

We aim to reconcile people unto God through Christ

SERMON TITLE:	RESSURECTION LIFE – TRANSFORMATIONAL LIFE
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DATE:	11.04.2010

Last Sunday, we celebrated the Lord's resurrection! This was wonderfully portrayed in the play presented by the Performing Arts group. Today, I would like to pick up with the same theme of resurrection life from the same passage that we have been considering: Matthew 16, from verse 24 "If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow me continually. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it". In particular, I want to follow the life of this disciple, Peter – remember, one minute, he has supernatural revelation from the Father (Mat 16:17) and the next, even though well intentioned to protect his Rabbi, he is manipulated by satan (Mat 16:23)

What is interesting is this word "follow" – the same word in the Greek, used by the Lord Jesus in vs. 23 & 24 – we either follow behind the Lord, in the example of His self denial and total obedience to the purpose of God, or we are forced behind as an advocate of satan, in opposition to the purpose of God.

Remember last Sunday's sermon. This self denial and following after the Father had three application points; 1. Jesus heard from the Father – "***I speak only what the Father has taught me.***" (John 8:28) – a strong personal relationship. 2. To "deny" ourselves means to "humble" ourselves and to entrust ourselves to be used of God, for His purposes and for His glory, not our own. 3. We have to resist the instinctive urge to preserve life the way we "see" or "think" best and submit this to the process of "hearing", "listening", "seeking" and "seeing" what God is "doing" and "saying".

Denying ourselves, taking up our cross, our place in the Kingdom of God, leads to resurrection life!! In particular, Jesus spoke to Peter in the context of all the disciples and elaborated further –

Reading: Matthew 16:27 – 17:13

What an amazing experience this was for Peter, James and John! – But in particular for the disciple Peter. The Lord teaches Peter to move from considering the cost of self denial (vs. 26) to focusing on a greater reality!

How do we move past the instinct to preserve our lives and choose to follow the purposes of God and experience resurrection life? – The answer lies in the secret of a living with a Kingdom perspective! "The Son of Man is going to come with his angels in his Father's glory, and then he will repay everyone according to what he has done". (Mat 16:27)

For all of what we face in this life, on this earth – there is a greater reality! What Jesus is teaching his disciples, is that there is a paradox that has to be mastered. - "... For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

Further to just teaching this, the Lord Jesus promises the disciples that some would not die before seeing him come in glory with his angels. This amazing experience was Peter's, and made such an impact upon him, that as an older man, he writes to a struggling church and encourages them with this reality - 2 Peter 1:16 ff

Application point: What can we say about the disturbing current events in our country? We, of all nations on the earth, in our time have witnessed – no, **experienced** the resurrection life of God, the **transformational** power of God. How did this occur?

I would like to suggest, that it was not through the secular, worldly and carnal instinct to self preserve – it was through the outworking of this verse. "If My people, who are called by My name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. "(2Ch 7:14)

Four prerequisites – humility, prayer, seeking first the Kingdom of God and repentance! We learned that the King of the Kingdom, and the Lord of Africa reigns over our nation.

His transformational power comes when we respond in trust and faith and not react in fear! We experienced this transformational paradox, that when we lost our lives in Christ, and sought His rule, His reign!

Comment: Letter from Bishop Ivan Abrahams – Methodist church of SA. And Archbishop Thabo Makgoba

What the lord Jesus was teaching his disciples, is the principle of the Kingdom of God. It does not come with a sword – for all who live by the sword, will die by the sword in His Kingdom. Rather, it comes when we respond in an opposite spirit and attitude to satanic protagonists.

Our battle is not against flesh and blood. (Eph6:12)

The weapons we fight with are not humanly engineered, but spiritual – and "... they have divine power to pull down strongholds!!" (2 Cor 10:4)

May our Lord give us spiritual tenacity and courage, as we continue to respond in a opposite spirit, to the spirit of this world, and come in the Spirit of the Kingdom – humbling ourselves, praying, seeking His face and repentance!
Amen