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FIRST RESURRECTION; NOT RAPTURE

God is leading us on to glory. He has shown us a way, a way we have never been before. There are mountains to climb and there are valleys to cross. But before us there is an open door. The scriptures have shown that many saviours shall come out of Zion. And on account of this, our souls can rejoice in the Lord our God. This open door no one can shut. The word of the Lord, this gospel of the kingdom shall prosper exceedingly in this city, in this nation and all over the earth, and all oppositions shall prove to be weak against the might of the Lord's Spirit and the Lord's word.

We give thanks to the Lord for the great mercies He is showing to the church and to this nation. An instance of God's saving mercies towards the church is seen in the sustained call to repentance that God has been sending for some time now unto His people; repentance from sin, from the works of the flesh, from error and various shades of unfaithfulness.

And with the word of repentance is a strong word of warning going forth. And let all that hear take this to heart. If you have known the Lord in forgiveness of sin, in assurance of salvation, then there is such a tremendous grace available to you to live above sin. And God is calling for self-inspection and great adjustments in our lives that will make Jesus Christ Lord indeed.

In particular, there are great excesses in the church systems, which border on being obstinate, taking the work of the Lord with levity. And there are things done in the courts of Christian ministry that is a shame to the gospel. God is calling us all unto repentance.

What the Spirit of prophecy is indicating is that many will be publicly disgraced. Many of the buildings where the Lord's people gather unto the Lord, witness so much of shame and uncleanness. Even in Bible schools. Terrible things are taking place in unexpected quarters. And all of these are marks of the Spiritual decay that will ultimately lead to the enthronement of evil in the visible church systems.

There is a warning. Let all that hear these words know that the Lord is strong who executes judgement in His house. The Bible says, "judgement will begin in the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17). And the only thing we can do (and this is a personal appeal)... the only thing we can do as God's

people to help ourselves, is to look into the mirror of God's word and break from everything in our lives that the word of God frowns at.

Coming into the mainstream of this meditation, our focus is on showing things that belong to the blessed hope. We are titling this meditation "First Resurrection, not Rapture". The first resurrection gives the true hope of the believer not the rapture.

We begin by asking the question, what is the first Resurrection? The Bible teaches that resurrection is a doctrine of Christ (Hebrews 6:2). But for Christ, all that are dead would have been eternally lost, for there would have been no life after death. The Bible reveals that there are six foundational doctrine of Christ: first repentance from dead words and faith towards God, second, the doctrine of baptisms and of the laying on of hands for spiritual ministry, and lastly, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgement. The six doctrines are in three pairs.

These three pairs of doctrine show in a sense, three distinct spheres of our walk with God. And when we talk of coming into the fullness, coming into the holiest of all, coming into immortality and life, receiving the change of nature which is associated with the activities of the Lord in the last days, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgement are two core doctrines that establish us in a fruitful walk with God.

1 Corinthians 15 reveals at least two resurrection: the first resurrection which is mentioned also in Revelation 20:4. By virtue of the word first, we know that there is also, at least, a second resurrection. We are shown that it will be every man in his own order, as the message of Christ comes and men open up their hearts to receive and submit to it, in this age, and in the next age.

However, the hope of the church, the highest and best, the richest and most glorious of the inheritance of the saints, come under what is called the first resurrection. And the Spirit of prophecy is indicating very strongly that men and women are already entering into this highest and best grace of redemption in growing degrees. And it is quite instructive that while God is leading some unto fullness, He is calling us into repentance. When somebody is a week old in the Lord, he ought to know and actually knows within himself, what God approves of and what He disapproves of. And we are talking especially of breaking free from the works of the flesh listed in Galatians 5:19-21.

There is the first resurrection, the hope of the church, a glorious hope. In contrast, "rapture" is a dangerous doctrine in as much as it blinds the Lord's people to the present day ministry of Christ at this time of the end, as He prepares the church for the greatest manifestation of His glory here on earth.

So, let us come to Philippians 3:7-14. We shall first of all show that the first resurrection is in two stages, the second part being time dependent. We read.

⁷But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ⁸Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ: ⁹And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. ¹⁰That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable, unto his death; ¹¹If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. ¹²Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. ¹³Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things, which are behind, and reaching

forth unto those things, which are before, ¹⁴I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul, as indicated in verse 11 had the longing for the "out-resurrection from among the dead" as the driving force in his walk with God. It certainly had an impact on his ministry too. The first resurrection, which is in two stages, is something to attain to. This should hold out an irresistible appeal to all who truly see its glory. Just so, its promise would not fail to continue to strengthen the spiritual resolve of those who accept its demands of consecration and habitual submission to the leading (rule) of the Spirit of the indwelling Christ. First resurrection secures to those who attain to it, throne placement.

Besides, for Paul, he longed to see the full process completed in him without his having to experience death. The resurrection of the body, the second stage of the process enables one who is physically alive to break free into incorruptibility and life; free from death and associated limitations. In visible physical form, yet a fully developed divine spirit clothed with incorruptibility – this is the "resurrection from among the dead" (Philippians 3:11) that Paul had unyielding passion for as attested to in our passage.

However, this second stage of the process of the first resurrection, the full responsibility of the body is dependent on two things. First, it sets in only after the first stage of the resurrection is fully (successfully) completed. We shall elaborate on this later. The second thing is that the resurrection body can only be given at the time of the Second Advent; at an hour slated for it in the divine plan. Let us add this: this is the reason why Paul did not realise his dream of being "clothed with his house, made without hands, eternal in the heavens" – the resurrection body.

What then is the first stage of the resurrection process? How is it realised? What is indicated when the first stage is completed?

The moral and spiritual excellence of the Lord Jesus Christ reproduced in the believer is the goal of the first re process. Full development of the fruit of the Spirit is the moral part. Fully worked-in divine attributes of wisdom, justice, love and power (Isaiah 11:2,3) indicate the spiritual excellence of Christ. We now proceed to restate all of the above in more words to assist comprehension.

Moral resurrection commences with experience of the washing of regeneration and renewing in the Holy Spirit, which takes place when an individual receives Jesus Christ as His Lord and personal Saviour. Before this, in an unsaved condition, man is said to be dead in trespasses and sins. The guilt of sin is forgiven; the power of sin is destroyed. With this is an impartation of the hatred for sin and the love of righteousness.

There is a further development of war against sin and coupled with the practice of righteousness, indicating sanctification experience. The grace that secures Christ, as one's sanctification will see the individual able to submit to the workings of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit begins to develop in all earnestness. In the same measure, the self-life, (propelled by the carnal mind) is gradually overcome.

In the process of time, given a faithful continuance in the above, there is an experiential deliverance from sin, and a full crystallisation of the moral perfection of Christ. This in brief is the process involved in the moral resurrection.

Spiritual resurrection has to do with the Lord imparting into our lives attributes of wisdom, knowledge and understanding, which enable us to know the mind of the Lord fully and to serve

God according to His good pleasure. The Bible says David served his generation by the will of God. So spiritual resurrection relates to knowing and sharing in the attributes of God: wisdom, knowledge, understanding, compassion, power, grace etc, possessing those graces of the Spirit in increasing measures.

This (spiritual resurrection) together with moral resurrection, constitute the first part of the First Resurrection. When fully accomplished in the believer, they qualify him or her to receive the second part of the First Resurrection (the redemption of the body), which takes place suddenly or instantaneously.

Now, let us read verses 11, 12 and 13 of Philippians 3 and see how Paul declares that it is as we take on more and more of the moral and spiritual beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ, that we are qualified to receive the second part of the resurrection. This consists of the resurrection of the body, the redemption of the body: the body being lifted from corruptibility and mortality to incorruptibility and life.

That second aspect is sudden, not gradual, incorruptibility. It is something God reveals at the time of Jesus' Epiphaneia. He imparts that element of total change, at the time of the Epiphaneia. And believers may enter into the experience only when that time sets in.

But, let us see how verses 11-13 of Philippians read and that will help us. Verse 11 says *if by any means I might attain unto...* So, it is something that is to be attained to. Grace is at work, but not submitting to the grace of God is like receiving the grace of God in vain. And the grace of God is a Teacher, a Saviour (Titus 2:11); it continues to lead us into the image and likeness of Christ in everything.

So, Paul here says, "if by any means I might attain". There was something to be attained unto; it is moral and spiritual resurrection. If he attains to this, then there will be a breaking free from death. The phrase "the resurrection of the dead" in verse 11 is "out resurrection", a resurrection out from among the dead ones, an experience that would lift him up so that he becomes a full grown spirit man, coming into incorruptibility and life.

In verse 12 he says *not as though I have already attained, either was already perfect*. He knew he must continue to grow up until he comes to the fullness of Christ. Then God will do his part of bringing total change to wit, the redemption of the body.

True enough as we shall show, there is a work of the Spirit of God in our bodies from the time of salvation to the time we experience in full, the moral and spiritual resurrection. Divine healing and divine health results from the work of the Spirit in our bodies as we cleave by faith to the testimony of Christ in this regard; but the redemption of our bodies is sudden, terminating the ageing process. It signals our coming into full spirit nature; no longer held down by the limitations of our present bodily estate.

We have quickly looked at two things *moral and spiritual resurrection*, which we say constitute the first stage of the resurrection. We know that the process is gradual. Paul, at the point of laying down his body in death had already attained to the needed grace. It is God's purpose in apprehending us is to bring us to the first resurrection; but the scriptures shows that not all of Gods people will attain unto it.

For some, the process of moral and spiritual resurrection is almost nil. For others, it is going on at a slow pace. There certainly are some that are mounting up on wings as eagles. Each one of us ought to stir up himself to follow the Lord faithfully. This is not an hour to play church. This is not the hour to hide under the supposition that this thing that is being taught is not commonly believed by the church systems and so must be wrong. Wisdom is justified by her deeds. There is

a witness in the heart of those that love the Lord that these things are an expression of God's love and mercy to the church, calling men into the things that belong to the fullness of their inheritance.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 shows the other aspect of the first resurrection that has to do with of our coming into the fullness of life and immortality. Recall that this stage of resurrection is sudden, not gradual. From verse 50 we read

⁵⁰Now, this I say brethren that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep (that is to say we shall not all die) but we shall all be changed, (then the change is described in the next verse). ⁵²In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound and the dead in Christ shall be raised in incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption..

"In a moment... ". The word "moment" refers to the force that is applied to bring about the final aspects of the redemption of our body. The word in Greek is "atomos" from which we have the English word "atom". It is not a moment of time but a moment of force.

Its suddenness is shown in the other phrase, "in the twinkling of an eye". This has to do with the suddenness with which persons who have attained to the fullness of the moral and spiritual resurrection are brought into the "redemption of the body". This "atomos" is according to the working of God's irresistible power (Philippians 3: 21). So, divine power is going to change this physical body and cause it to be transformed into a spirit body, a divine body, a body that befits the New Creation Man already developed to the full stature of Christ.

The resurrection body waits to be received at the completion of the moral and spiritual resurrection. It says, "The mortal shall out on immortality". It is not going to be a change of body, but a change in our bodies. It is going to be a fashioning of this body and it will be by the power of Christ. This is reserved only for those who "overcome and keep his words to the end".

Thus, it amounts to a false hope and mere delusion when we suppose that we can just remain the way we are as spiritual babies, unexposed to the things of the Kingdom and to the moral and spiritual glories of the Lord Jesus Christ and then expect to be catapulted to divinity at the sound of some physical trumpet. What purpose will that serve? May the Lord deliver us from folly.

The word "meet" in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 conveys the idea of welcoming and receiving a dignitary. The meaning becomes clear when we look at what happens in our secular world when a dignitary, say a president, is to visit a state. The governor of that state, together with other state functionaries goes out to give the president and his entourage a befitting welcome.

The persons who are to meet the Lord in the air are persons who have come into great status and honour in the Kingdom; persons who are full-grown, who having taken on the fullness of Christ's life have become divine. So, it is a meeting of Christ with Christ; not a meeting of Christ with babes. He receives unto himself in full union, not a babe, or a person laden with imperfections, but a church that is without spot or wrinkle or blemish or any such thing (Ephesians 5:27).

Hence, there is held out for us a hope. For those alive in this hour that know Jesus Christ as Lord experientially in their daily living, God will do a quick work. It will be in the environment of His

Word and of His Spirit. God does all He does by the power of the spoken word. His Word clothed with the Spirit of God.

God is reacting against the decay in the church systems. With it a people are coming out of the hold of the denominational walls, coming into a free atmosphere where the Word of God and the Spirit of God are leading men and women into greater experience in God. May the Lord cause you to be a part of this great body that the Lord is raising up.

When we pick up this subject again in the next edition, we shall once again discuss the first resurrection in its two stages. The first part being, moral and spiritual resurrection and the second part being the redemption of the body. The Lord bless you, cause his face to shine upon you and do you good. The Lord bring you into a peculiar fellowship with him and cause you to cleave to Him with all your heart in Jesus name.

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FIRST

RESURRECTION;

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In entering into this meditation, we want to say again that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Pattern Son. Salvation brings us into sonship with God. Through salvation, the seed of Christ is planted in us and as that seed is grown to full life, we are placed as God's sons indeed. So, if we want to see the glories that belong to full sonship, then we look at Jesus in whom is found all that the Lord wants to reproduce in us.

Then, there is this man, the apostle Paul. He is the pattern disciple. If we want to know how to follow the Lord and so come to full sonship; we have an example in Paul. In this teaching on the first resurrection, we shall be looking at this man's life and ministry. Through the things that are revealed concerning Paul, who expresses in his life and service, the true longings that should be found in every disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, we may come to a fuller understanding of the blessed hope.

We begin with 1 Timothy 1:16. Paul says of himself here:

¹⁶Howbeit for this cause, I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Now, you will find that Paul was saying that God laid hold upon him, exercised so much of mercy, love, kindness and truth towards him, in order that he, coming from his dark background, might be a pattern of the grace and power of God. The verses preceding this verse tells us that Paul before his conversion was actually a persecutor of the church, given to a religion that seemed to have its beginning in Moses, but standing against the God whom Moses served.

Coming from a total hatred for the gospel and those who believe in Jesus Christ, to becoming a pattern disciple, Paul is here saying that in him, God shows the example of the working of divine long suffering to bringing men to the highest and best in God.

So, we are to look at the man Paul. The longings in him, the desires for full union with Christ, reveal what God expects to see in us. These things should characterise us as God's people.

Paul's passion for God's glory, his passion for God's fullness puts a question mark on the greater many of God's people. Are we indeed recipients of the riches of the Saviour's grace? If we do not find the same push in our spirits, the same motivation, the same longings, the same spirit that we find moving Paul in all of his life and service, then a charge of unwise neglect of divine love and mercies must be laid at our doorsteps.

There is something concerning resurrection that Paul tells us in Acts 24:14, 15. We read:

¹⁴But this I confess unto thee that after the way which they call heresy, so worshipped I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets. ¹⁵And having hope towards God, which they themselves also allow that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

Now, God's word allows that there would be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. In Christ is preached repentance from dead works, faith towards God, baptisms, laying on of hands for spiritual ministries, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgement. So, there is the hope that the just and the unjust will experience a resurrection of the dead. However, the resurrection of the just takes place before that of the unjust.

The first resurrection is a part of the resurrection of the just. It is that part that relates to the inheritance of those who share with the Lord Jesus Christ in his divinity; those who are to reign with Him. Thus the first resurrection is an honour, a glory to be conferred on one having been tested and found worthy.

In this connection, let us read Revelations 20:4. There, John says,

⁴And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgement was given unto them, and I saw the souls of those that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. ⁵But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first

resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and they shall reign with him a thousand years.

Now, if you were following the reading, you will discover that certain qualifications are required of those who reign with Christ a thousand years. These are made to be partakers of the first resurrection.

Not all those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ unto salvation experience the first resurrection. In fact, scriptures reveals that a difference exists between those who come to the first resurrection and those who did not give full proof of their submission to the Lordship of Christ.

In the above passage, those counted worthy of the first resurrection either are beheaded or they must have had victory over the beast, its mark and the number of his name. In the message "The mark of the beast", we gave attention to this. The interested reader can request for a free copy of the printed message.

While the things to overcome in order to have a share in the first resurrection are given in spiritual symbolism in Revelations 20:4, in the life of Paul, we see what it takes to possess the mark for the prize of the first resurrection. We see in his life and ministry, what the standard of life is that makes a man to be judged worthy of full union with Christ. We as the Lord's people ought to imitate Paul if we are to come into the honour of sharing with Christ the fullness of His glory.

Reading from Philippians 3:7-17 we hear Paul say of himself:

⁷But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ⁸Yea, doubtless and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ. ⁹And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; ¹⁰That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable unto his death; ¹¹If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. ¹²Not as though I have already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. ¹⁵Let us therefore, as many as be perfect (as many as be matured, as many as have clear understanding of God's purposes for them in salvation...) be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

That is, as you long for more of God, living by the principles Paul took upon himself, if there be anything about your life that will keep you from overcoming, God will make it known to you.

Thus, sincerity is required, living in consecration is required; and as we follow the Lord, hating sin, loving righteousness, God by His Spirit, will bring to our notice, anything that is contrary to His will in our lives and ministries. We read on from verse 16.

¹⁶Nevertheless, whereunto we have already attained (the things we have already known, the things we have already experienced in Christ), let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same

thing. ¹⁷Brethren, be ye followers together of me, (Paul counsels us to follow him as we see him follow Christ)... and mark them which walk so as ye have us for examples.

Coming back to verse 11, Paul says *if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead*. The reference is to one of the two classes described in Acts 24:15 as the resurrection of the just. The first of these two classes is the promise made to the overcomer of the gospel age. The resurrection of the unjust is a general promise to the entire human race. All will partake of it and it is not something to be attained to. In passing, let us simply note that the second of the two classes of the resurrection of the just, also mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:23 (b) will be addressed in another connection.

The first resurrection; the honour of sharing with Christ in His fullness, is something to be attained to. It is not a general promise held out to all men. All who believe in Jesus Christ in this age can by the grace of the indwelling Christ attain unto this glory. In our daily walk with Him we do experience His dealings. If we faithfully and habitually submit to Him, growth results morally and spiritually.

Paul laboured to attain to the first resurrection; and it is in the light of this that he gives the counsel we find in Philippians 3:15-17. There is a lifestyle that is in harmony with seeking for mastery, for honour is the kingdom of grace. We are to walk humbly before the Lord our God. We are to allow the law of His Spirit to bring about tremendous changes in our lives. A heart loyal to the cause of God receives grace to be faithful. The process of resurrection will only continue to completion in the faithful.

He began the work of salvation in us by the power of His Word and His Spirit; by the same power, he will complete it. Philippians 1:6 says, *he that has began a good work in us will bring it to completion IN THE DAY OF CHRIST*. The words in capital refers to Christ coming in glory; the Epiphaneia.

However, just as faith was created in us when Christ was preached, and we responded to the pull of the Spirit unto salvation, so it is required at every stage of our development to keep on submitting to the Lord and to the testimony of His Word.

One of the fatal aspects of the rapture doctrine is that it covers up God's purpose, and men just suppose that a physical trumpet will sound and up they fly! But brethren, an apostle of God said he did all that was in his power according to the working of grace to attain to the first resurrection. Thus, we should expect that the same tremendous changes that took place in Paul, John, Peter, and in thousands of believers since the church began, must take place in all who sit with him on the throne. Revelations 3:21 says "*to him that overcomes shall I grant to seat with me on my throne even as I overcame and am sat with my father in his throne*." A place by Christ in rulership over the nations in the age to come is reserved for those who overcome.

So, continuous growth is a must to the believer who is to sit with the Lord in his throne. He must come forth in the true image and likeness of the Lord. A crystallisation of the full statue of Christ is the goal set before us. In Isaiah 11:1-5, we are told:

¹And there shall come forth as rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of hid roots. ²And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. ³And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight

of his eyes, neither reprove out of the hearing of his ears. ⁴But with righteousness shall he judge the poor and reprove with equity, the meek of the earth; and he shall smote the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breadth of his lips, shall he slay the wicked (all these speak of spiritual powers) ⁵And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reign.

The description is true of the Lord Jesus Christ and would be true of members of his perfected body. The believer is to give all diligence to ensue that he keeps vital fellowship with him who is the resurrection and the life.

Remember that resurrection is a process, the better part of which is given to incorporating Christ in us. It is indeed a gradual process, but its final stages exert more on our hitherto mortal body. Raising up the dead is an act, but resurrection is a process. This distinction must be noted carefully.

Resurrection commences at the point of the washing of regeneration, when a man experiences forgiveness of sin. It progresses at a pace dependent on a number of things: obedience to the revealed word, fellowship, consecration, the Spirit of faith and yieldedness to the government of the Holy Spirit.

So, growth in Christ' likeness is a must for the believer. The bible says concerning the Lord Jesus Christ in Luke 2:40 and *the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.* In verse 52 of the same chapter, we see the same thing. It says that *Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man. The same thing was said of John in Luke 1:80.*

All of the epistles clearly teach this one thing. God has proposed a throne of glory for everyone who follows faithfully in the footsteps of the Master. The overcoming life is the product of grace. Nothing of any spiritual value comes by our natural might. Grace utilised begets more grace. The measure of a man's submission is nothing but a proof that grace has not been disregarded or trampled underfoot

Treasuring the things of redemption means putting the same value on them as God does. This will imply faith; faith in the person of God and His word. One who opens up in this manner to Christ will continually experience a divine pull towards the Lord and his interests. Though such a one is severely ravaged by the fall prior to salvation, he will experience deep moral transformation. He shall live. And if as he lives in unbroken fellowship with God, he holds unto Jesus for the full performance of all the gracious promises of redemption, then he shall never fall; never die. Everything about resurrection is built around our Lord Jesus Christ. He that liveth and believeth in him shall never die. Christ is the resurrection and the life. (John 11:25, 26)

The great heights we must attain to are gradually but surely obtained on daily basis. Given the same degree of faithfulness, the availability of the prophetic word (meat in due season) to the individual places him at an advantage over another not so blessed. This relates to the pace at which the process of resurrection takes place. A proper understanding of this is required for one to be able to earnestly seek to partake of the present day ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. His voice sounding in the ministries inspires them to trumpet the prophetic word.

Let us know that it is not a physical trumpet that will bring about any change in us. Romans 8:10,11 says,

¹⁰If Christ be in you, the body is dead (still subject to death) because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹BUT 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 (give life to) your mortal bodies, by His spirit that dwelleth in you.

Christ in us is the hope of glory. The indwelling Christ in me is the Spirit of God that raised Jesus from the dead. Our change will come by him. The power of his working is in the medium of the revealed and received word. Through him, we slay death agencies; we mortify the deeds of the flesh. Rom. 8:12, 13.

¹²Therefore, on account of this, we are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh. ¹³For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit (indwelling you) do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

We are debtors. We have a debt to pay if this experience must be fulfilled in us. We owe ourselves and the Spirit of God in us some responsibilities. If we must experience the change, we are debtors not to the flesh, but to the Spirit of Christ in us. If we live in the flesh we shall die, that is we shall suffer loss (1 Corinthians 3:15) but if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh we shall live, we shall come to the fullness of life in God.

The above observation links us with Philippians 3 that we began with. The first resurrection is something to attain unto; and there is a manner of life the believer is to take on in order to be counted worthy of this honour. Paul says *what things were gain to him, he counted loss for Christ; Yea, doubtless he counted all things but loss for the Excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus His Lord.* The reason is that he may be found in Him, that he may know Him increasingly, experiencing the power of His resurrection on daily basis.

In Romans 8:18 he says he reckons that the sufferings that he must endure in order to win a place of honour in Christ, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us at the time of the manifestation of the Sons of God. He says "not as though I had already attained (at the time he was writing; Philippians 3, he had not yet attained unto the fullness of spiritual resurrection) but I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ".

There is a mark for that prize. The mark is the overcoming life. This "life" lives on the irresistible desire to be like Christ through being with Him. It is the first love. Paul had this grace. He presses on, not allowing anything to distract him or cause him to lose that focus in his spirit.

Little wonder at the closing days of his life and ministry, he could say assuredly *"for I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing"* (2 Timothy 2:6-8).

Now, after calling believers to be followers together of him (even as he follows Christ) and to mark them which walk in the same manner for an example, Paul in verses 18 and 19 of Philippians 3 laments the lean spiritual condition of many in the early church. This, same condition is prevalent in the church world today. He says:

¹⁸(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now telling you even weeping (may the Lord give us the same passion for His glory in Jesus name) that they re enemies of the cross of Christ (even though they profess to be Jesus Christ in their lips and have him in their hearts so to say) ¹⁹Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly (what they can get out of the gospel in terms of material acquisitions) and whose glory is in their shame (and shameful practices) who mind earthly things)

It is terrible for a believer to live for the dust; but it is equally painful to lose a placement with Christ on the throne when God has so graciously opened the opportunity to all believers. Our commonwealth is in heaven. We must "set out affections on things above".

Not all of God's people will be stars with ruling functions in the heaven of God when the Kingdom of heaven is installed. Not all will come to rulership in the Kingdom. There will be lesser degrees to occupy. The Lord Jesus Christ talked about the least in the Kingdom of heaven (Matthew 11:11). This implies that the Kingdom of heaven is highly stratified.

To make it to the Kingdom of heaven at all, is a great honour and requires for one to be processed of God. However, let us also remind ourselves that it is God's intention for all that are called in this church age to come to the highest and best in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul says many in the church world have their belly as their god. "They mind earthly things", and "they are enemies of the cross of Christ". These are very strong words and our prayer is that we all will turn to the Lord in repentance and begin to seek him, uncommonly opening our hearts, to the light of his searching but love-filled eyes. He is our Sanctification.

The same power that transforms us and fulfils in us the deep desire of God to have Jesus to be the first born among many brethren is that which works on our body. Our resurrection body will conform to the glorious body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lets read verse 20, 21 of Philipians 3 and close.

²¹For our conversation is in heaven (this speaks of a manner of life Old Testament be lived) from whence also, we look for the saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. ²²Who shall change our vile body (newer translations say he shall fashion anew our vile body) that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body (and how will he do this?) according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself...

Yes, it shall be according to the power of the indissolvable life; according to the working of the same power that makes him able to subdue moral failures in our lives giving us victory morally and spiritually. All of these things happen in the medium of the life-giving Spirit, Christ the Living WORD; the Lord from heaven. The testimony of Him and his final acts in redemption is the Spirit of the prophetic word. They that hear with effect His voice shall live (John 5:25). His voice is as the sound of a great trumpet (Revelations 1:10, I Corinthians 15:52). May the Lord keep you for Himself. Amen.