

Knowing God

*"I want to know Christ –
yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings..."*
Philippians 3:10 (NIV)

*"...I pray...that you may know...his incomparably great power for us who believe.
That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted
when he raised Christ from the dead..."*
Ephesians 1:18-20 (NIV)

*"He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain."*
Isaiah 53:3 (NIV)

Some people crave power as an addict craves whatever they are addicted to. Power comes in a variety of forms – monetary, political, physical, and so on. Sometimes one form of power is used to gain a second form of power. For example, a lot of money is consumed in winning a political position.

However, Paul the apostle craved a unique form of power for very different reasons. He wanted to know the power it took to raise Christ from the dead. Such a power is far beyond anything human genius can create. Regardless of how much money a person spends on doctors and medical treatment death finally comes. Medical doctors will never drive funeral directors out of business! It is generally accepted that raising the dead is impossible.

However, Paul is not wanting to know resurrection power for its own sake. He wants that form of power in conjunction with "participation in his (Christ's) suffering".

To participate in suffering is not an idea that is popular with people. Such a biblical theme is generally ignored by some well known preachers in the western world. Usually, those preachers are all about living the "good life" here and now.

Some of the most godly and truly productive believers are the ones who have suffered the most. The most published preacher in history was C.H. Spurgeon. He suffered from Bright's disease, gout, neuritis, rheumatism, and depression. He was too ill to preach during more than 25% of his adult life. Yet he could never recall preaching when people were not converted. Among church historians he is generally regarded as the "Prince of preachers".

Our beloved Saviour was named the "Man of sorrows" (Isaiah 53:3). So, entry into the Christian life is to enter into suffering similar to that described in Isaiah 52:13-53:12. My reader are you praying to know the resurrection power of Christ? Do you wish to participate in His suffering? 2 Timothy 2:12 tells us that if we suffer we shall reign with Him. Rise up Christian friend and embrace your calling in the power of the resurrected Christ. We have eternity to rest and enjoy ourselves in the company of those who overcame.

*"To the one who is victorious,
I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne."* Revelation 3:21 (NIV)

Must I be carried to the skies
On flow'ry beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?

Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?

Sure I must fight if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy Word.

Thy saints in all this glorious war
Shall conquer, though they die;
They see the triumph from afar,
By faith's discerning eye.

When that illustrious day shall rise,
And all Thy armies shine
In robes of vict'ry through the skies,
The glory shall be Thine.

- Isaac Watts

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