

RANSOMED *Heart* MINISTRIES

- April 2004 Newsletter -

Dear Friends,

I'm going to make an assumption. It's based on many, many conversations, emails, and experiences over the past several months. My assumption is this:

Things seem to be getting harder.
Or, more intense.
More...demanding.
The battle seems to be thicker.

Doesn't it? Okay, a few of you are sailing right along and life is going great, and we're very happy for the three of you. As for the rest of us, and for the folks we know, life is increasingly *hard*. Struggling relationships, struggling bodies, struggling finances, so many struggles...and so little time and energy to deal with it all.

We need more Life.

Isn't it true? That's what I walked away from Easter realizing this year. I am so, so very grateful for the cross (yes, I saw *The Passion*, too). Now what I need is resurrection, the triumphant life of God working in me, through me. I need what Paul is so passionately trying to get across in Romans 5-8.

Here it is in a nutshell: Just as one person did it wrong and got us in all this trouble with sin and death, another person did it right and got us out of it. But more than just getting us out of trouble, he got us into life! (5:17)

What we believe is this: If we get included in Christ's sin-conquering death, we also get included in his life-saving resurrection. (6:8)

A new power is in operation. The Spirit of life in Christ. (8:2)

When our understanding of salvation is reduced merely to "forgiveness of sins," it doesn't help us with all this human need, with our desperate need for Life. But salvation is *so much more*. As Paul says, we are "saved by his life!" (5:10). So Willard writes, "The simple and wholly adequate word for salvation in the New Testament is 'life.'" (*The Spirit of the Disciplines*). Okay. Now we're talking. *Life* is available to us. Not to take away every struggle – but to give us strength to triumph over many, and strength to live through those that cannot be solved in this life.

I'm seeing more and more that we need to embrace and learn to live in the resurrection life of Christ...now. So, here is how I've been praying lately to understand, enter into, embrace the life God has for us. I share this prayer in hopes it will help you, too. The life is ours to have.

O God, you are my life. You have breathed into me the breath of life and I have become a living being (Gen 2:7). My very existence and my being flow from You. In You I live and move and have my being (Acts 17:28). You are the Vine and I am a true branch of Yours (John 15:5). Father, you have made me alive with Christ (Eph 2:4-5). Jesus has become my second Adam a life-giving spirit (1 Cor 15:45). He came that I might have life, and have it abundantly (John 10:10). I have Jesus Christ, and I have his life (1 John 5:12). Christ is now my life (Col 3:4).

Dear Father, restore this frail branch in full union with the trunk. Restore my full union with Christ and with You. I return myself to You – my body, soul and spirit. I return myself fully to the Source of Life. May I be one with You even as Jesus was one with You (John 10:30, 17:21). Let Your life flow through me, and flow and flow throughout this day. O Life, live into me. Encompass me and all that I am. Well up within me, O Spring of Life let Your river flow through my heart, soul, mind and strength (John 7:38). You are the God who gives life to the dead (Rom 4:17). And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in me (and You are living in me), he who raised Jesus from the dead will also give life to my mortal body through his Spirit, who lives in me (Rom 8:11). O God, fill me with the resurrection power of Jesus Christ in my body, soul and spirit.

For it is Christ in me that is my hope of glory (Col 1:27). It is the triumphant life of Jesus Christ that has become my life. I live by Him. I reign in life through Him, by the life of Christ in me. For if, when I was Your enemy, I was reconciled to You through the death of Your Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall I be saved through His life (Rom 5:10). I announce that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death (Rom 8:2).

I now claim the resurrection triumph of Jesus Christ against all forms of death and destruction come against me. By Jesus Christ and his great work I cut off every attempt of my enemies to steal, kill or destroy my life. As Jesus said, no one takes my life from me (John 10:18). Death has no mastery over Jesus now (Rom 6:9) and death has no mastery over me, for I am united with Christ, one Spirit with him (1 Cor 6:17). I am in Christ (1 Cor 1:30). And Christ is in me (Col 1:27). I claim the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus now against every black law of sin and death and every foul power of destruction aimed against me. By the authority of Jesus Christ I bind and banish all forms of bondage and death from me now – all spirits, all witchcraft, all foul powers. I cancel all claims against me by the work of Jesus Christ (Col 2:13-15).

I take my place in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and in his life. I claim the resurrection of Christ against my enemies and their devices and I bind them from me, and send them to their judgment, in the Mighty Name of Jesus Christ and to his everlasting glory. I choose to live by the strength of Jesus Christ, and by his mighty life. In Jesus' Name.

With love, and hope,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'John' written in a cursive, flowing style.