

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TESTIMONY BY RESURRECTION

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Chapter Three MAKING THE TESTIMONY AN INWARD THING

(Illustration from John 11)

Oh, if there is one case which sums up all the others and brings us to the consummation of the life of the Lord Jesus here on this earth, it is the case of Lazarus, and in that we have this challenge. "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" It is a battle with unbelief that the Lord Jesus is engaged in in the case of Lazarus. He is seeking to draw out some faith in relation to this man, a positive ground. "I am the resurrection and the life." Taking the ground of God in Christ, positive ground.

It all comes back to this that, in the carrying forward of the testimony of the Kingdom of God, to the end it is going on this way. Again and again, scores and perhaps thousands of times in the course of our history and experience in relation to the testimony of Jesus, the next step forward will be only, but surely, on the basis of a new, positive, asserting faith in the God of resurrection. I am not sure that, as we go on, we are not going to find that the thing, from any other standpoint than God's, is going to be more and more impossible if there are grades and degrees of impossibility. But this is going to be driven down into us as we go on and we are going to realize increasingly how impossible this matter is but for God. And therefore we are going to be brought to the place where faith becomes far more triumphant if it will take God's positive ground, and in the end it will be such a tremendous situation of impossibility so far as the testimony of Jesus is concerned, that the consummation of that testimony will be by reason of one final triumphant act of faith on the part of God's children to go through. The testimony of Jesus will be carried through always on the ground of resurrection.

But do not let us think of the testimony of Jesus as a doctrine, as some teaching. Let us remember that it is a spiritual thing primarily. The testimony of Jesus is not primarily what you or I say. All that we can say can only be a description of truth. The testimony of Jesus is the living fact that Jesus lives, but His living represents supreme power in this universe, that He is supremely Lord throughout this whole universe. God has made Him that by resurrection.

The Son, the heir of all things, that is the testimony of Jesus. It is a fact on the ground of resurrection.

Now that fact, as I said at the beginning, is not an objective thing to which we point. That fact is a subjective thing which is an inward reality, and the church is called to carry on the testimony of Jesus in that subjective, inward way. That is the manifestation, the witness to the universe, to men and demons and angels, of the fact of the risen Christ as an inward reality. Well, that can come down to anything. It can come down to all our moods, all those experiences that are common to the children of God when they cannot explain things at all, why they feel so dead, so crippled. We cannot cover the ground where the testimony of Christ's risen life has to apply, but there it is.

But when it is a matter of carrying forward definitely and concretely the meaning of Christ as risen, Christ as Head, Christ as Lord, we are brought into conflict with every spiritual force that is opposed, and that testimony can only be carried through in the power of His resurrection.

God has a positive note about which there is no wavering, no suggestion of uncertainty. It is the resurrection of Jesus Christ and all that that means. Oh, what a lot there is in that familiar phrase, "the exceeding greatness of His power ... according to that working of the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead". "The exceeding greatness of His power". Perhaps we are beginning to understand a little in experience of what that means. The exceeding greatness of His power as over death, for if there is one thing that is coming home to the consciousness of many of us more than another, it is that it takes the exceeding greatness of His power to get us through some of the things that we are having to encounter and bring us out triumphant. There is a law connected with that "exceeding greatness of His power" — "to us-ward who believe". Our attitude has got to be toward the Lord — 'Lord, by faith I draw that power in my direction for the testimony's sake, for the sake of the Gospel, for the sake of Your Kingdom'. There it is, but it is only to us-ward who believe. We have to take up the positive attitude toward the positive fact, and we shall prove the power of His resurrection. May the Lord settle in us, in the midst of the difficulties, the trials, the adversities and the shakings, this positive note — Jesus lives! That means everything. Ultimate triumph; because Jesus lives, we will get there. We have got to settle that and bring that fact to bear upon every fresh situation and to write it over every fresh test of faith — Jesus lives! That spells the defeat of every force in this universe that is set against God's end. The appeal then to us is that we shall have in us God's positive, that

there will be nothing in us that is uncertain, wavering, questioning. One central, definite, positive note — God's positive. The Lord write it in us!

Chapter Five

LIVING IN THE REALITY AND POWER OF HIS RISEN LIFE

We have read that little fragment to do with the two witnesses (Rev. 11:3-12). The two witnesses exercised such a tremendous power and then were overcome and slain; their dead bodies lie in the street and then they rise up and were caught up to heaven. The point right at the heart of that thing (and nothing really matters but this because the whole book of the Revelation is centred upon one matter), is that the witness, the adequate witness, is life. The number two in many places in the Bible stands for adequate testimony. "He sent them forth two by two." That is adequate testimony. Here you have two witnesses. They stand in the power of life, and there is a manifestation of what that life means. It is terrific, if you read the thing again. All hell is allowed to be loosed upon that testimony, and it looks as though that adequate testimony is quenched, is dead.

There it lies for days. Satan from the pit has triumphed. But wait a bit, we will see. You cannot deal with life, God's life, like that. That is only allowed to show what that life really is. What is that life? Why, that life draws upon itself, in the permission of God. All the power of hell seems to go under it, and then strips it off and climbs to glory! It is the adequate testimony of life. You need not bother who the witnesses are. Get the principle. If you want to be in the line of the two witnesses, do not worry about names. Get into the life, the life will prove. That is the test of everything. It is the power, the effect, in the realm of the devil, that is where the ultimate registration is. There you have, right in the middle of that book, the two witnesses, adequate testimony in the power of divine life, and then the pit opens, hell divulges itself, and everything converges upon that testimony. It seems to overcome, to overpower, to quench and to finish, and then life enters in. It is all that is needed; that is God's answer.

God has only to put His life in and where is hell and where is earth? The testimony is in heaven. Hell is defeated! It is a wonderful thing, life in Jesus Christ.

You can follow through the book of Revelation. May the significance of what I have said be taken hold of. You need not worry about the message, the things said, the things left unsaid. It is what it is all pointing to, the tremendous, the

unspeakably great significance of our having in us now eternal life in Jesus Christ. It is big enough to attract all the attention of hell and to drag out all the power of Satan and his kingdom in desperate determination to try and quench it, because it means so much. It means their overthrow, it means the undoing of all their work, the change of the whole course of things, the bringing in of a new creation, the Kingdom of God — all bound up with this life in Jesus Christ. You understand the battle we are in, and why it is. May the Lord then make the testimony of Jesus be for us not just a teaching, but a living reality, the power of His risen life.