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Daily Devotional - Thursday, April 17, 2025 - Prayers From Heaven

APRIL 17TH 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Thursday, April 17, 2025 - Prayers From Heaven

When I announced my retirement, the thing most people wanted to know was what I would do with my time. “I am going to sit on the beach and think about God,” I told them. It was an exaggeration, of course. I live in Michigan, so the beach is too cold in the winter! But have you ever wondered how Jesus occupies Himself now that He has risen from the dead?

Paul reveals that one of the things Jesus does is pray. This was something He did even before His resurrection. But now Jesus does so from a position of complete victory. His sacrifice for sin is complete. He has been raised to life and restored to His rightful place at the Father’s right hand (v. 34). The apostle reminds us of these things to encourage us in the present and reassure us about the future. For those who belong to Christ, God “works for the good” in every circumstance (v. 28). Christ’s death and resurrection have guaranteed the believer’s complete transformation into His image (v. 29). What is more, as Christ prays for us from heaven, the indwelling Holy Spirit “intercedes for us through wordless groans” (v. 26).

No wonder Paul concludes that nothing we face can “separate us from the love of Christ” (v. 35). Since the entire Trinity is at work in our salvation to make us “more than conquerors through him who loved us,” why should we have any doubt about what the future holds (v. 37)? The level of certainty that Paul describes in these verses is absolute. The ultimate outcome depends on God, not our situation. God’s accusing Law was the chief impediment that stood in our way. Now that Jesus has died and risen for us, there is no longer any charge that can be brought against us (v. 33).

Go Deeper

How would you use the assertions Paul makes in these verses to reassure another believer who was worried about their salvation?

Pray with Us

What can separate us from the love of Christ? Paul gives a definitive answer in today’s passage: Nothing! What a wonderful assurance! Holy Spirit, guide us into life rooted in God’s enduring love.

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, April 16, 2025 - Raised by the Spirit

APRIL 16TH 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, April 16, 2025 - Raised by the Spirit

Antinomian is a word that combines a Greek preposition that means “against” with the Greek word for “law.” It may seem as if this is a good way to describe Paul’s view. Yet in Romans 3:31 Paul asserts the opposite: “Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.” How does faith uphold the Law? By the Spirit!

In Romans 8:2, Paul says that “the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.” This is a contrast between two “laws” or controlling principles that shape behavior. One operates in the realm of flesh, which “cannot please God” (v. 8). The other is the rule of the Spirit, who “gives life because of righteousness” (v. 10). Those who are in Christ are still subject to mortality. We will die. However, when we are indwelt by the same powerful Spirit who raised Christ from the dead, death is not our ultimate destiny because “if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is

living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you” (v. 11).

The hope of resurrection lies in the future, but its power is something that those who belong to Christ have already begun to experience. The reality of the indwelling presence of the Spirit obligates those who belong to Christ to live out of the realm of the Spirit (v. 12). The Law, even though it is “holy, righteous and good,” can only operate externally (7:12). It reveals the standard but does not enable us to meet it. Its weakness is the flesh, which “does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so” (8:7).

Go Deeper

Is Paul “against” the Law? How does a life lived in the power of the Spirit differ from an “external” Law-oriented approach?

Pray with Us

Holy Spirit, You are our Advocate, Comforter, and Helper! Echoing today’s devotional, we ask You, the Spirit of Life, for Your help and strength to live lives worthy of God’s kingdom.

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, April 10, 2025 - Back to School

APRIL 10TH 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Thursday, April 10, 2025 - Back to School

What did the disciples think would happen next after Jesus proved to them that He was alive following the resurrection? We get a clue from the question they asked in verse 6 of today's reading: "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" They thought it was the end of the story. Or, perhaps more accurately, the beginning of a new one. What I don't think they expected was that they would have to go back to school.

Verse 3 says Jesus "appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God." His aim was twofold. First, He would provide His followers with irrefutable proof of His bodily resurrection (v. 3). Jesus backed this claim by being with them in the flesh and eating with them (v. 4). Second, He would finish instructing them and prepare them for their next stage of ministry. For forty days, Jesus taught them about the kingdom of God (see

Matt. 4:23). Yet despite all this instruction, His apostles still had questions. Specifically, they wanted to know when the kingdom would be restored to Israel (v. 6).

In his reply, Jesus pointed out that the timing was not their concern. The times and dates are things that “the Father has set by his own authority” (v. 7). The immediate task that lay before them was to wait for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit who would empower them to bear witness “in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (v. 8). Jesus had spoken to them about the ministry of the Spirit. He had called Him “another advocate” who would “help you and be with you forever” (John 14:16). He is also called “the Spirit of Christ” (Rom. 8:9; 1 Peter 1:11).

Go Deeper

How does Jesus describe the ministry of the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:8? How does the Spirit help us?

Pray with Us

It’s amazing to realize that Your resurrection, Lord, is only the beginning of our new life with You. Thank You for giving us Your victory on the cross and inviting us to Yourself—to receive a gift of life.

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, April 9, 2025 - Starting Over

APRIL 09TH 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, April 9, 2025 - Starting Over

Pastor and author Erwin Lutzer has called failure “the back door to success.” But at first, it often just feels like failure. When we stumble, we may find it difficult to get back up and start again. Even after seeing the risen Christ, Peter seemed to go backward rather than forward. When Peter made the sudden decision to go fishing in John 21:3, he was not merely looking for a way to pass time. Perhaps it was a decision born of necessity. Were the disciples running low on food? Did Peter feel his denial of Christ had disqualified him from serving the Lord, and all that was left was a return to his old vocation?

Whatever motivated Peter, the result was a failure that mirrored his initial call (Luke 5:4–11). When someone on the shore urged them to try again on the other side of the boat, it was John who recognized it was Jesus (v. 7). Jesus’

repeated questions and the command to “feed” His sheep in verses 15–17 could imply Peter’s sudden return to his old vocation sprang from concerns about the practical needs of the small band of disciples. Yet when they reached the shore with their miraculous catch, Jesus already had “a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread” (v. 9). Jesus’ questions were not intended to shame Peter but to remind him of his true vocation and recommission him. In addition to providing an opportunity to reaffirm his commitment three times (one for each denial), He promised that Peter would one day make good on his boast that he would lay down his life for Jesus (John 13:37).

Jesus’ promise made Peter curious about John’s fate, prompting a quick rebuke. Jesus’ new marching orders for Peter are the same as His original command: “You must follow me” (v. 22).

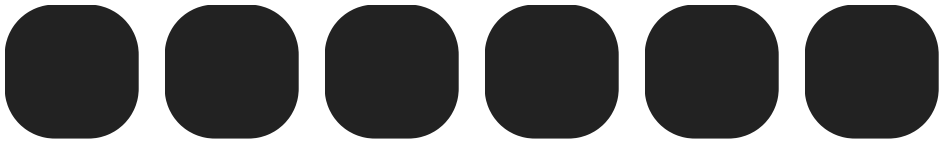
How do you tend to compare yourself with other believers? What kind of obstacles might this create for you in following Jesus?

Christ, protect us from repeating the apostle Peter’s mistakes. May we never grow so fearful and discouraged that we “go back to fishing”! Give us a steadfast faith to remember Your marching orders to Peter: “You must follow me.”

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Daily Devotional - Monday, April 7, 2025 - Peace and Doubt

APRIL 07TH 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, April 7, 2025 - Peace and Doubt

Empiricism is a philosophy that says truth is based on experience. The scientific method is an empirical approach that tests ideas through repeatable observations that produce the same result. The refusal of Thomas to believe the word of those who had seen and heard Jesus displays an empirical approach. It is also scientific in a way. Thomas devised a kind of “experiment” to test the claim that Jesus was alive: “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will

not believe” (v. 25).

Thomas was not alone in his doubt. According to Luke 24:11, the other disciples had difficulty accepting the testimony of Mary Magdalene and the other women who had seen Jesus at the tomb. Their skepticism was only remedied by experience. Jesus appeared again on “the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders” (v. 19). The picture John paints is not one of faith and courage. It shows the disciples hunkered down behind locked doors and terrified.

Jesus did not bother to knock and wait to be let in. He “came and stood among them.” Nor did He chide them for their unbelief and fear. Instead, He greeted them with a customary “Shalom.” Jesus breathed on them in anticipation of Pentecost, told them to receive the Holy Spirit, and commissioned them as His witnesses and messengers (vv. 21–22). This commission clarifies the nature of their gospel. The gospel promise is that all who accept the apostles’ testimony about Jesus will find forgiveness. The peace that Jesus offers and the promise of the Holy Spirit do not belong only to those who have seen Him with their own eyes but to all who will believe.

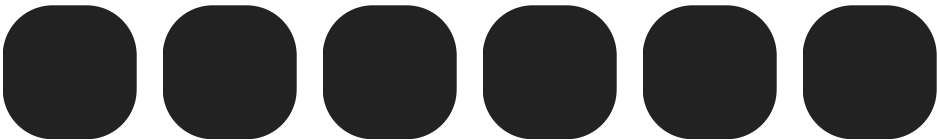
In what sense is the promise of the gospel based on empirical fact? What does Jesus promise? Have you experienced this peace?

As we await Easter, we thank You, Lord, for the life, righteousness, and peace Your resurrection gives Your followers. Thank You for extending Your gifts and promises to us as well—those who didn’t see You and yet believed.

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