

Jesus Lives and Reigns

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1 Corinthians 15:20-28 ²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming. ²⁴ Then *comes* the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy *that* will be destroyed *is* death. ²⁷ For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under *Him*," *it is* evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. ²⁸ Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

I happened to run across two interesting facts about Luther this week. The first is that he was apparently an avid bowler and even had a bowling lane built next to his house. The second is that he more than once quit preaching. Luther disgusted with the attitude people would refuse to preach anymore and leave for a time.

The Roman Catholic Church claims the reformation was a failure. They will point to Luther's leaving and other things that he did and said as proof. From one point of view one can understand such a statement. If the point of the reformation was to reform the church, to do away with corruption and sin, then yes it was a failure. There certainly were reformers at the time of Luther for whom this was the goal, but it was not Luther's goal and is not the goal of Christ.

The goal was not to create a pure and holy church but simply to preach the gospel in its truth and purity. In this regard the reformation was a success and continues to be. We preach Christ crucified. We continue to preach Christ crucified. Christ preaches Christ crucified.

The gospel is proclaimed, and if vast multitudes refuse to listen, and despise the grace of God that is proclaimed what is that to us. We preach Christ crucified and risen from the dead.

This is what Paul means when he says, "**He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.**" **1 Corinthians 15:25**

The reign of Christ or the kingdom of Christ, which in the Greek is the same word, is the power of Christ in action. The reign of Christ is the preaching of the gospel. Paul witnesses this in the book of Romans. "**I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God.**" The whole Gospel of Matthew witnesses to this. Over and over we are told that the kingdom of God is like a man who sows seed, or like a mustard seed, or like net catching fish.

Paul says that Christ must reign that is the Gospel will be preached until the end. Then Christ will present the kingdom to God the Father. That is to say that Christ will bring all those who believed through the preaching of the gospel and present them to the Father.

Paul's life was not a failure because he preached Christ crucified and risen from the dead. Luther's life was not a failure because he preached Christ crucified and risen from the dead. Even if no one else has listened to him, still he preached Christ who died for our sins and rose again from the dead. Faith Lutheran Church is not a failure as long as we continue to preach Christ crucified and risen from the dead.

Jesus is risen from the dead and reigns in the preaching of the Gospel. Jesus will continue to reign through the preaching of the gospel until the end.

Satan knows very well that the preaching of the gospel is the kingdom of Christ. He does everything he can to oppose this preaching. He bends all his will and power to stopping the preaching of the gospel. He attacks the gospel on every front.

On the one hand he attacks the Gospel through so called science. He claims that we have proven that there is no god and that only the material universe exists. Science is a good and wonderful thing, but like all good things Satan knows how to twist it to his own ends.

On the other hand, he attacks the gospel through the preaching of works. He tells people that if they want to be holy and go to heaven they have to behave and follow the law. Paul reminds us that through man came sin. The only thing that man produces is sin. "In Adam all die." There is no hope in our works or outside of Christ.

Again, he attacks the gospel through false love. He puts it in our minds that if God were really loving then he would simply make sure everyone goes to heaven and would not care about sin at all. Satan whispers in our minds that it is loving not to ever judge or condemn any other person no matter their lifestyle or choices. The love of God is not one that ignores sin but that condemns it. It is not loving to allow a person to live in their own filth. Nor is it loving to allow a person to live in their own sin. Therefore **"as through man came sin, so also through the man Jesus came the washing away of sin."**

This is why Paul moved by the Spirit says to the elders of Ephesus:

Acts 20:29-30 29 "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 "Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

This is the reign of Christ, that he preaches the gospel. This is the work of Satan that he in every way possible opposes and attempts to silence the preaching of the Gospel, but he cannot do it. Why is he unable to stop the preaching of the Gospel? Because Jesus rose from the dead and lives and reigns. The power of his reign is this that he through us proclaims the Gospel.