I read this passage now, the Holy Spirit rouses my heart with a powerful truth: "Jesus has never been more powerful than he is right now." Moreover, according to Paul, Christ is "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (1:21).

If we truly believe this, the implications for us are awesome. You see, the Christ of Galilee never gave up on the dead. Indeed, there was no greater evidence of Jesus' power on earth than when he conquered death. He demonstrated time after time that he has all power over death.

"As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth [gives back life to] them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will" (John 5:21). Jesus not only claimed to have power over death, saying, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," he proved it!

Dare we believe what Jesus said about resurrection life? “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; *so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself*” (John 5:25–26, my italics).

When Jesus spoke these words, he wasn’t referring only to the final resurrection. He was showing us his present power to raise up what has died and to flood us with life.

The truth is, we all have a secret graveyard in our lives. I’m talking about someone or something we gave up on long ago. We have buried it, placed a tombstone over it and written the date of death on it.

I think of a dear acquaintance who told my wife and me about going to her children’s graduation ceremony. This is a woman whose husband had left her years before for another woman. At the graduation, he and his new wife showed up, along with all his relatives.

How difficult it was for her. At that point, our friend’s former marriage was beyond resurrection. Yet as she sat within a few feet of her ex-husband and his new wife, God made this woman go back to the gravesite of her marriage. And she began to pray for the salvation of her former husband, as well as for his wife.

Why would she do this? She wanted him resurrected from the death of sin. You see, because she knows Christ, she refuses to give up on the dead. She knows Jesus has present-day resurrection power to bring life out of death.

Jesus never gives up on the dead. Our Lord brings life out of death. All that is needed is his word, his breath, and suddenly what appears dead and hopeless comes to new life.

I know a father who grieves over his sixteen-year-old daughter who is hooked on crack. She once was so innocent and loving, enjoying long walks with her father and deep talks about faith. But now she stays out on the streets, selling her body to support her drug habit. Her body is emaciated; in a sense she is more dead than alive.

Her father loves her deeply, weeping over her high school picture. These days, he has given up hope. He waits for the dreaded phone call when the voice of a stranger asks him, “Are you the father of...? Please come to the morgue.”

But Jesus never gives up on the dead! He has all power to save this girl from the grave of drugs. Thousands like her have been raised from addictions of all kinds.

A grieving father named Jairus once came to Jesus for healing of his dying daughter. His little girl was on the very brink of death. “There cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet, and besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the

point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him" (Mark 5:22–24).

Clearly, Jairus had a good measure of faith. He urged Jesus, "Come, lay hands on her, and she'll be healed." What an affirmation of his faith, revealing Jairus' deep belief: "My daughter only needs Jesus' touch. He has all power. He can keep her from death."

I believe Jairus' attitude represents most Christians today. When we are in a deep crisis, we know Jesus is our only hope. And so we run to him in our need, falling at his feet and seeking his mercy and help.

Jesus responded to Jairus' faith by going with him. Can you imagine the great hope that must have filled that grieving man's heart? Yet, at the same time, I believe a terrible thought might have struck Jairus: "What if we're too late? It's wonderful to have Jesus by my side. But we need time. With every step we take back to my house, life is seeping out of my daughter."

In our own crises, most of us say the same thing Jairus did: "I need you, Jesus. But we are running out of time." Had Jairus known who Jesus was — the Resurrection and the Life — he would have rested at heart. He could have reassured his troubled spirit, "Jesus exists outside of time. We don't need time. We only need him!"

Jesus permitted time to run out for Jairus. The Lord wants more from us than a faith that extends only to the point of death. Jesus desires faith in his resurrection power. I'm talking about a power that reaches beyond death, beyond hopelessness.

The nominal believers in Jairus' household had a limited faith. They believed only to the point of death. As long as there was a little life left in the girl, a little bit of hope, Jesus was wanted and needed. Their plea was, "We believe Jesus is the great physician and healer. But we need him to hurry. Our little one may die at any minute. We won't need him then!"

I ask you, what kind of faith is this? It is faith only to the point of hopelessness. It believes only to the grave. And that isn't faith at all.

Jairus' daughter did die. I envision someone taking the little girl's pulse and pronouncing her dead. What little faith those people had was now gone. And the first order of business was to notify the healer he was not needed. They sent this message to Jesus: "There came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: *why troublest thou the Master any further?*" (Mark 5:35, my italics).

The words seem so final: "Thy daughter is dead." Tell me, are similar words ringing in your ears over something that has died in your life? "Your marriage is dead. There's no use going to God about it." "Your ministry is dead. It does no good to pray." "Your child is dead in sin. Let him go." "Your

relationship to that loved one is dead. Get over it.”

No! All these dreaded words mean absolutely nothing to Jesus. He never gives up on the dead. I am talking about spiritual death. He is resurrection life for what we think is dead.

How did Jesus respond to the news of Jairus’ daughter? The best translation says, “Jesus, as if he did not hear what was spoken, said to the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe” (see 5:36).

Contrast this with the finality of the message: “Why troublest thou the Master any further?” In other words, “Why hold on when it’s all over? It’s a dead issue now. Leave it alone.” But it is never over with Jesus.

If Jairus had listened to such doubt, how do you think he would have responded to Jesus? “Thanks, Lord, I know you meant well. Maybe she would have lived if we hadn’t been delayed by that bleeding woman who touched the hem of your garment. I really did have faith. I believed if we had made it home while she was still breathing, she would have lived.”

When Jesus was called upon to heal Lazarus, he faced the same kind of limited faith. “When Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died” (John 11:32). The passage goes on to show that Mary and her friends had faith only to the point of death. “Some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?” (11:37).

To them, Jesus was only needed to the edge of death. Neither Mary nor Martha nor a single person at that grave site had faith in Christ as the resurrection and the life.

As I read the account of what happened when Jesus arrived at Jairus’ house, I am amazed. What a terrible scene it was. There was total confusion, doubt, fear and wailing. “He cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly” (Mark 5:38).

When Jesus arrived, the people there acted as if he were just a mourner who’d come to pay his last respects. I can hear them whispering, “At least he’s decent enough to come to the funeral. Better late than never.”

Do you wonder why there is so much commotion in the lives of so many of us Christians? Why such grieving and mourning? It is because we don’t believe Jesus can resurrect what seems dead. If we’re honest, many of us will admit there are times we don’t believe Jesus knows what he’s doing. We don’t believe he has a life-giving plan for us. We think he’s too late, that things are too far gone.

This attitude rose up when Jesus told Jairus’ household to have hope. “He saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth” (5:39). Here was the mourners’

reaction: "*They laughed him to scorn*" (5:40, my italics).

As I picture those doubters, I want to ask them, "What are you laughing at? Why have you given up? Hold on! Trust him. He can raise her up. That has been his plan all along."

Think of it: These were the same praying people who waited in faith for Jesus to come. Just an hour earlier they declared, "Jesus is our answer. He is the solution to our trouble. Go and fetch him!" Now these same believers laughed at him scornfully. With the little girl dead, they simply ignored him. To them he was just another man.

Today, many of us are just as guilty as that doubting crowd of mourners. Isn't this true of many of us as well? We cry out to God in our trouble. We demand that he answer us before it's too late. Then, when our answer doesn't come on time, we become mourners. We tremble before the power of the devil, as if demons have won the victory. We conclude, "Jesus lost this battle. The devil won in the end."

I tell you, it is not enough to love, serve and worship Christ only to the point of hopelessness. Why don't we trust him *once all hope is gone*? I ask that of myself. Why don't we trust him when it looks like we'll never get a job? When it appears humanly impossible for us to go on?

Let me ask you: What if Jesus walked into your present situation? What would he find? Would you still grieve over your situation? Would your heart be in the same turmoil as those mourners at Jairus' house?

Or, would you say to Jesus, "Lord, it looks so hopeless. I was about to give up. But you are the same today as you were at the house of Jairus. You can heal this problem. You are the resurrection and the life. You can bring life out of death!"

Note what Jesus did at Jairus' house: "When he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying" (Mark 5:40).

Whom did Jesus gather to himself but "them that were with him." This means those who believed in him: his disciples as well as the girl's believing parents. They all were there to see him bring life out of death.

Note too that Christ wasn't interested in showing his power to the unbelieving. In fact, after he raised the little girl to life, he told those around him, "No man should know it" (5:43). In other words: "Don't tell others what you saw. The miracle is between us in this room."

Tell me, dear saint, when Jesus works your miracle, as he did for Jairus, and for Mary and Martha, will you be in the room alongside others who believe him? Or will you be on the outside? I want to be on

the inside when Jesus works life. I want to be on the faith side!

Jesus has never been more willing to show his resurrection power than he is right now. Our faith simply has to go beyond the point of death. We must look into the very face of all that is dead and proclaim, "Jesus never gives up on that which appears to be dead." We need a faith that refuses to give up on anyone or anything, no matter how hopeless the situation seems.

Christ will astonish us by his power. Indeed, if you hold on in unswerving faith, you are in for a glorious manifestation of his resurrection life. Only you and the Lord will know all the intimate workings of his miracle. But he will astonish and thrill you as he shows you his great glory.

Scripture says we have been provided the very same energizing, resurrection life that is in Christ: "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:11). He infuses our mortal bodies with physical strength through the very energy of God.

"You, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened [made alive] together with him" (Colossians 2:13). "But God... for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us [made us alive] together with Christ" (Ephesians 2:4-5). "It is the Spirit that quickeneth [makes us come alive]" (John 6:63). "The last Adam was made a quickening spirit" (1 Corinthians 15:45).

Titus speaks of "the renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). "So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Psalm 103:5).

How clear is his message to us: The Holy Spirit dwells in us to bring forth his constant life. That is Christ's present greatness. Believe in him.

YOUR SITUATION IS NOT HOPELESS. KEEP THE FAITH!

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