

When God Resurrects a Vision

At one of the darkest moments of my life, I learned that God's resurrection power is at work even now on behalf of the believer.

In my situation, a God-given vision had died, and I could see no way of it ever coming back to life. It was at that critical moment that I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Don't be afraid of death because I am the resurrection!"

A God-Given Vision Dies

It was the first year of our marriage, and after months of prayer and fasting, we had begun a new congregation and ministry in Sue's hometown. We experienced growth, and things seemed to be going well when suddenly everything seemed to begin going wrong. Through a series of unforeseen circumstances, we lost everything, including the building in which we were meeting, most of our congregation and a place for us to live.

It was a very trying and humiliating time. In the midst of it all, I received word that my brother back in Oklahoma had been killed in an accident. I flew out to preach my brother's funeral, leaving behind another kind of death. The small group I left behind was discouraged and so the meetings stopped while I was gone. My mother-in-law, Chris Stubbs, later reminisced, "That was when it all died."

I returned home still determined to trust God, even if I did not understand all that was happening. One young couple that had remained loyal through it all asked to meet to talk and pray. We met at an outdoor picnic area where we sat at picnic tables and talked and then entered into a time of prayer.

The Holy Spirit Brings Hope of Resurrection

Sitting on a picnic table with my feet on the bench, I heard Cara, their 5-year-old daughter, praying in tongues nearby. Suddenly, like a gusher breaking forth, I sensed the Holy Spirit flowing up out of my spirit and I too began praying in tongues. It was a surreal experience, for all the time I was praying in the Spirit I was hearing the words, "Don't be afraid of death because I am the resurrection."

I knew it was the Lord speaking to me about the vision that had died. For the first time, I realized that the resurrection is more than a doctrine about a past or future event, but is a present reality personified in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth.

The words of Jesus to Martha in John 11:21-25 were suddenly alive to me. You will recall that Martha said to Jesus concerning her brother Lazarus: *"Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died,"* expressing faith in what He could have done in the past. When Jesus replied, *"Your brother will rise again,"* Martha then put her faith in a future event, saying, *"I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."* Jesus then brought her back to the present by speaking those amazing words, *"I Am the Resurrection,"* and then raising Lazarus from the dead.

Resurrection Life Bursts Forth

Filled with fresh faith from that experience, I acquired a meeting room at a nearby community center and announced a "charismatic" meeting on Thursday nights. In the second meeting, a Catholic brother came up to me and told me he was there on business from another city and that, in his hotel room, God had instructed him to come to our meeting.

As we fellowshiped further, he revealed that he was managing property in that area for a large national corporation. I shared that we were looking for a place for our meetings, and the next day, he took us to a building that had been the

offices for a construction company that had gone belly-up.

It was obviously a God-thing, and we agreed to rent it. He gave us the first month rent-free and had the tanks completely filled with heating oil to get us through the winter. The resurrection was beginning!

We had our first meeting the next Sunday with a handful of people sitting on old office chairs that had been left behind. Shortly thereafter a roommate from Bible school, Larry Hill, came for a two-week visit, and a powerful revival broke forth.

Without any advertising, the building filled with people. Many stood around the walls because there were no seats available. They came because of the presence and power of God that was being manifest. The resurrection life and power of Jesus was flowing.

It was the first time I saw people fall “forward” when overwhelmed by God’s power. These were no “courtesy drops” and some fell without anyone praying for them. I smile when I think how such manifestations would cause confusion for today’s “catchers” who have been trained only in catching people who fall backward. Real revival from heaven is not always so easy to manage, for God does not confine Himself to our carefully prepared channels of protocol and order.

His Resurrection Life Is With You Today

That was almost 40 years ago, but it was a life-changing moment that helped me to begin living in the realization that the resurrection power of Jesus is at work in our lives here and now. Resurrection power has been personified in the Person of Jesus Christ, and He is with and in His people today.

If, therefore, you have a dream or a vision that has died, take heart. The resurrection life and power of Jesus is flowing today, and He would say to you, “Don’t be afraid of death because I am the resurrection!”

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