

Bereans,

As I was seeking inspiration for an Easter encouragement for our people, I found myself visiting a book of short devotions that I had the privilege of writing for publication back in 2004: *Silver Threads and Golden Wisdom*, Thomas Nelson, Inc. Although it was not my intention at the outset, I have decided to encourage you with a few Easter centered devotions from that work. I hope that you are blessed by them.

Because I live, you will live also. – John 14:19 (NKJ)

With the passage of years, the cemetery has become a familiar place to me. Mother, Father, brothers, nieces and nephews have been gathered out of my sight to that place. Death leaves a wound that never entirely heals in this lifetime. Long years and many tears have not effaced the memories nor have they dimmed the love. What joy then, to know that I will see those who are dead in Christ again – because He lives they will live also.

Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst, and said to them, Peace be with you.” – John 20:19 (NKJ)

The disciples were defeated. They had left their old lives and livelihoods. Their reputations among their countrymen had been irreparably destroyed. The One on whom they had staked everything lay in a new-made tomb. The Jews, still jeering in the approaching night, might, at any moment, have demanded the sacrifice of their lives also. Into this scene stepped the risen Savior and spoke peace to their souls. Let the fact of Christ's resurrection bathe your troubled spirit in an unspeakable, and unfathomable serenity.

Then He bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. – Mark 15:46 (NKJ)

There is nothing in life that troubles us so much as the prospect of its end. The Christian need have no fear of the cold tomb. The same Lord who has preceded us in pain and weakness, has gone before us into the stillness of the grave. The knowledge that He has suffered these things removes the sting of them for us. His victory over death secures the same for us. Because He lives, we shall live also.

And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.

- Matthew 28:2 (NKJ)

There is subtlety here. We must never more think of Christ as being in the weakness of the tomb. The mighty Roman Empire has sealed the stone that was placed at the mouth of the sepulcher. Note that our risen Lord has all authority in heaven and earth. The angel is not bound by any worldly design, but he sits on the very symbol of it. We will rise from the dead because Christ has risen. No power on earth can prevent that.

Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”

– John 20:15 (NKJ)

There is a rebuke here. The women have risen early and have come with crushed hearts to minister to the broken body of our Lord. The sad truth is that they are weeping and seeking because of their unbelief. Better that they had heeded the Lord’s promise. Then they would have greeted this day with thanksgiving, knowing that He is raised and no longer among the dead. These are wise words for us also. Be joyful: Christ is risen.

And they said among themselves, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?” – Mark 16:3 (NKJ)

This is a worthy question. The days hasten on. Our paths, though winding, all tend toward an end. What hope do we have when the grave is closed around us? Who will roll away the stone for us? Our still forms, though dormant through a thousand budding Springs, shall not fail to hear the call of our risen Lord. The corruptible shall put on incorruptibility and our mortal bodies shall be raised to immortality.

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