

Church of God, The Eternal

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Three Realities That Should Encourage Us

November 2005

Dear Brethren:

Hello to all whom God has called out of this world.

From the peaceful and joyous atmosphere at God's Feast that has just ended we are back to the world of troubles, sufferings and sorrows. What a contrasting feeling we experience as we think of the realities we lived and heard during the Feast compared to being back again in this world. How we wish those "restorations of all things" were now come into this present world, ending all these unpleasant uncertainties and the perilous existence of this end time. News is of floods, earthquakes, typhoons, diseases of epidemic levels, and other natural calamities, even man-made disasters (like suicide bombings and terrorist attacks), where thousands and thousands are reportedly dead or missing. These are happening in various parts of the globe. It is no exaggeration that many of these disasters that are happening now with alarming intensity are far greater than those which happened years before. To the insensitive and unconcerned majority, these world events are just normal, and they feel that "the world is still a good place to live." To the fearful and hopeless, the day-to-day existence is a daily struggle with the world's ills and difficulties. They try to condition themselves to an attitude of "come what may; what will be will be." Brethren, how about us who have the Spirit of God? Are we affected by what is happening around us or the sufferings we are experiencing? Do we feel discouraged and succumb to our human weaknesses when confronted with our various trials in these last days? What do we have in us to stir the real confidence and joy to go on? Let me suggest at least three realities we are hoping for that can bolster our tenacity to hold on to the faith once delivered.

The Reality of Eternal Life

God has promised eternal life to those whom He has called. He who affirmed Himself as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, also assured us that He is the Resurrection. Considering that reality, I would say along with Paul:

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8:10–11).

That is the reality of eternal life in us: A living hope that should buoy us on an ocean of helplessness; an assurance that should allow us to soar with wings like eagles to heights beyond the troubles of this world; the mind of Christ that should humble us with undaunted obedience amid suffering and pain; a joy that should cause to vanish the sorrow that beclouds our paths. Brethren, the gift of eternal life that we will receive as the crown of life at the Resurrection is the same as the gift of the Spirit that we received at baptism (Acts 2:38).

Without the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, we are helpless to attain righteousness for eternal life. No matter how we will ourselves to attain righteousness, we will fail. It is only living through God's Spirit that we can master the will of the flesh while pressing on toward our goal.

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would (Galatians 5:16–17).

With the sustaining hope of the certainty of eternal life in mind, and living with the power of the Holy Spirit in us, we can say with fervent determination like Paul: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

The Reality of the Kingdom of God

In this present world the Kingdom of God is not to be found on earth. Every government in every nation all over the world is a human government. Corruption and injustice in different degrees is a common characteristic of every ruler. Self interest and lust for power and wealth is the main motive of every ruling class. Their main concern is giving

support and service to those who can put them into power, not to the weak and less fortunate in society. They do everything to maintain their position in their government. They promulgate laws that they themselves circumvent. Those are the kingdoms of this world. The government of God is the exact opposite of the governments of this world. It will be established at the coming of Christ. Real peace, progress, and abundant life in safety will be enjoyed by everyone. It will be a real Kingdom with laws to follow, with territory to occupy, and with people to serve. It will be a government of righteousness and love. It will be a government where you and I are co-rulers with Christ. What a rare privilege and enormous responsibility we are about to accept and for which we are in actual training today! Every year that we attend the Feast of Tabernacles, we receive new insights and actually demonstrate our lives to be in the Kingdom of God. Then after the Feast we go home to face the challenges of this world, where we can apply what we learned and practiced during the eight days of communion with our loving Heavenly Father. The many blessings that we receive during the year, and the trials and temptations we meet daily, are part of our training to develop godly character that prepares us to be in His Kingdom. The Apostle Peter has a befitting admonition:

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:3–11).

The reality of God's rule is very succinctly delineated by Mr. Jon Brisby in his sermon series on the "Restitution of All Things." May our humble and teachable minds be thoroughly nourished throughout the year by the reality of God's Kingdom as we rehearse these messages in our daily activities.

The Reality of the Second Resurrection

Another reality that should boost our desire to be in the Kingdom of Christ is the certainty of the second resurrection. The prospect of serving our loved ones, friends, and the rest of mankind who are not called today is an opportunity that should inspire us to want to be there. Year after year as we celebrate the Last Great Day of the Feast we are reminded

of the final phase of God's plan for the salvation of all mankind. In the vision given to the Apostle John (please read Revelation 20:11 through 21:7) we can see the reality of the second resurrection and the final glorious act of God to save mankind. To think that for a thousand years we will be a part of that activity in the restitution of all things by our Lord Jesus Christ; and then in that final restoration of all peoples we will be witnesses of the grand event—the fulfillment of our Father's desire for all mankind to become members of His Divine Family. What joy and excitement indeed to be there!

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:22–28).

What a blessed reality that God has promised to fulfill in His master plan. It is indeed very exciting to think that all things will be restored in due time. Revelation 22:3–5 gives us the grand picture of that fulfillment:

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever.

Beloved, make sure of all things, hold fast to that which is good, and be there.

With much love and care,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Corsino C. Canta". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large initial 'C' and 'C'.

Corsino C. Canta