

April 4, 2021 AM
Pastor Ken Hepner

“Balanced and Victorious Christian Living!”

Romans 6:1 – 10

Introduction:

This morning we celebrate the most amazing event ever recorded in human history: The resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord from the power of death and the grave. It is so important that we all understand what is so amazing about the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus on Friday and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus on Sunday morning! When we grasp the truth of what God was doing for us all in Christ Jesus our Lord, we can then move on to apply God’s eternal work of salvation in our hearts, souls, minds, and lives!

The Apostle Paul made a lot of tremendous and powerful statements about what God was doing in Christ Jesus, in his letters in the New Testament. In my view there are no more concise and powerful than what Paul wrote to the Corinthians as recorded for us all in II Corinthians 5:17b – 21:

“those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun! All this newness of life is from God, who brought us back to Himself through what Christ did. And God has given us the task of reconciling people back to Him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them... For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.”

As we read through the passages of what our Lord Jesus did for us, recorded in Scripture, it is so important that we are fully identified with all of the events of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we are to live a **balanced and victorious Christian life** we must all identify with the Cross on which He died bearing away our sins, and shedding His precious blood to cleanse us. The Cross is about forgiveness of sins.

But it is equally important that we identify with the resurrection life of Jesus Christ from the dead, because His new life is bestowed in us all giving us what Paul wrote about and we just read aloud together; *“those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!”*

This amazing three-day period of time from Friday to Sunday is what the entire Word of God is centered around. Everything in Scripture either looks forward to, records the events of, or looks back at what Jesus was doing on the Cross and the power of His resurrection life and victory for we who believe! It is really striking to see the difference between the events of Friday afternoon and Resurrection Sunday morning!

I know in my heart that it is all one atoning action of the Father God, the Son of God, and the Spirit of God, that you can’t have one without the other. Yet I am impacted deeply in my heart

this year, as I see the vast difference between Friday and Resurrection Sunday in God's Word. This year I have become keenly aware of a very important truth: I need full identity with both the Cross of Jesus and the Resurrection of Jesus in order to be **a balanced and victorious man of God!**

So as we meditate together this Resurrection Sunday morning I have some things for us to consider from God's Word in Scripture to enable us to see the lives of the men and women who would carry on Jesus' work in the Church after He was gone! Let's all see the vast difference between what was happening in the lives of those closest to Jesus on Friday afternoon when Jesus died and what was happening in their lives when they encountered the Risen Lord Jesus after Sunday morning took place!

The Two Disciples on the Emmaus Road

The disciples of Jesus had wildly different experience in their lives as they walked through His suffering and death, then encountered Him after He had risen from the dead. Let's look at what they thought about Jesus on Friday and Saturday, as compared with what they thought about Jesus after Sunday morning and the resurrection event! The attitudes of the disciples are found in the two men on the Emmaus Road, Luke 24:17 – 21:

*“You seem to be in deep discussion about something,” he (Jesus) said. “What are you so concerned about?” They stopped short, **sadness written all over their faces.** Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, “You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days!” “What things?” Jesus asked. “The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth,” they said. “He was a prophet who did wonderful miracles. He was a mighty teacher, highly regarded by both God and all the people. **But our leading priests and other religious leaders arrested him and handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. We had thought** he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago.”*

These two men are giving us pictures of what was going on in the lives of the disciples in microcosm. These men had spent three years with Jesus. They worked by His side, ate with Him around campfires, and heard His marvelous teaching. They were all convinced Jesus was the coming of the Holy One who would establish the kingdom of Israel on earth. But when Friday came and Jesus died on the Cross, their hopes were crushed and shattered and only despair flooded their hearts and minds now!

- On Friday Jesus was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, tried before Caiaphas, handed over to Pilate, and sentenced to die the worst possible death one could die at the time, crucifixion!
- On Friday the air grew cold and sky grew black for the last three hours of Jesus' life as our Savior hung on the Cross in horrible agony between two evil men.
- On Friday they heard His agonizing cries: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” “Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.” “Into your hands I commit my spirit. It is finished!”

- On Friday their hope as gone, Jesus was dead, and they followed Joseph and Nicodemus from afar as the two men who loved Jesus took care of His dead body and placed it in a garden tomb.
- On Friday the Church of Jesus is huddled in great fear, a small band of followers in an upper room, people who are lost, bewildered, and shaking with fear that the Romans will be sent by the religious leaders to get them and crucify them too. They are completely without hope!

But please note with me that these men and women are not experiencing **balanced and victorious Christian living**! At this point in time they have only experienced the Cross, the events of Good Friday as the Son of God died for them to bear away from them their sins. Sunday morning would bring a wildly different experience into their lives!

Once these people came into an encounter with the risen Christ Jesus, the Victorious Savior and Lord over all the powers of sin, death, and Hell, their experience would be wildly different, **balanced and victorious**! The two men on the Emmaus Road experienced it when they encountered the risen Lord Jesus. Luke 24:32 *“They said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us as He talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?’”*

How the gathered church was alive as the women who had been at the tomb burst into the room shouting, “Jesus is alive! We have seen Him and He talked with us!” How their hearts were so radically changed when Cleopas and his friend walked in with the same news! “Jesus is alive! We talked with Him on the road to Emmaus!”

Consider with me their joy and delight when they are locked in the upper room, doors closed and Jesus walked into their midst, and they can see and recognize Him! The gloom and despair of Friday have been replaced by the joy and exuberant praise of Sunday morning as they fellowshiped with the Risen King Jesus!

The Enemies of Jesus

On Friday afternoon the human enemies of Jesus rejoiced, gloated, mocked Him, and spoke words of slander about Him and to Him as He hung on the Cross. The religious leaders walked around like Peacocks and strutted as they flung dust in the air and insulted Him. On Friday afternoon they crowed at Jesus: “Go ahead and die Messiah! We’ll teach you to mess with our religious status quo we have worked so hard to create!”

And as these humanly motivated and conniving leaders do their stuff at the foot of the Cross they are seemingly unaware of just how amazingly they are fulfilling the words God gave to King David in Psalm 22:

Psalm 22:6 – 8: *“But I am a worm and not a man. I am scorned and despised by all! Everyone who sees me mocks me. They sneer and shake their heads saying, ‘Is this the one that relies on the Lord? Then let the Lord save him! If the Lord loves him so much let the Lord rescue him.’”*

Psalm 22:16 – 18 *“My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs; an evil gang closes in on me. They have pierced my hands and feet. I can count every bone in my body. My enemies stare and gloat. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garments.”*

But this religious glee on their faces will disappear on Sunday morning when someone bursts into the Sanhedrin and tells them Jesus’ body is no longer in the tomb! Now they call an emergency human meeting to cover their tracks and bribe the guards of the tomb to lie that His disciples came in the night and stole His dead body from the grave! Their glee and gloating on Friday afternoon has given way to another experience on Sunday morning, that first Resurrection Day!

On Friday as Satan watches the life of the Son of God ebb away, and He dies on the Cross, the powers of Hell all lit victory cigars. But what they have experienced is only their supposed victory in getting Jesus out of the way so people will stop seeing the presence and the power of God in and through His life on earth!

On Sunday morning Satan and all the powers of Hell had a vastly different experience with Jesus Son of God, Risen King over sin, death, and all the powers of Hell. In Jesus’ cell in the presence of Satan there is a rumbling sound, the cell door bursts open and the Son of God Risen from the dead, King of kings and Lord of lords comes out of Hell with all of the keys to every human cell that was ever created there!

Experiencing Friday: His Suffering and Death for Me:

Romans 6:2b – 4a *“Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? Or have you forgotten that when we became Christians and were baptized to become one with Christ Jesus, we died with him? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism.”*

Romans 5:1 *“Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.”*

For the first five chapters of Romans Paul has been establishing the truth of the doctrine of salvation by faith in what Jesus Christ has done for us all. The word faith and being justified by faith have become so watered down in our culture today, as we compare how we use the word with what the Biblical writers like Paul meant when they used it. Today we tell people to just believe and they are forgiven. But that is not what Paul meant when he wrote this word!

It is the Greek word Pistis! It comes from the Greek verb Peitho, which means, “fully persuaded, absolutely convinced, fully identified with Jesus with such strongly held beliefs that I entrust myself completely in reverence and I surrender my life to what I believe Jesus died to make available to me!”

It is this kind of believing, this fully identifying with Jesus Christ and what He did for me on the Cross that Paul directs the hearts of the Roman readers and you and me this morning! Paul is anointed of the Holy Spirit to tell us we must come face-to-face with the crucified Son of God,

and see Him dying on the Cross is for me personally. It is full identity with my Lord Jesus and what He did to secure the forgiveness of my sins, and to take them away from me forever!

What Paul is telling us as his readers is that there must be a full identity with Jesus by faith, what Jesus did for me on the Cross was to shed His precious blood to cleanse me personally. Jesus bore in His body my sins, the guilt and the shame I have felt, and bore them all away from me. That is what I am called to fully identify with in faith that what Jesus did has provided my forgiveness of sins!

Romans 6:5 – 7 *“Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised as he was. Our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin for when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin.”*

Do you hear the truth of the power over sin that is available to you and me because of what Jesus has done for us? By full identity with Jesus and His substitutionary death on the Cross for us we may experience the joy of sins forgiven and sin’s power to enslave us removed! But that is only the experience of Friday isn’t it?

Experiencing Sunday: Resurrection Life and Victory in My Life

Romans 6:4, 5 *“For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised as he was.”*

Romans 6:8 *“And since we died with Christ, we know we will also share his new life.”*

Now we come to the place of power for the believers in Jesus who walk in a relationship with God by faith in and through what Jesus has done to set us free from the power of sin, to forgive us all. The Lamb of God who was slain to take away the sins of the world is now the Risen Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God at the Father’s right hand making intercession for you and me!

For the believers in Jesus not only is our sin paid for and removed from us but now He has come to live in us by His Spirit, making us alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord! It is the role and ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit to create in us new hearts, to give us His power to live above the allure of sin and its ability to reign in our lives any longer!

The assurance of our victory over sin is that in the same way death couldn’t hold Jesus, sin has no power to put or keep the believers in Jesus in bondage to constantly doing things we do not want to do! The very same power that the Father God exerted in Jesus when He raised Him from the dead now lives in you and me, since we have come to believe in and receive the life of Jesus in our lives!

Romans 6:8 *“And since we died with Christ, we know we will also share his new life.”*

Ephesians 1:19, 20 *“I pray that you will begin to understand the incredible greatness of his power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms.”*

There is no doubt about it; full salvation is available to us if we if we will fully identify with what Jesus came to do for us on the Cross and in the empty tomb! We need no longer bow down to the bondage of sin, and then are held captive by our enemy. There is deliverance in Jesus, as we live a life that **identifies with the Cross and the resurrection life and victory of Jesus.**

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Romans 6:1 – 10

Introduction:

This morning we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord from the power of death and the grave.

Paul’s wonderfully concise and powerfully written in II Corinthians 5:17b –21.

It is so important to be fully identified with what Jesus did for us, if we are to live a balanced and victorious Christian life.

Full identity with Jesus on the C_____ the joy of sins forgiven and the resurrection L_____ of Jesus living in us, giving us new life

There is such a vast difference between what people experienced on Friday from what people experienced on Sunday. We need full identity with both events if we are to be balanced and victorious Christians today!

The Two Disciples on the Emmaus Road:

The disciples of Jesus had wildly different experiences in their lives as they walked through His suffering and death, then encountered Him after He had risen from the dead. Let’s look at the two men from Luke 24:17 – 21.

These two men are a picture of what was going on in the hearts and lives of the disciples in microcosm. They had spent so much time with Jesus and loved Him. When Friday came and He died, their hopes were crushed!

The events of Friday as Jesus hung on the Cross and died there ...

They are not experiencing balanced and victorious Christian living because they have only experienced Friday.

When Sunday came they would E_____ the Risen and Victorious Savior of the world, and their faith would be balanced and victorious!

The Enemies of Jesus:

On Friday afternoon the human enemies of Jesus gloated, mocked Him, and spoke words of slander about Him and to Him as He hung on the Cross.

These conniving religious leaders seem oblivious to the fact they are fulfilling the words of prophecy in Psalm 22:6 – 8 and 16 – 18

Their glee and joy will give way to another experience on Sunday morning!

On Friday, Satan and his kingdom rejoiced over the death of the Son of God on the Cross. They have taken out the voice of God!

On Sunday morning, Satan and his kingdom will have a very different experience with the risen King Jesus Lord over sin, death, and Hell!

Experiencing Friday: His Suffering and Death for Me!

Romans 6:2b – 4a and Romans 5:1

For the first five chapters of the letter Paul has been teaching the reader about being justified by **F**_____ in what Jesus Christ has done for us on the Cross! Faith has become so watered down in our culture!

Paul uses the Greek word pistis from the verb pietho, meaning “fully persuaded, absolutely convinced, fully identified with Jesus with such strongly held beliefs that I entrust myself completely in reverence and I surrender my life to what I believe Jesus died to make available to me!”

It is this kind of believing in Jesus that is **F**_____ **I**_____ with what Jesus did for me, on the Cross, which Paul directs the readers to see.

Romans 6:5 – 7 ... By fully identifying with Jesus we may experience the joy of **S**_____ forgiven and sin’s power to enslave me **R**_____!

Experiencing Sunday: Resurrection Life and Victory in My Life:

Romans 6:4, 5 and 8

Now we come to the place of power for the believers in Jesus who walk in a relationship with God by faith in and through what Jesus has done to **S**_____ **U**_____ **F**_____ from the power of sin, to forgive us all.

The assurance of our victory over sin is by faith in what Jesus has done to give us victory over sin. In the same way, death could not hold Jesus; sin has no power to put or keep believers in bondage!

Romans 6:8 ... Ephesians 1:19, 20

There is deliverance in Jesus, as we live a life that **identifies with the Cross and with the resurrection life and victory of Jesus.**

Discussion Starter Questions for Home Groups

1. The Scriptures clearly testify to the fact that Jesus Christ our Lord died on the Cross and was raised to life by the Father God. Why is the resurrection of Jesus such an important and carefully guarded truth in Scripture?
2. Why does Paul write so often about the gift of new life in Christ Jesus for all people, and tie it so directly to the Cross and the resurrection of Jesus?
3. What comes to your mind when you think about the disciple's experience on Friday when Jesus died? What do you think it was like for them when they saw Jesus raised from the dead on Sunday?
4. What was the perspective of the religious leaders on Friday at the Cross as Jesus died? What was their perspective after He rose on Sunday?
5. What comes to your mind when you think of the huge difference in Satan's kingdom between the events in Jesus life on Friday and on Sunday?
6. What do we experience in our spiritual lives when we are by faith fully identified with what Jesus did for us on the Cross?
7. What do we experience in our spiritual lives when we are by faith fully identified with what Jesus provided for us when He rose from the dead?
8. Read together aloud I Corinthians 15:1 – 11 and discuss insights you have regarding how Paul speaks of our victory in Jesus through His resurrection.
9. Read together aloud Paul's incredible pastoral prayer in Ephesians 1:15 – 23 and discuss insights you have about how we are to apply to our lives what Jesus died and rose again to make available to us.
10. What have you experienced personally in your spiritual journey with Jesus as you have taken by faith what He did for you on Friday on the Cross? And as you have taken by faith what He provided for you in His resurrection on Sunday?