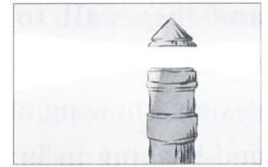


The Center of Our Faith

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I once heard a pastor say that it is not the cross which is the center of faith, but resurrection. At first, I thought this statement was a bit off-track. Isn't the cross the sign of every church? Don't we sing "on the cross"? Didn't Paul say, "I know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified"?

When I meditated further on the topic, however, I discovered that what the pastor said was right. We can recall that Paul also said "if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith."

We all know that the cross is merely an instrument of punishment. Although it was the cruelest instrument of death by execution during the time of the Romans, thousands of people had been nailed to crosses. If Christ has not been resurrected, He would have been only one of the executed. At the most, He was one of the martyrs.

Truly, he said some great words while dying on the cross. A lot of famous people have also said great words on their death

beds. Furthermore, if Jesus had not risen from death, His words to the criminal, "Today you will be with me in Paradise" would be a lie or a false hope just to comfort a dying man. Because of His resurrection, however, this word proves to be a promise and assurance for all of us through the ages.

If He has not risen, He is only a historical figure to be put on the shelf and his life's story would eventually turn yellow with all the other biographies. Jesus has risen, however, and live forever so we can trust Him and claim Him as our redeemer and our Lord.

Only after His resurrection can we look back to the crucifixion with meaning. The cross was made of two coarse pieces of wood and Jesus used His blood to sanctify it. With His resurrection, the cross shines all around the world.

Therefore, we, the ordinary people, who are willing to follow Jesus with our own crosses can also be resurrected and enjoy the eternal life when He comes again.

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