

After Resurrection Sunday: Samuel Rodriguez Says Believers Now Have a Responsibility

Not long after Jesus' Resurrection and ascension into heaven, many of His followers began traveling to Jerusalem, Nazareth, Bethlehem, the Mount of Olives and the Sea of Galilee as a way of recalling sacred events, heavenly miracles, divine prophecies and revelations.

Aware that God had lived as a man in these very locales, they eagerly traveled the same roads, visited the same synagogues and worshiped at the place of his crucifixion and the cave believed to have been His three-day tomb. Still to this day, Christians visit what is now called the "Holy Land" to see the places where Jesus spent His time on earth.

Before believers undertook any of these pilgrimages, the Bible indicates that God designated some sites as sacred. Such is the case for Gilgal, a place identified in the Old Testament as memorable for several significant reasons. When the Israelites finally reached the promised land after their forty years of wandering in the desert, Moses had died, and God chose Joshua to take command.

Afterward, God told Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you" (Josh. 5:9).

Parenthetically speaking, the instructions coming from heaven implied a clear message to these younger generations: These newly circumcised men were getting another chance, a fresh start. They were now accomplishing what their ancestors did not.

Easter celebrations provide us an emotional Gilgal—God’s way of allowing us to come clean before Him and start anew. It is as if the calendar is reset to begin a new year, a fresh beginning, a reboot of the spiritual system we have been running in the hard drive of the soul.

When we claim the Resurrection of Jesus in our lives on Easter Sunday, we are not only creating an altar to praise and thank God for getting us to this point—we also remember that God completely separated us from whom we used to be. Our past sins, failures, shame and fear no longer define us. Instead, we discover God extends grace if we will only stop to take hold of it.

At your Gilgal, at the empty tomb, God completely separates you from the old you, the broken you, the sinful you and the defeated you at the empty tomb. God is now telling you that nothing in your past can stop your anointed future. This is the Easter message in one sentence: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Cor. 5:17, NIV).

Your heavenly Father tells you he rolled the stone away from the grave, removing the shame, condemnation and pain.

The Holy Spirit reminds you that you have died to sin and been resurrected in grace. Along with the apostle Paul and other believers, you can proclaim, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

When you visit Gilgal and remember the Resurrection, God reminds you that you are not that person anymore. You are now His beloved son or daughter. You are not what you have done or left undone. You are not who others say you are or want you to be.

After you have been to the cross of Christ and been washed by the blood of the Lamb, God gives you His dream for your life, and the pain of your past becomes hope for a better future.

God in Christ did all the heavy lifting. Now, you are responsible for deciding whether you will delay the glorious adventure God has for you or take the next step. {eoa}

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