

NOT IN VAIN

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It has been a week since we celebrated Resurrection Sunday, and the phrase 'not in vain' still reverberates in my mind. What is "not in vain", you may ask? Paul answers this question with the truth that, because Jesus Christ is risen, all that we do has a purpose, and eternal value! But even before he reaches this point, he explains to his original audience, the saints or believers in Corinth, that apart from the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, life is meaningless and futile. He writes, "and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Cor 15:14).

That only means that we are still in our old state of life—in sin. It also means that all the good that I think I do, is futile, and irrelevant, for I still cannot be good every day. If Jesus Christ has not been raised, all the good I think I do, is futile; it is not enough to pay for the sins that I have committed. It only means that I do not have hope—that after this life, I am still bound to suffer eternally.

But the resounding truth that is put before us to remember, ponder, and hold on to is that JESUS IS ALIVE! He was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is now at the right hand of the Father, interceding and preparing a place for us in heaven! The truth of the Resurrection is our Blessed Hope.

It is in the Blessed Hope that only Christ can give, that we have the power and the confidence that everything about our lives and everything we do for the glory of God will never be in vain (15:58). This was Paul's last exhortation to

the saints in Corinth so that they can live out the new life that they have in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11).

This is the Lord's Word not only for the church in Corinth but also for us today, in 2023. Because of the resurrection of Christ, we live a life that is victorious. Victorious because we have been set free from sin and are now alive to God in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:7-11)! Because of this truth, it is good for us to remember that sin has no more dominion over us (v.9), and thus we can say NO to it.

We are victorious because, the Holy Spirit is at work in the life of the believer and is the power that propels and emboldens the saints to carry on with the work the Lord has privileged his disciples to do!

There is power in our daily manifestation of who Christ is in our lives. As a people made holy by God, we are called to live holy lives to declare the power of the holy God in our lives. In GCFSM, this is to SHOW to our family, peers, and the people we associate with what Jesus Christ looks like as we live out and SHOW the LOVE of Jesus daily.

There is also power in our declaration of who Jesus is! Jesus left us with a Great Commission to accomplish—not by our own strength but by the power of the Holy Spirit, who is in us. We have the Holy Spirit who emboldens and empowers us to declare who Jesus is to the people we live and work with.

These truths should allow us to grow in our faith and accomplish what the Lord has for us. However, we are still in this broken world of sin and confusion, which hinders us from pursuing what is already in store for us. Thus, Paul leaves the Corinthian believers with three exhortations. He calls on them **to be steadfast** in their faith. It was Paul's desire for the saints to carry on with their faith despite the challenges of their day. They, too, were exhorted **to be immovable**—to stay put, and keep steady. The only way a believer can be steady is when He is rooted in what He knows about the Lord Jesus. And this is why, Paul lovingly elucidated for them the beauty and the power they have because Jesus has risen. His third exhortation at the end of the chapter was for them **to always abound in the work of the Lord**. Paul reminds the church to keep on serving, to keep on doing the work the Lord has assigned for them to do, because he knew that their lives and the work that they do in the name of the Lord and for the glory of the Lord is and will never be in vain!

Jesus is alive. He is powerfully at work in our lives as a church. Let us carry on with His work of SHOWING AND SHARING THE LOVE AND THE GOSPEL OF THE Lord Jesus Christ. Let us be ROOTED in HIS Word. Let us KEEP on Serving for the sake and glory of His name, for all these will never be in vain! ✠