

So Jesus Came Back to Life, So What?

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I. Introduction

My friend's 18yr old son and two of his highschool friends were killed Thursday at 1:00 am when a drunk 27yr old woman rear-ended their car and it burst into flames. What does it matter that Jesus came back to life 2,000 yrs ago, what can Jesus' resurrection do about this tragedy and my friend's pain? In the grand scheme of things, what does it matter that Jesus was raised from the dead? What difference could it make to anyone's life?

II. So a Dead Guy Came Back to Life, What's That to Me?

God didn't give us a world of misery; we got this world when we walked away from Him, the place He gave us was beautiful and full of promise and hope. We had harmony with nature, each other, and more importantly God; He walked with us and we walked with Him. It was a beautiful existence (Genesis 2). But one day we strayed from God; we left His protective care and guidance and our perfect world was destroyed. One of the reasons for our misery today is because we often stray from God: A girl decides to get drunk one night, she's not planning to kill anyone. Maybe she's in pain herself and thinks that alcohol will take her pain away. But then she decides to get in a car and drive off, unaware that this decision will take the lives of three teenagers.

But God didn't walk away from us, as soon as we took God's perfect creation, the home He gave us, and destroyed it, He ran to our rescue. He didn't yell at us; He didn't say "I told you so," He didn't strike us down, He didn't say, "I'm going to wipe you out and start over." What He did is speak comfort to us. As a concerned father, He asked us questions in order to show us where we went wrong and how to get back under His protective care and guidance (Genesis 3).

God suffered more than we will ever know in order to end our suffering, people often say that God doesn't care. He sits by and lets tragedies happen. There are many things you can say about God, but one of them is not, "God doesn't care." God cares more about our pain than we do. Our sins, the source of all our pain, don't just provoke God's wrath; they break His heart (Genesis 6:6). He knew that in order to remove our suffering, He would have to do away with our sins. He would have to find a way to free us from that thing inside us that drives us to walk away from Him and sin. He had to somehow find a way to give us a new heart, a new life, one that kept us close to Him and His protective care. He found that way, but it would end up causing Him terrible suffering, in fact, it cost Him His life. But He did it anyways. That's why God that Father made the only innocent person who ever lived pay for our sins. The death that we deserved, He took upon Himself. God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us so that we would have a brand new life in Him, never more to be separated from Him (Isaiah 53; 2 Corinthians 5:17, 21; Galatians 4:6).

It took Jesus' death to give us new life, but Jesus didn't stay dead. He came back to life, which is why His disciples, who were terrified and hopeless after Jesus' crucifixion (John 20:19), turned the world upside down with that very message, that Jesus had been raised from the dead in order to save a hopeless and lost world (Acts). In fact, the worst enemy of Christianity, Saul of Tarsus, became its most ardent supporter and recruiter par excellence when the resurrected Jesus appeared to him (Acts 9, 13-28). In fact, Paul willingly suffered as his Lord did to bring the Goodnews of Christ to the world (2 Corinthians 11:23-27). Why? Because it was no longer Saul of Tarsus living this life; it was the apostle Paul and Jesus living it together (Galatians 2:20).

What can Jesus' resurrection do for you today? My friend and his entire family and extended family will experience tremendous pain because their 18yr old son and nephew is gone. What can Jesus' resurrection do about their pain? In fact, can He help the 27yr old woman who caused all this? It's easy to hate someone like her. But her life will never be the same; she will be haunted by what she did for the rest of her life. What can Jesus do about someone who's so tortured by guilt that they're reduced to bitter tears? Can Jesus give us hope where there is none to be found?

The Lord restores Peter after his tragic failure: Peter thought quite highly of himself; he was always ready to lead even though he wasn't always qualified (Matthew 26:47-54; John 18:10-11). Sometimes he put his foot in his mouth (Matthew 16:21-23). He was also insecure inside (Luke 5:8). When his courage and loyalty were tested after he had proclaimed it so loudly to Jesus, he failed miserably (Luke 22:33, 54-62; John 13:36-37). But long before Peter failed his Lord, Jesus prayed for him and prophesied Peter's recovery (Luke 22:31-32). And after Jesus was raised from the dead, He personally restored Peter three times, the same number of times that Peter had failed Him (John 21:15-17). Peter, who was so brash and so bold but didn't know how to use that boldness, became one of the pillars and key leaders of the Church when Peter and the Lord did boldness together (Acts 1-15 [4:5-12; 5:27-33]; Galatians 2:9). And he like Paul looked at his suffering differently: Acts 5:40-42.

A boy grows up lost and confused, but the Lord restores him, he was spoiled by his mom and dad and if he didn't get his way, he gave up. He was raped by his cousin when he was 13yrs old which left him thinking that his manhood had been taken, that he was damaged goods, that there was something wrong with him. His mom taught him to put on a happy face, sweep things under the rug, happy cures everything that's bad. His dad taught him to show no emotion, there's no crying, no whining. He learned to go with the flow and became prideful, a liar, manipulative, and self-centered. But inside was a broken man and he became distant. He also became materialistic, which was something else his mother taught him. If you fail/screw things up, get a good job that pays a lot of money and you can buy your way to happiness. Good Job = Happy Life.

He got married and his wife got pregnant. He decided to go find that Good Job his mom talked about, which took him away from his pregnant wife. He thought he had it all planned out. When he graduated, he'd be set; he would enter a great career. But something happened and his plans were destroyed. All of a sudden his plan for happiness had fallen apart and he felt the pressure. How he would support his wife and son, what was he going to do, what could he do, it was all over. He was surrounded by men who drank and cheated on their wives and girlfriends and he soon was tempted by other women. What did he do? He did what he was taught to do, he gave up, put on a happy face and went with the flow. He cheated on his wife. When he finally told his wife three years later, it devastated her. He had come to the end of his rope. How could he recover? The Lord stepped in and began to ask him questions to show him how he got there and how to get out of it. As he began to walk with the Lord, his life was resurrected. He found his true identity.

III. Conclusion

So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."