

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

DESIGNATION
BY
RESURRECTION

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DESIGNATION BY RESURRECTION

In [Romans 1:1](#) Paul says that he was “separated to the gospel of God,” and then he goes on to say that the gospel of God concerns God’s Son, Jesus Christ our Lord ([1:3](#)). This indicates that the gospel of God is a gospel of sonship. The goal of this gospel is to transform sinners into sons of God for the formation of the Body of Christ.

THE PROCESS OF RESURRECTION

As we consider this matter of sonship, certain important words command our attention: designation, resurrection, sanctification, transformation, conformation, glorification, and manifestation. We are being designated sons of God through the process of resurrection. In this process a number of steps are involved. These steps include sanctification, transformation, conformation, and glorification. This glorification will also be the manifestation. Today people may not realize that we are Christians. But on the day of our glorification, no one will need to ask us

whether or not we are Christians, for we shall be manifested as sons of God. That manifestation will be the consummation of the process of designation by resurrection.

Sanctification, transformation, conformation, and glorification are not four altogether separate steps. Rather, as sanctification is going on, we are also being transformed. Moreover, as we are being transformed, the process of conformation begins to take place. Eventually, as the spontaneous continuation and consummation of these processes, we shall reach the stage of glorification or manifestation. When sanctification, transformation, and conformation reach their peak, that will be the time of our glorification. This glorification will be our manifestation as sons of God. We are presently undergoing the process of designation by resurrection, a process which will ultimately bring us to the point of manifestation. The key to this process is resurrection. Therefore, we speak of designation by resurrection.

THE EXPERIENCE OF RESURRECTION

We need to consider the matter of resurrection in some detail. We shall not look at it

objectively, from the standpoint of doctrine, but subjectively, from the standpoint of the experience of life. [Romans 6:5](#) speaks of the experience of resurrection. This verse says that we share in the likeness of Christ's resurrection. Some students of the Word have said that the resurrection mentioned here is the first resurrection spoken of in [Revelation 20:4 and 5](#). But I do not believe that this is Paul's understanding of resurrection here. Paul is not saying that we must wait until the millennium to participate in the resurrection of Christ. In [6:5](#) Paul says that we have grown together with Christ in the likeness of His death and that we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection. This does not refer to a future, objective resurrection, but it refers to our present experience of Christ's resurrection life. We should not regard the resurrection merely as a future event, as Martha did in [John 11](#). The Lord Jesus told her that He was the resurrection and the life ([v. 25](#)). His word indicates that there is no need for us to wait until a future day to have Him as resurrection. Resurrection is not a matter of time or place; it is a matter of Christ. If we have Him, we have resurrection. But if we do not have Him, we do not have resurrection life, neither now nor in the future. Hallelujah,

resurrection is Jesus, the Son of God! As long as we have Jesus Christ, we have resurrection, no matter where we may be.

What a difference there is between the doctrinal teaching regarding resurrection and the subjective revelation of Christ as resurrection! What we need today is not the objective teaching about resurrection, but the subjective, living, up-to-date experience of Christ as resurrection.

CHRIST AS LIFE-POWER

To say that Christ is resurrection means that Christ is the life-power. Resurrection is life-power. With life there are the life-essence, the life-shape, and the life-power. First we have the life-essence, and then we have the life-power. Following this, we have the life-shape, the life-form. Resurrection is Christ being the life-power to us. This is a very significant matter.

In 1936 I paid a visit to one of the leading universities in China. One of the students spoke to me about his difficulty in believing in resurrection. He told me that due to his modern scientific knowledge he could not believe. To him, resurrection was against scientific truth. Outside of the room where we were meeting there was a wheat field. Drawing his attention to the

wheat growing in the field, I pointed out that the wheat was produced by some grains of seed that were buried in the earth. I told him that, in a sense, those seeds died, but that now they had come forth in resurrection as wheat. Through that illustration of death and resurrection, this young man was saved. Now he is one of the leading co-workers in Taiwan. This illustration shows that resurrection is a matter of life-power.

THE FUNCTIONS OF RESURRECTION

Conquering Negative Things

This life-power has a number of functions. The first function is that of conquering. Resurrection is able to conquer every negative thing, including death. Apart from God Himself, the most powerful thing in the universe is death. Whenever death visits anyone, that one cannot resist it; he must yield to its power. Although death is so powerful, resurrection is even more powerful. Death cannot hold resurrection ([Acts 2:24](#)). On the contrary, resurrection conquers death and overcomes it.

In [1 Corinthians 15:26](#) Paul says, “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” This

indicates that death is the strongest enemy. Such a strong enemy can be defeated only by resurrection. Therefore, the first function of resurrection, of the life-power, is that of conquering the negative things, especially death. The more resurrection is placed in a situation of death, the more opportunity it has to function to conquer death.

Swallowing Up Death

The second function of the life-power is to swallow up death. Resurrection not only conquers death and overcomes it, but it also devours it. In [Numbers 14:9](#) Joshua and Caleb said that the enemies of the children of Israel would be their food. Death, the last and greatest enemy, is food for resurrection. Sometimes an enemy is conquered, but he is still present. Through the function of the life-power, death is not only conquered, but is swallowed up to the point that it disappears. When the life-power swallows death, death vanishes.

Producing Growth, Transformation, and Shaping

The functions of conquering and swallowing are negative functions. Resurrection, however,

also has many positive functions. The first of these is to produce growth and transformation. The more something grows, the more it is changed, transformed. The growth of a carnation flower illustrates this. The carnation begins as a small seed. But after the seed is sown into the soil, it begins to grow, first into a tender sprout and eventually into a full-grown blossoming carnation plant. When the carnation is still a sprout, it is difficult to distinguish it from other types of plants. But the more it grows, the more it changes and is transformed. It is transformed by growth.

In principle, the same kind of change takes place in children. As a child grows, his body assumes a certain shape. As the life-power transforms, it also shapes. The more we grow, the more we are shaped. Hence, resurrection causes growth, change, and shaping.

Releasing the Positive Things

Resurrection also releases the positive things. Fruit-bearing is one kind of release brought about by the function of resurrection. In the bearing of fruit there is the release of the life-essence from within a certain tree. This indicates that through fruit-bearing the riches of the life within that tree are released. By the releasing function of the

life-power, all that is in a seed—the root, the stem, the branches, the leaves, the flower, and the fruit—is released. As the seed is resurrected, everything positive in it is released.

We often speak about the riches of Christ. Christ with all His riches has been sown into us as a seed. We see this in the parable of the sower in [Matthew 13](#). According to this parable, Christ has sown Himself into us as a seed of life. This seed includes all kinds of positive things: love, holiness, righteousness, humility, patience, endurance. In this seed are both the divine attributes and the human virtues. The only thing that is needed is the release. Resurrection releases the essence of all the riches of Christ from within the seed.

The Power to Rise Up

With resurrection there is also the power to rise up. Resurrection, like the calamus used in making the anointing oil in [Exodus 30](#), rises above the “muddy” situations. This calamus is a picture of the power in Christ to rise up.

OUR EXPERIENCE OF RESURRECTION

As believers, we have Christ within us as

resurrection, and this resurrection is our life-power. Day by day this power functions to conquer death. Death has many aspects: weakness, hatred, darkness, pride, criticism, rumors. Even if you murmur or engage in a little gossiping, you will touch death. All negative things are included in the content of death. The resurrection within us conquers every form of death and swallows it up. It swallows our pride, our criticism, our false humility. Furthermore, this life-power causes growth, transformation, and shaping. It also releases the positive things, and it causes us to rise above every “muddy” situation.

Even if we do not have the realization that this life-power is within us, we do have the reality of this power. If we look back upon our experience with the Lord over the years, we shall see that the resurrection within us has been conquering death and swallowing up negative things. Our experience also testifies that this life-power has caused us to grow, to be transformed, and even to be somewhat shaped into the image of Christ. Furthermore, our experience reveals that the life-power has released so many positive things from within us. As resurrection releases, it also rises up within us.

Satan is always doing his best to hold us down.

He does everything he can to suppress us, depress us, and oppress us. But praise the Lord for the rising calamus within us! The Lord sometimes allows the enemy to cast us into a “muddy” situation just so that resurrection has an opportunity to function by raising us far above that situation. This subjective resurrection is the resurrection spoken of in the book of Romans. It is in this resurrection that Christ in His humanity was designated the Son of God. By means of such a resurrection we also are in the process of being designated the sons of God.

THE SPIRIT AS THE REALITY OF RESURRECTION

Romans 8:11 says, “But if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from among the dead dwells in you, He Who raised Christ Jesus from among the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit Who indwells you.” In this verse resurrection is linked to the Spirit. The Spirit is the reality of resurrection. The Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from among the dead dwells in us as the reality of resurrection. If a person does not have the Holy Spirit, he cannot have resurrection. The resurrection we experience is actually the Holy Spirit Himself. If we had

Romans 6 without Romans 8, we would not be able to participate in Christ as resurrection in a practical way. In Romans 8 we have the reality of resurrection, that is, we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We should never separate resurrection from the Spirit.

THE PROCESS OF DESIGNATION

We are being designated as sons of God by resurrection. We are daily undergoing the process of designation, and this designation is by resurrection. We all need to see that what the Lord is doing within us today is a matter of designation.

I would like to continue with the illustration of a carnation seed. A carnation seed is designated, not by being labeled, but by being sown into the earth and by growing gradually into a mature, blossoming carnation plant. The seed is designated as it grows. The more it grows, the more it is designated. When it reaches full bloom, it will be designated in a complete way. This means that the full blossoming of a carnation flower is its full designation. Like the carnation seed, we all are in the process of designation. The more

we grow and are transformed, the more we are designated the sons of God.

ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT

According to the flesh, we all are troublesome, both to the church and to those with whom we live. The husbands trouble the wives, and the wives trouble the husbands. But we do not need to have our being according to the flesh, for we have the option of being according to the Spirit. When the brothers and sisters have their being according to the Spirit, they are wonderful and glorious. Whether you have your being according to the flesh or according to the Spirit depends on the choice you make. By your own will you may decide either to have your being according to the flesh or according to the Spirit. May the Lord be merciful to us so that we may choose to live according to the Spirit. We urgently need to learn how to walk according to the Spirit. If we walk according to the flesh, the church life will be most unpleasant. But if we walk according to the Spirit, the church life will be in the heavens.

The sonship is realized by resurrection and in the Spirit. The Spirit who dwells in us is the rising-up Spirit and the designating Spirit. Day by day, this Spirit is designating us the sons of God.

If, like Paul, we would serve God in the gospel concerning His Son, we must know what sonship is and how it is realized. Thank the Lord that Paul wrote this Epistle to the Romans! This book reveals that we should help others not only to be saved, but also to experience the sonship. This means that we need to help them to see the matter of designation by resurrection, including sanctification, transformation, conformation, and glorification.

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD

The universe is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God (8:19). This manifestation will not come as an accident, but it will come as the consummation of the process of designation, just as a carnation flower blossoms as the consummation of a long process of growth and change. The more we grow, the more we are designated by resurrection. One day, at the time of our glorification, we shall fully blossom and manifestly be the sons of God.

Many Christians devote their attention to objective teachings regarding the so-called dispensations in the Scriptures. According to the Bible, however, the word dispensation does not

denote an age, but it denotes an act of dispensing. The New Testament revelation needs to become very subjective to us. I do not believe that a person who lives outside the presence of the Lord will suddenly be raptured into His presence. Being brought into the Lord's presence involves a process of sanctification, transformation, conformation, and glorification.

SUBJECTIVE SANCTIFICATION

No believer in Christ is ever sanctified accidentally. I realize that, in a sense, we were all sanctified when we were saved. But we still need to pass through the process of sanctification in order to be sanctified dispositionally. In the Bible the words sanctification, holy, and holiness refer to separation. Hence, to be sanctified is to be separated, to be made different from that which is common.

When a carnation plant is a tender sprout, it may not appear to be very different from other kinds of sprouts. But the more the carnation plant grows, the more it becomes separated, different, from other plants. When it blossoms, it is wholly separated, absolutely different, from all other flowers. This is an illustration of subjective sanctification, of dispositional sanctification.

THE CONSUMMATION OF TRANSFORMATION

Sanctification in Romans refers not merely to a change of position, but to a change of disposition. It involves a change in shape that is the result of an inward change in life. This indicates that conformation, the change in shape, is related to growth and transformation. A carnation plant illustrates this also. As a carnation grows and is transformed, it is shaped into a particular form. By growth, it is changed from one form into another. This change continues until the plant blossoms. The blossoming is the consummation of transformation.

SHAPED INTO THE LIFE-FORM

To be transformed is to be shaped into the life-form by the life-power with the life-essence. Suppose in your garden two kinds of plants are growing, a carnation and a lily. As these flowers grow, the carnation will take on one form, and the lily will take on another form. Each is shaped by the life-power with the life-essence within it.

Every life has its own form. For example, a dog has one form and a chicken has another. The growth of a certain life brings in the full form of

that life. Today we are sons of God, but we do not yet have the full form, the complete shape, of sons of God. Therefore, by growth and transformation we need to be conformed to the image of Christ. Eventually, we shall be completely conformed to His image. Then we shall possess the full life-shape which comes from the life-power with the life-essence. A carnation, a chicken, and a dog all have a different life-form according to their life-essence. A carnation has the form of a carnation because it has the life-essence of a carnation. The carnation essence develops into the carnation form by means of the life-power within the carnation. Praise the Lord that we have the life-essence and the life-power within us! This life-power is shaping us into the image of the Son of God. Through this shaping function of the life-power, we shall be fully conformed to the image of Christ.

ENJOYING THE DESIGNATING SPIRIT

Praise the Lord that instead of mere objective teachings, we have the designating Spirit within us! We have the designating Christ as resurrection within. Do not try to improve yourself or to make yourself sinlessly perfect. Rather, enjoy and experience the designating Spirit. If by the

Spirit we put to death the practices of the body, we shall live (8:13). We need to walk according to the Spirit, set our mind upon the Spirit, and by the Spirit put to death the practices of the body. If we walk daily according to the Spirit, we shall be fully in the process of designation by resurrection. By the power of resurrection, we shall be transformed, conformed, and, eventually, glorified.

The more we contact the Lord by calling upon His name, the more we sense His presence and the more we are conscious of His anointing within. By calling on the name of the Lord, we are watered, we are refreshed, we are sanctified, we are satisfied, and we are strengthened. In this way we are brought into His presence and we are made ready for His coming. The kind of teachings we need today are not objective teachings about prophecy or about the dispensations, but those regarding how we are designated by enjoying and experiencing Christ as the life-power. If we have this kind of teaching, we shall realize that in ourselves we are hopeless and helpless, and we shall no longer try to improve ourselves. Rather, we shall exercise our spirit to contact the Lord so that we may enjoy His anointing and

participate in the process of designation by resurrection.

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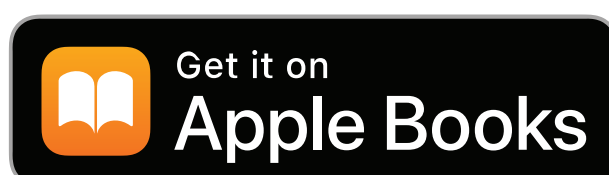
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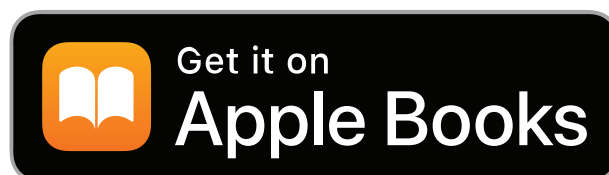
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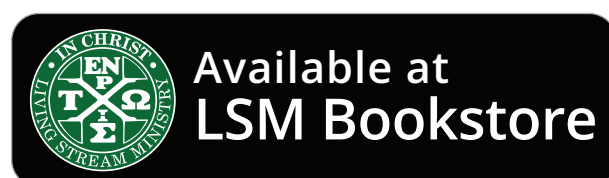
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