

Springing Up Thoughts of Resurrection

Each season has its own unique qualities that make it either favored or not so favored by the human race. Some love the hot days of Summer while others dread them. Some thoroughly enjoy the cold days of Winter while others shudder at the thought of that time of year. In between those two extremes lie the transitional seasons of Autumn and Spring. Autumn, with its blast of colors in the trees, reminds us of the Master Artist whose creative processes paint every leaf. As each of these three seasons bears its own distinctive characteristics, so it is with Spring which, with its freshness and vibrancy brings to mind thoughts of renewed energy and life.

From a spiritual perspective, Spring is a daily reminder of not just life, but new life. The flowers that have laid dormant during the cold winter begin to show their heads at the first signs of Spring with many bursting into full bloom during the season. Birds that have rested quietly or even flown to warmer locations during Winter return to their songs and soon produce another generation of singers. Spring is a reminder of new life, of rebirth. Spring brings to the heart of a Christian thoughts of a new life in the hereafter, of resurrection into the eternal home with God.

The fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians is the definitive section of Sacred Scripture on the subject of resurrection. Paul begins by affirming the fact of the resurrection from the dead in demonstrating that a Christian's hope in eternity rests upon the truthfulness of Jesus Christ's resurrection. He writes, "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." (I Corinthians 15:13-19). The chapter closes with reflections on the resurrection of the righteous and concludes with these beautiful sentiments made possible by the power of resurrection. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Corinthians 15:55-57).

That all will be raised is confirmed by Jesus' statements in John 5:28-29. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Some of the new life we see in the spring is not welcome as weeds, insects and other less than desirable items are renewed. Spiritually speaking, all will be raised, but not all shall be resurrected toward the heavenly realm. For some, resurrection will be most unpleasant and a gateway into eternal damnation.

In I Thessalonians 4:13-18, Paul pictures the resurrection of the righteous as a reunion with those who are alive when the Lord comes in judgment. "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (verse 17). Just as we look forward to the freshness of Spring after a dark, cold winter, so we can look forward to the resurrection and reunion with the faithful who have gone on after life in a sinful world.

John expresses an exquisite thought in I John 3:2. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Resurrection for the righteous brings with it a face-to-face meeting with the Lord Himself. Can there possibly be any better motivation to prepare for or reason to desire resurrection than this? Spring brings the warmer air, the greening grass, the chirping birds and everything else of which we dream in winter's cold days. Resurrection brings us to our Lord and Savior. It's no wonder that John later wrote, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Revelation 22:20).

The season of Spring is indeed grand. Thoughts of resurrection and eternity with God and the faithful of all time are grander still.