

Triumph in Both Resurrections

✦ **First – by faith in the Son** (vv.25-27)

✦ **Second – for life everlasting** (vv.28,29)

In the name of Jesus, our triumphant Lord and Savior, dearly redeemed saints of God:

One of my favorite Bible passages is Romans 12:21: *“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”* (NIV) Many times when the chips were down and everything seemed to be going the wrong way, especially when misjudged or treated unfairly, this Word of God gave me hope.

To really appreciate this, read what Jesus was up against here in John 5. Talk about evil! Next time you feel mistreated, think about Jesus being persecuted because He healed an invalid who could not walk for thirty-eight years. Was everyone happy? Not “the church people.” Jewish religious leaders were upset because Jesus healed on the Sabbath. God’s law said, “No work” – in order to enjoy Sabbath-rest hearing God’s Word. These religious zealots insisted on their own interpretation: “No mercy! The man must remain paralyzed until tomorrow!” When Jesus gave His credentials for this Sabbath Day miracle, *“the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.”* (5:18)

Sometimes you just want to lie down and die. Instead, follow Jesus as SAINTS TRIUMPHANT. The Holy Spirit is about to pull back the curtain on eternity and reveal something you may not have realized. Every believer is between resurrections. Jesus gives us **Triumph in Both Resurrections...**

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Hopefully, you were here last week to hear the last verse of the Gospel Lesson, John 5:24: *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”* In our Children’s Lesson we talked about the Hinckley Fire on September 1, 1894. The escape train just barely made it across the Brule River before the burning wooden bridge collapsed. Jesus is our bridge from death to life. And He wants us to listen to God’s Word, the Bible, and believe what the Father says about Jesus: *“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”* (Matthew 17:5 NIV) Everyone who hears and believes already *“has eternal life and will not be condemned.”* We can watch the raging fire safe on the other side where we have *“crossed from death to life”* for eternal blessings in Christ alone.

Yet do we always want to *“overcome evil with good”*? As traffic congestion has doubled since 1980 on Twin Cities’ freeways, who of us has not wished for a machine gun on his car? After driving with high speed, skillful drivers in Italy, it’s hard to come back to the creepy, crawly ineptitude of American drivers. But just the other day if two women talking had not been watching out for me, the accident would have been my fault. Later I thanked them for watching out for foolish drivers like me.

Years ago a mild mannered Christian was getting serious about revenge on an in-law for mistreating his daughter. But again Romans 12 counseled him: *“It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.* (12:19) And the Lord did repay. That was a stubborn unbeliever who never repented. He died alone in an outhouse after running sprints up hill. Conditioning can kill you, and unbelief will damn you.

We need to **Triumph** in the *“first resurrection”* by faith in the Son. You heard Jesus before: *“I tell you the truth,”* Jesus says because the truth is all He can say, *“a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.”* This is the Word of God Incarnate, the extension of the Father’s loving power to save. The Word took on human flesh and blood to bring God to us since we could never climb to Him. *“In him was life,”* John said in Chapter 1, *“and that life was the light of men.”* (1:4) And now that living Word of God is telling the Jews who want

to kill Him, ***“For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.”***

Over 400 years earlier, the same eternal LORD God had promised through Daniel: ***“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”*** (Daniel 7:13f NIV) That’s one of the things I love about the God of the Bible. Along with so many practical things like, ***“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good,”*** He says things no human mind could conceive. And whatever God says, He will bring to pass no matter how many foes in heaven or hell line up to oppose Him. He will bring the saints in His Church Militant into the Church Triumphant.

This ***Son of Man*** has sent His Holy Spirit in Word and sacrament to bring sin-dead souls to life . This is what the book of Revelation calls ***“the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.”*** (Revelation 20:6 NIV) God says that if you believe in Jesus as your Savior from sin, ***“you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.”*** (1 Peter 1:23 NIV) Now that you are enjoying new life in Christ, **Triumph in Both Resurrections, First – by faith in the Son**, and...

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Over the years there have been some very determined individuals dead set against this, absolutely firm and unwavering that this should never be. Jesus’ disciples must have been surprised that He would also be the judge of all in the end, but our Lord told them, ***“Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.”*** Maybe you’ve heard some of the stories about scoffers and stubborn unbelievers trying to prevent such a rude awakening on the Last Day. Sailors figured they had nothing to worry about if their bodies would be consumed by sea creatures and scattered over the seven seas. Humanists have tried the cremation trick by having their ashes thrown to the winds to escape resurrection call of God Almighty. And now a world of sinners is depending on evolution in hopes that there is no God to finally call them to account on Judgment Day. But the LORD God is literally “the One who exists.” And the LORD God who created those molecules can surely gather them together again when His voice pierces the silence of the grave and calls everyone to come out.

Stand in the middle of Fort Snelling Cemetery sometime and look at all those crosses lined up as far as you can see. How will it be for you on that Day when Christ calls, “Come forth!?” If you’ve already taken part in the ***“first resurrection”*** by believing in Jesus as your Savior, then keep trusting God’s promise from the resurrected Christ, ***“who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”*** (Philippians 3:21 NIV) The bodies of unbelievers will be changed in the opposite direction like the movies of the living dead, only far more gross and disgusting in fire and worms forever.

But how can you know and show that you have saving faith today? Here is the evidence: ***“Those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.”*** As naturally as a good apple tree bears juicy fruit, so believers visit the sick, comfort the sorrowing, feed the hungry, quench the thirsty out of pure love and thankfulness without keeping track – until the King says, ***“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”*** (Matthew 25:40) But those who habitually practice worthless wickedness are giving evidence of their unbelief. The **Second** resurrection will enter them into a state of eternal destruction. You already know God’s verdict. Now let your light shine by faith in thankful works of love. Amen.