

## The Legacy of Faith

2 Timothy 1:3-7

May 12, 2019

Mother's Day

A family was celebrating Mother's Day at home. They had a little party for the Mom. Dad cooked the meal, and the children set the table. Everyone really enjoyed the day. After dinner, the mother was washing the dishes when her teenage daughter came into the kitchen. The daughter was horrified to see her mother doing the dishes. She said, "Mom, what are you doing? You shouldn't do the dishes on Mother's Day!" The mother was touched by what she said and she appreciated her thoughtfulness. So, she took off her apron and gave it to the daughter. The daughter took the apron and said, "Yeah, Mom. You shouldn't do this today. You can do it tomorrow!"<sup>1</sup> I am sure this is just a joke. I am sure our children are not like that.

No matter what our children do or don't do, we always love them, don't we?

In the last few weeks we have been talking about the story of Jesus' resurrection. Today, we will think about the changes the resurrection brought to the disciples, what the resurrection of Jesus did to the disciples, and connect this to the faith legacy we need to leave to our children.

Think about it. As a Christian, what would be the most important legacy you can leave to your children? Wouldn't it be faith? We just read Paul's letter to Timothy. In this letter, Paul describes about the faith legacy Timothy received from his family. Paul says, "I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded, now lives in you also."<sup>2</sup> Timothy had received the legacy of faith from his mother and grandmother. On this Mother's Day, we need to examine ourselves and see if we have raised and guided our children with faith, and whether we are leaving a legacy of faith to our children.

Many of us confess that Jesus is risen from the dead and he is alive even today. We proclaim this every Easter and his involvement in our lives every Sunday. But the question is how transformative the resurrection story really is in our lives.

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<sup>1</sup> From Illustrations Unlimited, by Editor James S. Hewett, (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.), [www.esermons.com](http://www.esermons.com).

<sup>2</sup> 2 Timothy 1:5.

The greatest faith statement of the Church is not that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary; or the fact that Jesus was a profound teacher, an amazing healer, and an incredible miracle worker. Well, they are true and important.

However, the greatest affirmation of the Church is not those stories. Rather it is the fact that Jesus is alive and that he actually lives in us and among us. That is the most important message of the Bible, because the fact of Jesus' resurrection brought an amazing change in the disciples' lives.

Actually, there has not been any event in history that has shaped and changed the world as much as the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When we truly believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and live with that faith, our lives inevitably change.

Let's look at the disciples and see what happened as a result of Jesus' resurrection.

No one can deny the fact that the disciples' lives were completely changed. That change was brought by the resurrection of Christ.

What is the most powerful and undeniable evidence of the resurrection? Is it the empty tomb? No! It is the transformation of the disciples. Their disappointment was completely changed to exciting joy. Their fear changed to boldness. They were not afraid of anyone any more. They had the intrepidity to stand for the truth. They were empowered with a new courage, the audacity to proclaim that death is not the final word.

The disciples were changed from craven cowards who locked themselves behind closed doors to courageous apostles who stood before the thousands. They did not hide any more. They were not afraid of the Jewish religious authorities any more. They proclaimed the Good News of Jesus Christ, and of his resurrection in the presence of those who incited Jesus' crucifixion. How did this radical change happen? They had encountered the risen Christ. That's what changed everything.

Believing in the risen Christ gives us peace and assurance of God's presence even in the most difficult and hopeless situations.

On February 28, 1991, an elderly couple Jean (68) and Ken (75) Chaney traveled to Fresno about 60 miles away from their home for tax issues. They needed to see a CPA. On their way home they got lost. They were traveling on a mountain road, and it was snowing heavily. About 6 pm that night their car skidded off the road in a

snow-storm. They tried to put the car back on the road, but because of the snow the wheels did not have any traction. The car was stuck. They couldn't pull it out. That night they had another foot of snow. By next morning, the car was completely covered with snow. They could not even open the door.

They were trapped there inside their car for 18 days. They were literally sealed in their tomb alive for two and a half weeks and eventually they died there. They suffered hunger, dehydration, and hypothermia. What a horrible way to die. During those 18 days, Jean kept a diary on any scrap of paper she could find in the car. The diary was surprisingly upbeat in tone. The words were comforting and peaceful. There was a real sense of peace and contentment even in that situation.

On the 18th day, Jean Chaney wrote this last entry: "Dad went to the Lord at 7:30 this evening, March 18. It was so peaceful I didn't even know he left. The last thing I heard him say was 'Thank the Lord.' I think I'll be with him soon... So much to say and so little time. I can't see. Bye. I love you."<sup>3</sup> That was her last entry.

What a witness of faith this is! What a legacy! How can anybody face death with this kind of faith, poise, peace, and assurance of hope? You know, I believe, Jean and Ken had such serenity because of their assurance of resurrection, their assurance of God's care, and their assurance of God's love for them no matter what they faced, and no matter what happened to them!

Saint Paul said:

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... No! In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."<sup>4</sup>

True faith looks up to the Lord, no matter what happens in life.

Now the question is this: "How real is your faith?" "How real is your faith in believing the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ?" "How real is the presence of the

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<sup>3</sup> <https://people.com/archive/were-in-gods-hand-vol-35-no-21/>

<sup>4</sup> Romans 8:35-39.

Lord in your life?” Does your faith give you strength in days of severe trouble? What is your faith-response in facing difficulties?

Your response will be very different depending on whether you believe in the resurrection of Jesus or not, whether you believe in the presence of the Lord or not. If you believe the Lord is the living God and he loves and cares for you, your response to various life situations will be bold and confident. But if you don't, when the difficulties come, you won't find any strength, because you cannot trust or depend on anyone.

Do you want to know if the resurrection of Jesus true? Consider the following:

1. Could the disciples just believe in the resurrection of Jesus without actually seeing him and being with him? According to the Bible, the disciples not only had a brief encounter of the risen Christ, but they had multiple encounters with him during the 40-day period between the resurrection and the ascension.<sup>5</sup>

2. How is it that disciples who were terrified after Jesus' arrest and crucifixion suddenly changed to be bold and confident? The only possible explanation is that they actually saw the risen Christ. Think about it. They lost their businesses, reputations, families, personal well-being, and even their lives for their testimony that Jesus rose from the dead. They didn't just die. They were horribly executed. All of them except John. Was it worth it, if it was a hoax? Other than the resurrection itself, can you think of any reasonable explanation for their claim?

3. Paul's testimony and his life support the fact of Jesus' resurrection. Paul had power, influence, and a respectful reputation in Jewish religious community, but he abandoned all of that to proclaim Jesus' resurrection. Is there any reason for him to do that? He claimed that he encountered the risen Christ. By claiming so, he had lost everything he had and everything he worked for – his power, reputation and influence. Can you think of any reason why this important, influential, intelligent man would change his beliefs and jeopardize his life and his freedom?

I am sure there are other obvious reasons to believe in the resurrection.

But it is a matter of faith. I invite you to consider the following questions. “Does your believing in Jesus, change the way you live?” “Does your believing in the resurrection of Jesus change your perspective of life?” “Do you have stronger assurance of God's care and God's love for you because you believe that Jesus lives?”

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<sup>5</sup> Acts 1:3.

If you do, your life will be filled with thankfulness and confidence no matter what you face, and your children will see that and will be influenced by it. That will be a wonderful legacy.

My friends, without Easter, our faith is nothing. Because we believe Jesus is risen from the dead and he is always with us, we can face all challenges of life with boldness, calmness, and confidence.