



# LIFE APPLICATIONS “I CORINTHIANS”

## Chapter 15

### LIVE IN THE LIGHT OF THE RESURRECTION

The lives of many people are oriented around an irrational fear of death: life is spent futilely attempting to forestall and deny death, thereby making life itself an absurdity. In contrast to such a dismal life, our Lord stated that He came so that His people “may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). To embrace Christ is to embrace Life itself! St. Cyril of Jerusalem explains, “The real and true life then is the Father, who through the Son in the Holy Spirit pours forth as from a fountain His heavenly gifts to all; and through His love to man, the blessing of life eternal are promised without fail to us men also. We must not disbelieve the possibility of this, but having an eye not to our own weakness but to His power, we must believe; for with God all things are possible.”

Venerable Bede emphasizes that we humans are incapable of liberating our own lives — only a relationship with the risen Christ can truly liberate us: “Remain, O Christ, in the hearts you have redeemed. You who are perfect love, pour into our words sincere repentance. We raise our prayer to you, O Jesus, with faith; pardon the sin we have committed. By the holy sign of the cross, by your tortured body, defend us constantly as your sons and daughters.”

Fr. James Meena explains that the purpose of life is to be united in Christ: “The whole point of being Christian [is living] in accordance with the Orthodox faith...The Right Believing Faith...that is living! That’s what it means to be a Christian...Living as Christ wants you to live...Living as though you lived with Christ...Living as though Christ is in you and you in Him. Believe in Christ, be committed to Christ.” The whole fullness of Paschal joy is accessible to us only if we preserve an absolute faithfulness to the Risen Christ, an entire dedication to Him as our God and Savior.

The life that is liberated through our relationship with Christ cannot be compartmentalized exclusively to our behavior while in Church [and particularly not to attending only one or two services per year] — this life must encompass our whole existence. Fr. Donald Hock summarizes this point:

The power and presence of the living Christ should be seen in the way we conduct our personal lives — the way we pray and worship; the way we work and use our time and talents; the way we treat others and relate to them. The risen Christ should also be viewed in our families — the way parents love and care for each other and their children; the way children honor, respect and obey their parents. Finally, the power of the Resurrection should be prevalent in our parish — the way families and individuals believe the best about one another; the way we together trust God for the direction and vision He gives to His Holy Church; the way we truly love one another and see Christ in each other.

St. Ambrose of Milan powerfully emphasizes the relationship of the Resurrection to the liberated Christian life: “What gain is it to celebrate the Pasch unless you imitate Him Whom you worship; that is,

unless you cross over from Egypt, that is from the darkness of evildoing to the light of virtue, and from the love of this world to the love of your heavenly home?"

St. Leo the Great similarly teaches:

Let us then not be led astray by vanities, nor falter when things are hard for us; in the one case deceit will flatter us, in the other our difficulties but grow worse. But since 'the earth is full of the mercy of the Lord' (Psalm 32:5), everywhere the victory of the Lord is with us, that the words may be fulfilled which say: 'Have confidence, I have overcome the world' (John 16:33). Whether we are fighting the claims of the world, or the lusts of the flesh, or the darts of the heretics, let us at all times arm ourselves with the Lord's Cross. And if we in the sincerity of truth keep from ourselves the leaven of our old wickedness, the Paschal Feast will never end for us.

The liberated Christian is called to "live a new life" (Romans 6:4, NKJV) and "walk in newness of life" (Ibid., RSV). This new, liberated life is, in the words of a twentieth-century Orthodox Christian, "The joy of spiritual renewal, the joy of putting on Christ, the joy of being joined to Christ as to the Source of eternal life, the joy of entire dedication and faithfulness to Christ as our Saviour, Who by His Resurrection has given us eternal life.