Reflections on Resurrection

By Kim Gordiany

At The Geneva School Chapel is conducted weekly for grammar school students. Dialectic and rhetoric students alternate weekly between chapel services and discipleship groups. Last year, Chapel focused on “Encounters with Jesus,” looking at the Gospels. Since Easter was so late in the spring last year, several of Mr. Ingram’s later Chapel homilies were on the certainty of the resurrection and on the disciples who spent time with Jesus prior to his ascension. Christ’s resurrection became the hinge of history, the cornerstone of our faith, and theme of every sermon Peter and Paul preached in the book of Acts.

I read through Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians each year, and I find that his prayer in chapter one never fails to cause my heart to beat just a bit faster. As I grow in my faith the Word reads true. Verses 17–20 are a portion of that prayer (bold italics are mine):

…that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places…

I am truly not able to fathom the greatness of God’s power at work toward me. God, who is so awesome … so infinite … has the greatness of his power at work toward me. And in fact, the greatness of his power is at work within me by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. I am God’s temple. His Spirit abides in me; he does not just visit biannually, or even just weekly. I realize that the sum of all the earthly regimes, military might, and economic engines is not even close to the strength of the power of God in the life of every individual believer in Christ.

Paul continues his thought in chapter two of Ephesians by writing that though we were once dead because of our sin nature, God has made us now to be alive. This speaks to us of God’s resurrection power. Just as Christ resurrected from the dead and is seated in heaven, we have been resurrected and are walking in newness of life. We are raised for a purpose.

Paul’s letter to the Romans gives us more insight into the resurrection power at work in us as believers:
Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of his death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of his resurrection...(Romans 6: 3–5)

In what follows that passage Paul exhorts us not to let sin rule our lives. We are not to be slaves to sin. We are exhorted to keep our eyes on Jesus. I picture here a lion. When the king of the jungle comes upon a dead carcass, there is no thought of stopping. The hyenas and vultures who descend upon rotting flesh do not have the same dignity as the noble lion. In the same way, sin, that body of death, should have no allure for us. Instead, we are called to live for Christ. We read as much in Galatians 2:20 when Paul writes that we are crucified with Christ, nevertheless we live. But the assurance does not end there because then we read that actually it is no longer we who are living, but Christ who is living through us. We read the same message in Philippians 1:21 when we understand Paul to say that living is all about Christ.

“Overcoming” is a theme in 1 John. As a believer walking in resurrection life, the power of the Holy Spirit is at work in me so that I can overcome the enemy of my soul (1 John 2:13). Not even the powerful temptations at work in the world today necessarily overcome me (1 John 1:16; 5:4). Yet I know that there are more than outside forces at work. My own flesh causes me to stumble. I know my weaknesses; I understand all too well my various flaws. I am selfish, and I am weak—I do not feel strong many days. But thanks be to God who leads me into triumph! There is no cause for me to wallow in the mud. In fact, returning to Ephesians 2, I see that there is more to understand.

Paul does not stop at saying we are now alive in Christ. Verse 6 declares that we are seated together in heaven because we are in Christ. I am always amazed when I read this verse. Paul does not tell us that when we have our glorified bodies we will be seated. He understands, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that our position in Christ is a position of authority. We read that we are already seated in heaven. Now, I understand that I am, indeed, still walking on earth, but I want the eyes of my understanding to be enlightened. I want to understand my calling as a Christian. I want to walk as a resurrected believer.

At The Geneva School, it is not enough for teachers alone to have the eyes of our understanding enlightened. We want our children to understand that they too are the generation created to praise the Lord (Psalm 102:18) We want them to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the Lord so that they have full confidence and faith that sin need not reign in their lives. Our children can walk in the Truth knowing that they are called to be overcomers in the world today as resurrected believers. They have been called out of darkness into a marvelous light to carry that light into whatever arena God calls them.