

THE BLESSINGS OF THE RESURRECTION

- 3 **Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.**
 4 **One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.**
 5 **They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—
 and I will meditate on your wonderful works.**
 6 **They tell of the power of your awesome works— and I will proclaim your great deeds.**
 7 **They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.**
 8 **The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.**
 9 **The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.**

My sinfulness, only God can fathom. One generation passes along its sin to another; they share their wicked works. They covet one another's abundance, they make the Lord's anger grow. And yet he has had compassion on us. He sent his Son to atone for our sins. Jesus died on the cross to rescue me and you from our wretched sinfulness. "He is risen. He is risen indeed. Hallelujah!"

Here we have a song that speaks of the greatest works God had accomplished without naming them. We are rescued from the burden of sin, the guilt, the shame, the consequences of our sinfulness-- this is a greater work even than our creation, because it means the salvation of our souls. The three chief foundations of this salvation that God has worked are these; each from a different person of the Trinity:

1. The Father's love has rescued us from our sin. His love set everything toward our salvation in motion.
2. The sacrifice of God the Son atoned for our sin and showed the Father's acceptance of that sacrifice. His resurrection gives us the hope and the certainty of our own resurrection.
3. The Holy Spirit works in our lives, to bring us to faith, to sustain our faith through the means of grace, and he blesses us with new life, strength, and opportunities to serve God, and he lives in us, in both your spirit and in your flesh, to guide you and to give glory to the Father. You are his temple.

These foundations are celebrated by David's words: "**Your abundant goodness,**" and it was God the Father's abundant goodness and love that set the whole plan of our salvation in motion. And David quotes the Lord's own description of himself that he made to Moses as

he passed in front of the prophet on Mount Sinai: **“The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love”**. This was his promise to carry out his grace and compassion in an active way, a way to be felt and known to all mankind. This was the promise of the suffering and death of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Most of the verses of this part of Psalm 145 explain the work of the Holy Spirit, which is the carrying of the gospel to the world through the word and through our preaching and teaching. **“One generation commends your works to another, they tell of your mighty acts; They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty.”**

This preaching work, spurred on by the Holy Spirit, was first carried out publicly in the days when Adam’s grandchildren were being born. Already then, when Adam and Eve could perhaps still have counted and named every human being in the world, some of their descendants were beginning to turn away from God, and others needed encouragement and instruction, and we are told that men like Seth, Adam’s son, began to preach and teach and to call on the name of the Lord.

But from Seth to Malachi, the message remained unchanged: The descendant of Eve would come and crush the head of the serpent, destroying the power of the devil in death, in sin, and even in temptation. Year after year the message was preached. It was heard by all, embraced by some, rejected by many, and increasingly more and more. Years became generations, and generations became centuries, and then millennia as thousands of years passed.

But then, one day, someone told his neighbor: They say the Messiah has come. He’s been teaching in Galilee for two summers, and some said he’s across the Jordan now. And as the neighbor carried on with his daily chores, wondering if this could be true, someone else came to say: “That man they thought was the Messiah was killed by the Romans. No, really. This was a month ago.” But others begin to talk about that man being seen in public. He isn’t dead. He has risen!

In ancient times, Abraham, Moses, Job, David, and the prophets spoke about the resurrection from the dead. Not the resurrection the Greeks and Romans talked about, the resurrection of the spirit into some kind of afterlife, or the reincarnation they teach in the East and in most of today’s video games, but no, this was the resurrection of the body, the rising of the flesh from the grave!

Christ rose in the flesh! David describes the kind of scene when this message was passed along: **“They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty-- I will meditate.”** So listen again to the way David describes his life: **“They speak... I will meditate.”** When we hear

about what God has done, it is better to consider it, to think about, even to catalogue it in the mind, than to start speaking up yourself and perhaps wash away the memory of the good thing that was just spoken. Consider, as you listen, that perhaps not every thinks as quickly as you do. Be compassionate to them. Don't fill every silence with the sound of your voice, or else the sound of your voice might become poison to your friends. They will shudder when you speak because you never stop, and they will begin to avoid your company. The blessings of the resurrection are what we meditate on today:

- Our bodies will be spiritual. Not that they will be spirit only; they will be flesh. But they will no longer be ruled by carnal, fleshly desires. We will be governed and motivated entirely by God's will and under God's pleasure.
- Our bodies will be free from suffering. We won't be subject to physical, bodily sufferings such as hunger, thirst, pain, cold, and so on, but also to internal, mental or emotional sufferings of any kind.
- We will also have the blessing of perfect beauty; the absence of every defect. Just as the husband in the wedding Psalm, Psalm 45, is told to clothe himself "with splendor and majesty" (Ps. 45:3), so also God will clothe your risen body with this same ideal perfection.
- And what does the resurrection rescue us from? Our sinfulness, so wide and so long and so high and so deep that only God can fathom its extremes and its limits. The ripples and aftershocks of our sins continue long after we leave a place, leave a person, or leave the world in death. One generation passes along its sin to another; they share their wicked works. They covet one another's abundance; they make the Lord's anger grow.

But the great work of the Lord our God was to conquer sin and remove its effects, including death. The world thinks of a dead body and believes that a dead man is as dead as a rotten banana; nothing in the world will make it fresh again. But Christ has risen and has shown that the resurrection is not just a matter of becoming fresh again, but of becoming better; the best-- we will be as God described his creation in the beginning: "Good, and Very good."

What is Good in God's eyes is beyond our ability to describe as perfection. This is the blessing of the resurrection of the dead. We will have life with God, forgiveness of our sins, the obliteration of all cares and the results and causes of sin, and reunion with one another. Just as Adam woke from his sleep and knew Eve to be his wife, we will wake from the sleep of death and know everyone, in joyous, intimate, and everlasting companionship. Amen.