



TRUTH APPLICATIONS

Articles

Because He Lives

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When asked to write “a personal reflection on the meaning of [Easter] for you,” I thought of the note I received from a friend in 2017 during the whirlwind of events between my wife’s cancer diagnosis and her death two and half months later. While writing about the resurrection, he was reminded of Romans 8:18-23 and the fact that death, cancer, and all other ills “are in the process of defeat,” vanquished by the power that raised Jesus and will one day liberate all creation from the “groaning” of our sin-blighted planet.”

As one of several passages that go beyond declaring and giving evidence for Jesus’ resurrection to talk about its significance, my friend’s note was not the first time that summer I had thought about Romans 8. But I was glad for the chance to think about it again.

Verses 18-23 begin a section that extends through verse 39. In the subsequent verses, Paul recalls believers’ confident hope that creation’s liberation will certainly occur and God’s purpose for our calling, justification, and glorification will be realized (vv. 24-30). Because he is for us, not against us, he will graciously give us all things; we’re sure of this because “he gave his Son up for us all” (vv. 31-32). Therefore, we also know that nothing, whatever its severity, extent, or malice, can separate us from the love of Christ. We have become “more than conquerors,” not because of our identity or efforts, but because of his (vv. 33, 35-39).

Verse 34 is the section’s pivotal statement, showing why we can be so audacious. Though death appeared to defeat him, Christ Jesus was raised. Furthermore, he still lives at God’s right hand, interceding for us when we suffer, struggle, and sin. Who, then, will dare to condemn us?

Notice that Paul did not pretend that cancer, tornados, oppression, murder, martyrdom, grief and its residual effects, or any other malady are not real or “all that bad.” He also made no effort to give specific reasons for why this happens to your family but not to theirs. So long as this world stands, it will continue to rain on both the just and unjust. But on this day, and every day, I know that one day it will not be so.

Because he lives.

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