

# Life in Resurrection

by John Nelson Darby

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*The Christian's life is in resurrection, quickened and risen with Christ, and identified with Him in all things.*

**Scripture:** Colossians 3:1

**Topics:** "Identity in Christ", "Resurrection Life"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the transformative power of resurrection life for Christians, asserting that believers are raised with Christ and thus possess a new identity and position in Him. He explains that this resurrection life brings joy, comfort, and a profound connection to God, contrasting it with the state of being dead in sins. Darby warns that without this new life, individuals remain alienated from God, highlighting the necessity of recognizing one's personal sin and the significance of Christ's sacrifice. He encourages believers to live in the reality of their resurrection, seeking heavenly things and embodying the love and righteousness of Christ. Ultimately, he assures that through faith, believers are justified and will share in Christ's glory at His return.

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## Transcript

LIFE IN RESURRECTION

COLOSSIANS 3 : 1-4

THE great principle upon which a Christian stands is as to what is his life, and from whence it flows. The Christian is said to be raised from the dead-to have risen with Christ and whatever is not thus quickened and risen is not of Christ " He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." All blessing and comfort is associated with this life in resurrection. There is the entering on a new position, and the setting aside for ever all previous and natural situation.

The apostle alludes to this in the preceding chapter where he says, " And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." And again, in chapter 3: 1: " If ye then be risen with Christ." The principle of life flows then from this : that he is dead, dead with Christ, quickened with Christ, risen with Christ ; thus manifesting his practical identification with Christ in all things.

In Ephesians 2 it is said, " You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins ' " to manifest " what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his

mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead." The same power which wrought in Christ's resurrection is effectual for the spiritual resurrection of His people. " God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ ... and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

The Christian then, being quickened with Christ, has the resurrection-life of Christ, and is privileged to sit in Him in heavenly places, unto eternal life, as Christ is now sitting at the right hand of God ; and the consequence of this position, when made known to the soul, is to bring in a rich revenue of joy and comfort, even " joy and peace in believing."

Now, where an individual is not in this position, it is just to be under all his trespasses and sins-to have them upon himself. He is a sinner, as all are ; but he is nothing else than a sinner in thought, principle, affection, and standing; all that he is, and he is nothing else. Perhaps he may not outwardly have manifested as much sin as others. He may have been restrained by regard to decorum ; he may not have been placed in such circumstances as to draw it out equally with others. He may not have had the opportunity as others of appearing as great a sinner, but still he is a sinner, and nothing else. If he has committed, in thought, word, or act, one sin, that is the evidence that he is a sinner, as one bad fruit evidences the unsoundness of the tree. Where did he get the inclination to transgress ? No union of outward circumstances could have brought forth what was not within.

Now there is no association of principle with God as long as man remains in that state ; but it decidedly manifests his departure from God. It was that which caused Adam to be driven out from the presence of God ; actual transgression, arising from dissociation of principle from God ; and all Adam's responsible posterity have actually transgressed ; and so their natural position is, alienation from God : and except those who have received the new life, being dead with Christ and risen with Him-that is just the position and standing of every individual. There is no difference of their being driven out all were driven out in Adam. As it says in Romans, " There is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

There is one grand sin which leads men to the commission of 0 others-the desire to please -themselves. If this has once been acted on, it constitutes that man a sinner ; just as the breach of one law of the land stamps a man a criminal. We do not require him to run through the transgression of every law in the statute book in order to bring him in guilty ; his having broken one is the evidence of his guilt : we need no further proof. While acting then on this as a principle, we are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. There is no life, no love, in us as our Saviour said to those by whom He was surrounded : I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you." Now this is the real fact, that there is no assimilation to God in man's natural state ; but the contrary principle-hatred, enmity.

Now this is the position of every individual of the human race, until called out of the general mass by divine grace. He is sprung from Adam, associated with him in his sin, as to its guilt and condemnation, belongs to that has the guilt not only of leaving God but of positi world w c Him. That is the world he loves, belongs to, vely rejectilli'g and forms a part of; and whether his transgressions are few or great, he is doomed to destruction, if he continue so to the end. Just as in the case of the flood : doubtless there was a wide difference in the amount of actual transgressions among the sinful inhabitants of the world at that time ; but none were saved but Noah. Many might even have bid fair to be saved, so as to be near the ark, but none were saved except such as were in the ark. So in Sodom: many had not so openly exhibited their

enmity to God as others, and yet, in the general conflagration, Lot alone escaped; and why? Just because all the others, without distinction, were opposed to God-were quite opposite to Him in every principle, and consequently had come to that state of exclusion from God's presence.

If so, we are at present without God in the world ; and to be for ever without Him is perfect misery. And is not this really the present position of the world, though they are unconscious of it ? There is a veil cast on futurity, as it regards them. They are occupied in the pleasures, amusements, profits, and pursuits of a Christ-rejecting world. But when the veil is raised, then will their position be disclosed. And whosoever is of Christ will have Christ's portion ; they will enter on the enjoyment of that portion, which by faith they now see is prepared for them.

By faith alone have we any of these exceeding great promises now. Now is the time for us to ascertain by faith our personal identification with Christ. Now are we to know our interest in Him. The time is coming, yea, swiftly coming, when we shall know even as we are known ; and as we are now quickened, raised, brought forth, what should be the effects but to manifest our identification with Christ, in a union so close and abiding that Paul says, " We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones " ?

Christ went down into death for our transgressions, though holy, yet accounted guilty. He did suffer the penalty of sin, and was brought " into the dust of death." He became dead. Having thus put away sin, He rose again-He is a risen Christ. A risen Christ is one that was dead ; and it is with a risen Christ that we have now to do. This state of blessedness He reveals to the soul by the Spirit of truth. He reveals what He had done in man's estate for man : as having borne our sins, and thus evidencing that " the wages of sin is death." The believer then knows experimentally what Christ was doing here. He was bearing sin on the cross, and making sacrifice of Himself to the justice of God It pleased Jehovah to bruise him."

Now there is the point on which the Christian rests : the power of the recognition of God's pleasure and God's approbation in the sufferings and sacrifice of Christ ; the point at which we feel the woes of Jesus inflicted : not the external perception, irrespective of a personal interest in His unexampled afflictions, such as the daughters of Jerusalem felt, when they bewailed and lamented Him. " Daughters of Jerusalem," said He, " weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

To weep in tender sympathy for human sufferings and woe does not testify a union of sentiment with God; but the recognition of the wherefore " it pleased Jehovah to bruise him," leading us to sorrow for those sins, and to rejoice at the Lord's approbation of their removal. This is a godly affection ; this brings to the soul a perception of Christ's woes, when He says, " Thou hast brought me into the dust of death." When the cup of suffering was presented to Him, mixed up with the bitterness of our sins-holy, yet agonised-sinless, yet bruised : does not this present us with the view God must take of sin ? When we see, not the perpetrator, but the bearer of sin only, exposed to such unexampled sufferings ; and yet where, in what position, can we perceive so clearly and completely the riches of divine grace, and love, and mercy, as here ?-" He spared not his own Son."

It is not merely the fact that He was left as it were to the unmitigated rage of man ; it was not merely that Adam's sinful race were permitted to " persecute and take him " ; but God Himself withdrew the comfortable perception of the light of His countenance, which extorted from Him that bitter cry, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" The prophet, in the prospect of this event, declares in Isaiah 53. " He had done no violence, neither was deceit found in his mouth : yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him "-and why ?

There -must have been some great concern passing between heaven and earth ; some wonderful transaction pending between God and man; some immense negotiation which was now to be decided, sufficient to awaken the world, an into which the very " angels desire to look." There must have been a something great and tremendous to have had such consequences attached to it ; to have seen Him of whom the Father's testimony was, " This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased "; and yet " pleased to bruise him! "

When this great mystery is understood (and none but a believer can enter into the spiritual perception of it), the soul is brought out of a state of death and darkness, and is translated into life and light. It then sees and feels what it was that caused the Father to bruise Him' and the Son willing to be bound. When the believer sees Christ reduced to that state of suffering as to cry, " Now is my soul troubled ' " then the believer himself experiences something of this soul-trouble; when he hears Him exclaim, " The waters are come in, even unto my soul! " and sees Christ " sore amazed, and very heavy," then he participates in spirit in it ; he sees, feels, believes it ; and, seeing in it the evidence of the love- of Christ, is glad, and rejoices.

And now, what were all these sufferings about ? Sin, sin was the cause of all, and such sin as to draw down such fearful consequences on the bearer of it-how tremendous! Now, if we are not such wrath-deserving sinners, for whom was it undertaken ? Assuredly not for us. If we have not come to the consciousness that our individual sins were so aggravated that in full justice they deserved what was laid on Jesus; that as He was bearing our sin, so was He bearing the penalty of it ; if we are not brought to see these sins as ours, and the guilt of them ours, we have no consciousness of assimilation or union with Christ. If any of you can say, I know nothing of this soul-trouble, this does not describe my feelings and state, then what have you to do with the promises of eternal life to the miserable, wretched, sinful ? If you can say, It is not so with me ; I do not think myself so bad as to draw down such heavy judgments upon me individually; I am not worse than others, and sin is not such a grief to me ; then assuredly all these sufferings and agony and woe cannot be manifestly about you.

If the consciousness of it has not been to make you " sore amazed and very heavy," troubled and oppressed, then is Christ crucified no concern as yet of yours. But if we have seen and received the truth, that the death of Christ was the wages of our sins ; if we have seen and understood the meaning and sense of His sufferings and death, and by appropriation can lay claim to them as ours, then the resurrection comes home to our souls with a quickening and revivifying power.

if we have seen Him really bearing the consequences of our sins, brought into the dust of death for us ; if we can experimentally understand Christ on the tree, bearing the heavy burden of His people's sins-so heavy, that they bore Him to the very dust of death and brought Him low, even to the grave; if we can see Him rising without them, having put them away by His precious blood ; then are we in a state to enter into the perception of that glorious privilege, " having forgiven you all trespasses." Though our sins brought Him down to the grave, yet they could not hold Him there, " because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." He rose, having triumphed over sin; He left sin no longer on His people or Himself, but washed it all away, never to appear against them, never again to draw down heaven's wrath.

The grave then has borne witness with us that He was dead that He put away sin, rose above it and every enemy : the full tide of His people's iniquity was here expiated, and for ever! Eternal justice poured down the punishment which sin deserved, until sin was no more. Christ, having risen from the dead, became the living witness that the justice and truth of God were for ever satisfied. Had there been one sin unatoned

for, there the surety must have remained. " Thou shalt not depart thence till thou hast paid the very last mite " : that is what the law exacts ; but the penalty was paid in all its demands, and eternal justice perfectly satisfied.

There was no more required, nothing more demanded and all this in perfect accordance with the purpose, counsel, and determination of God. The sins were owned, were confessed in penitence and shame, were mourned over, and the bearer held up to heaven, on which were to be inflicted the terrible effects of God's wrath. That wrath He met, and thus for ever settled the question between God and sin.

There is no more suffering for sin ; the controversy is now at an end for ever. Now the believer has done with sin, as regards God's anger and condemnation ; he also is risen, risen with Christ-has recognised it as his sin which is put away by the Redeemer-that He was accounted the guilty one. Seeing this, he sees his sin put away; if he did not, it would be to suppose that the sufferings were not commensurate to the extent of sin ; that the death of the victim has not expiated all; that it is not all done away with; but he believer, who is conscious of having risen with Christ, sees sin gone, forgot to no more to be remembered. It is actually gone as regards (believers) ; and in that position we are actually standing the presence of God, justified from all things, risen with Him without sin unto salvation, brought up before God in a justified state.

Who then can (or shall) lay anything to the charge of God's elect ? It is God Himself that justifieth ; it is Christ Himself that died, yea rather, that is risen ; nay in Him His people a complete, and made one by virtue of union with Him her How solid is the ground for peace, and an occasion for great rejoicing, " He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Now we see that this mighty transaction was a about us, and that we are the person interested in it. Now indeed we see why Christ became incarnate, suffered, and died : it was for us and for us to He rose again. The moment we can, by faith, see our personal interest in the sinless sufferings of Christ, that moment we have the certainty of our redemption ; we taste of the cup which He drank, and are associated with Him in all He did and suffered.

Having seen what we belonged to as heirs of the first Adam, "by nature children of wrath, even as others," we now see our entrance on another position, as heirs of the second Adam; we see that, as we did belong to that system of whose members it is said, " They have all gone out of the way " ; and that " there is none good, no, not one " ; and that " they drink in iniquity like water " ; believers can say, " Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"; they are now translated into another state, another system of things ; they are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God " ; they have heard the voice of the Son of God, and live ; they live the life of Christ ; and though this life is not fully exhibited in this present dispensation, yet it is a real true life.

There is more truth in God's life than in man's life : it is not a name, a voice, a notion, but eternal life, that very life which Christ has now, that very life which is without end, that we have. " He that hath the Son hath life " ; he has it now : there is no such thing as shall, as regards our possession of it. " He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life"; and is not the believer called upon, by these wonderful mercies, by this stupendous grace, to exhibit his possession of this eternal life ? He is. And how ? The apostle says, " Seek those things which are above," Col. 3 : 3.

Now, brethren in the Lord Jesus, are you doing so ? Are you dead now to all that you were conscious of being alive to before ? It is true, your life is hid now to sight, you see it not ; but " blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." It is, nevertheless, a certain life ; and when Christ who is our life

shall appear, then shall they who have been quickened by the life-giving power of the Son of God appear with Him ; then will it be seen that there is, and there can be, "no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." Of this they are now conscious, for " he that believeth hath the witness in himself." Yes, they have the eternal Spirit testifying to the believer of the truth of God, making known to him his personal identification with Christ, his oneness with Him, as well as his perfect acceptance and justification in consequence of His work.

In the sensible enjoyment of this the believer lives, and walks accordingly. He lives, subject to this new life which he derives from Christ ; it has its desires, affections, and objects of delight. Your natural life has its likings and attractions, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"; and so has the life of God-Christ in glory, having triumphed over every enemy, and holiness and happiness with Him in heaven : these are our objects, our desires-the affections tend upwards to them.

Suppose a person now alive with Christ in glory, what would be his desires, feelings, and pursuits ? Just similar, then, should be that of those who are alive with Him with that life which Christ gives. The glory of God should be their one end and aim. They have not merely the forfeited life which Adam lost, but eternal life.

The peculiar joy of the believer is the consciousness that he stands before God as Jesus stands ; that he is a partaker of that love which God has for Jesus. So prayed Christ, " that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." Where can we know anything of this love but in Jesus ? The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father He alone declares it. He brings it to our souls as one that knows it Himself, and tells us that God has loved us as He loves Him.

Here then is the position of the Christian, and it is a position of deep blessedness, everlasting blessedness, to stand as Christ stands before God, without the shadow or imputation of sin, perfectly justified, to be loved with the same love. This is wondrous blessing ; and this is Christ's joy and delight, to bring them into the same blessedness with Himself, as happy as Himself. It is His very rejoicing to come and make known to the soul these great and inestimable privileges, to reveal Himself and the Father by the eternal Comforter ; and, notwithstanding the weariness of the flesh, the body of corruption, and the many, many hindrances to the enjoyment of this privileged spiritual existence, yet doth grace triumph over all in the soul of the believer, enabling him in faith to enter into the appropriation of Christ's declaration : " My Father and your Father, my God and your God." Standing as in the presence of God, free from all condemnation, resulting from what Christ has done and suffered, having made reconciliation for iniquity and brought in everlasting righteousness. Now faith realises this ; it recognises the justice of God satisfied, and His love well pleased ; it rests on this, and lives in the enjoyment of it.

Now do you believe this ? If you do, what practical effects has it led to ? Are you dead to the world ? Would you like to be dead ? Would you feel it painful to be as dead to the world as Christ is now? There can be no assimilation to heaven in the things, desires, and pursuits of this world. The world does not like heaven, nor anything belonging to heaven: such is the judgment that was passed on it ; it was proved when the Lord came down from heaven, and they turned Him out of the world. God had one Son; there was just one thing in heaven with which God would try man; " I have yet one Son, it may be they will reverence him." But no ; they would not let Christ have the world, neither would they have Him. Men did not like Him; He was not the portion they wanted, and therefore they got rid of Him.

Now we must either have the portion of the world, or Christ's portion. Happy they who have the Lord for their portion! Happy they who are dead to all the little gilded toys of the world, which Satan has scattered around in order to entrap us! All the blessings and fulness of the Father's love are in Christ's portion ; but then He is a Saviour that is dead to every other portion ; soon will this be, not a hidden treasure, but a manifested one. He is now gathering out of the world His own, picking them out from among all nations, testifying His unwearied patience and forbearance towards still unpunished sinners ; but when the last saint has been brought into the church, Christ Himself will then appear, to the Joy of those who have confessed His name here and borne testimony to His truth, who have been content to give up all for Him. it will be then quite another scene from what the world anticipates, quite another dispensation ; and what the saints have been waiting for will then be accomplished - " the manifestation of the sons of God."

Have you believed this ? If you have, do you act on it ? Are you looking for, and hastening towards, the appearing of the glory of the Lord ? Are you conscious of being dead to that world which crucified Christ ? When you say, We are " risen with Christ," are you conscious of a distaste to, a dissociation from, those things that crucified Him ) or are you alive to a judged world ? are you favouring that world ? If you are, then are you fit assessors over it ? for the word of God declares, " the saints shall judge the world." " They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." " If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." " Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

If you are one with Christ, walk in the privileges of that union, and " when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

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