

Sunday, May 5, 2013

Raising Lazarus and The Resurrection of Christ.

The church places the powerful miracle of raising Lazarus at the beginning of Holy Week to draw few things to our attention:

1- **God's plans in the story of raising Lazarus were strange and inscrutable at first.** While Lazarus was sick, Jesus stayed away from him for two days, not responding to his calling to come and heal him, but the events changed later to the glory of God. Likewise Christ's plans during this week were mysterious and sometimes unfathomable to the Apostles (John 13:7), nonetheless, they all turned afterwards to the glory of God.

We too, when incomprehensible things happen in our lives, we should trust that God's plans will deliver us and that He will bring out of the strong something to eat (Judges 14:14) and turn all things to our good.

2- **The story of raising Lazarus was never void of suffering in most of its chapters:** Illness, sadness, and the anguish of death. Nonetheless, the joy that concluded the story was so overwhelming and echoed so far away.

Likewise, the Lord Jesus went through the winepress of suffering, both physically and psychologically, up to death. However, He conquered death and broke its bondage, He resurrected victoriously, and granted to us the joy of victory.

3- **During the events of raising Lazarus, the Lord revealed Himself as the Resurrection and Life,** and that whoever believes in Him though he may die, he shall live. He is Life and He also grants life that defeats death to whomever believes in Him.

The church wants to make this fact clear to us while we see Him being humiliated, pain afflicted, and subjugated. Resurrection and life are in Him even though He is hung motionless on the cross. Resurrection and life are not strange to Him, but death is. Nonetheless, He went through death out of His love for us in order to break its thorn on our behalf.



The miracle then is in His crucifixion not in His resurrection because resurrection is His nature!

The church surrounded Holy Week with two resurrections, the resurrection of Lazarus and the Resurrection of Christ so that we experience suffering without being shaken or defeated by it. We are supported by the power of Resurrection which is granted to us from our resurrected and victorious Christ. Consequently, we can face any suffering in our lives, and even welcome suffering with the courage of victorious heroes.

We obtained the power of Resurrection by dying and resurrecting with Christ in baptism. Resurrection is renewed within us daily through prayer, communion, and being nourished by the word of life.

This is the power that we chant with and proclaim in our wonderful praise with the Psalmist:

“The Lord is my strength, my praise, and has become my salvation”

May you be filled with power and joy of this feast of Resurrection.

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