

It is Monday, August 2, 2021! Ready for another Devotional? Let's look at one of the greatest promises and blessings in the Word of God. "Because He lives, we too shall live!" God bless you today.

NO! NEVER ALONE ... JUST BECAUSE HE LIVES!

A Devotional prepared by Dr. Robert L. Morris

Posted on August 2, 2021

"A little while longer and the world will see Me no more,

But you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also."

(John 14:19; NKJV)

Alone! Frightening? It can be. But it depends on the circumstances. For the disciples of Jesus, it was significantly discomfoting. When Jesus announced to His disciples that He was going to return to Heaven, they were troubled. Obviously disturbed in his heart, thinking about the past and the future, Peter said to Jesus, "See, we have left all and followed You." (Matthew 19:27; NKJV) But, what about these men we know as "Disciples of Jesus?" Why would they be so deeply troubled? Saying "Good bye" to a close friend may not be easy, but for those men it was extremely difficult. What about those men who walked the dusty roads of the Promised Land with that amazing Man from Nazareth? Let's think about them for a little while. Perhaps there is something we can we learn about those men who were a part of Peter's statement: "We have left all and followed You."

On a particular day, Jesus came to the shore of the Sea of Galilee. There He saw Peter and Andrew, two men from Bethsaida who were involved in a family fishing business, and asked them to follow Him. "Immediately they left their nets and followed Him." (Mark 1:18; HCSB) Jesus went on a little farther, where He saw James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They too, were fishermen, for the Scripture states: "They were in their boat mending their nets. Immediately He called them and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed Him." (Mark 1:19b-20; HCSB) Further, they "were Simon's partners." (That is, in business with, or closely involved with the fishing business of Peter and Andrew.)

Peter, Andrew, James and John, were from Bethsaida. John records this of Jesus' activity: "The next day He decided to leave for Galilee. Jesus found Philip and told him, 'Follow Me.'" Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter." (John 1:43-44; HCSB) Immediately thereafter "Philip found Nathanael and told him, 'We have found the One Moses wrote about in the Law (and so did the prophets): Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth.'" (John 1:45; HCSB) The name "Nathanael" is probably the first name of this disciple, better known as "Bartholomew," of whom Jesus said "Here is a true Israelite; no deceit is in him." (John 1:47; HCSB) (In the lists of the Disciples in the Gospels, Matthew 10:1-4, Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:14-16, Philip and Bartholomew are listed together. The Scripture account does not identify Bartholomew's profession, but it is sometimes assumed that due to his close association with Philip, that he could well have been involved in the fishing industry.

Jesus was ministering in Capernaum, and healed a paralytic, declaring "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." (Matthew 9:2; NKJV) This resulted in strong opposition and the public statement by some of the scribes, "This Man blasphemes." (Matthew 9:3; NKJV) Jesus left that place, and while traveling, "He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, 'Follow Me.' So, he arose and followed Him." (Matthew 9:9; NKJV)

The list has grown. We have learned about Peter, Andrew, James, John who were fishermen. We learned that it is at least possible that the fishing industry was the life-style of Philip and Bartholomew. We have added the tax collector Matthew to the list. However, the Bible provides no information on the professions of the remaining five of Jesus' twelve disciples, Thomas, Thaddaeus, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.

It does provide information about Paul, who became an apostle after the death and resurrection of Jesus. He was a Pharisee and may have taught religion or worked in a political office. During his missionary journeys, Paul supported himself as a tent maker according to Acts 18:1-3.

Then came that day ... a devastating day ... for the select twelve ... devastating because of Jesus' announced His departure from them. In all probability their dreams of the powerful triumph of the Messiah were dashed on the rocks of hopelessness. For these Jewish followers of the Nazarene, fishing nets and boats were no longer used daily. Tax collecting records were tucked away and no longer a part of a profession. Whatever other

professions belonged to those faithful followers of Jesus were laid aside. The loneliness of a foreboding future mocked their near-faltering faith. Gone! Dreams! Hopes! Gone!

Sounds dismal, doesn't it? Those followers of Jesus later witnessed the horrors of Golgotha ... the broken, bleeding body of their beloved Lord. They heard the mocking of some in the crowd. At least John, the beloved Disciple of Jesus heard the final words from the dry, parched lips of the suffering Jesus. In all probability John had heard Jesus' final words, "Father, into Your hands I entrust My Spirit." (Luke 23:46; HCSB) Then He bowed His head, and breathed His last. Gone! Dreams! Hopes! Gone! But don't lose heart, dear friends. Keep reading!

Another day came! Sad, frightened, sickened in heart, those disciples of Jesus, minus the betraying Judas Iscariot, were gathered in a room where they could lock the doors. Perhaps they had questions ... serious questions ... "What do we do now?" "Where do we go from here?" With pen in hand, the Beloved Disciple John wrote it for all of us to read! Like a lightning bolt from the darkened skies, his words have burst forth with the most glorious news of all. Let it build and capture your heart and mind. Catch the powerful relief we find this report. Here it is: "In the evening of that first day of the week, the disciples were gathered together, with the doors locked because of their fear of the Jews. Then Jesus came, stood among them, and said to them, 'Peace to you.' Having said this, He showed them His hands and His side. So the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you. As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' After saying this, He breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" (John 20:19-22; HCSB) Alive and well! Here is the thrilling fulfillment of Jesus' earlier promise spoken to them: "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also." (John 14:19; NKJV)

Yes, alive and well! Now, bearing the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, they enjoyed a little more time with Jesus before His ascension into heaven. They had breakfast with Him on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and there learned an important lesson on faith to believe God for supplying their needs. Peter heard the Lord commissioning him for the ministry of feeding the flock of God. (John 21:15-19) Together they heard Jesus give them another commission with a promise: "Then Jesus came near and said to them, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nation baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'" (Matthew 28:18-20; HCSB) They heard Him say: "And look, I am sending you what My Father promised. As for you, stay in the city until you are empowered from on high." (Luke 24:49; HCSB) And so it would be: "...in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8; HCSB) And it was "just because He lives!" Now they had His presence to encourage them, His promises to embolden them, and His power to enable them. Now they could ... and now we can ... understand what He meant when He said to them: "Because I live, you will live also." (John 14:19; NKJV)

His promise ... and all of God's promises can never be denied, defeated, or destroyed! They stand unbreakable, imperishable, and always applicable as intended by Almighty God. Do you remember that little chorus we sang as children in Sunday School? So simple! Powerfully true!

Every promise in the Book of mine,
Every chapter, every verse, every line;
All the blessings of His love divine,
Every promise in the Book is mine.

And so it is for us in 2021. It is still "just because He lives!" "Every promise in the Book is mine!"

Because He lives, the provision for eternal life is still available for all who repent and believe.

Because He lives, the enabling strength to live according to the Scriptures is abundantly supplied.

Because He lives, the commissions and the callings of Jesus on our lives are not burdensome.

Because He lives, we can walk the pathways of this life with full confidence in His promise to return.

Because He lives, the voice of the Archangel will one day be heard around the universe.

Because He lives, the trumpet of God will sound.

Because He lives, eternal vibrations will be felt in every Christian grave.

Because He lives, the grave of every Christian will be opened wide.

Because He lives, the molecules and atoms of every Christian who died will be gathered together.

Because He lives, the bodies of every Christian who died will break forth from their earthly grave.

Because He lives, the dead in Christ will ascend, and be united with their eternal souls and spirits.

Because He lives, the remaining believers will be caught up together with them.
Because He lives, all the saints of all the ages will be united with Jesus the Triumphant Lamb of God.
Because He lives, we will all gather together in eternal glory to sing Worthy is The Lamb.
Because He lives, the glory of heaven will be enjoyed by all who have put their faith in Jesus Christ.
Because He lives, the born again of the ages will be the bride of Christ, enjoying His presence.
Because He lives, the redeemed people of God will live and never be separated again.
Because He lives, all tears will be wiped away by the tender hand of the Lamb of God.
Because He lives, there will never again be pain, sorrow, sickness, heartache, or saying good bye.
Because He lives, the saints of all the ages will live forever in the land of fadeless day, for there is no night there. Worthy is the Lamb to receive riches, and glory, and power ... now and forever more.
In 1971, a Spirit-anointed, Christ-exalting, grace-filled couple wrote the words and music to one of the greatest Christian songs to ever bless the life of the Church. Bill and Gloria Gaither, she the lyrics, and he the musical score, have blessed the Christian world through this very special song, just one of the thousands God has given to us through them. By their own testimony, it emerged out of a trauma there were experiencing at that time in their lives. But it has become one of the most fantastic resources of God's abundant blessings in the lives of people who read it, sing it, play it, or hear it.

BECAUSE HE LIVES

1. God sent His son, they called Him Jesus;
He came to love, heal and forgive;
He lived and died to buy my pardon,
An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives!

CHORUS (after each verse)

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow,
Because He lives, all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living,
Just because He lives!

2. How sweet to hold a newborn baby,
And feel the pride and joy he gives;
But greater still the calm assurance:
This child can face uncertain days because He Lives!

3. And then one day, I'll cross the river,
I'll fight life's final war with pain;
And then, as death gives way to vict'ry,
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He lives!