

Tips, tricks, and life hacks to boost your family's spiritual life and live every day at Home with Jesus.



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@ Home With JESUS

WHY LOS ANGELES NEEDS RESURRECTION

WHAT'S YOUR DREAM FOR OUR CITY? WELL, LET'S DO IT



I moved to this city almost three years ago. A lot has changed since then. A lot? Yes, a lot. Specifically, the lot across the street from me. That lot used to have a traditional one-story 1940's home, but it got demolished to make way for a big glassy two-story (rumored to have sold for \$3,000,000.)

Anyhow, in three years I've only begun to learn some of the characteristics of Los Angeles, which make that kind of change possible, while on the other hand, can cause Westchester Park to become an encampment of people whose homes are tents and tarps. We know that something, somewhere is not as it should be.

Los Angeles needs resurrection.

Surveys connected to census data show that in Westchester, the #1 concern shared by most of us is financing the future (savings/retirement). This is followed closely by anxieties about success, health and weight, satisfaction with career, and finding time to relax.

Some of you tell me your parents do not live nearby, and cannot help take care of your children, or you are taking care of your parents as they age. Some of us are striving to keep jobs coming, while others are shutting down their businesses altogether. We don't even need to start listing the COVID concerns, and the isolation that still haunts us.

Obviously, some seek escape from the LA pressure in various ways. There is alcohol and weed. There is plenty of media to distract us. Homelessness might even sometimes be a type of alternative lifestyle to avoid first-world problems.

In the city of Jerusalem, around 33 AD, a small community of like-minded people began to form, with an interesting way of life. The members put together a voluntary system of communal sharing, so that no one claimed any property anymore. There were distributions of food, daily prayers, and daily teaching times. They emphasized oneness of mind, good works, and purity of life. Landholders sold their land and contributed the price to the common fund, so that there was no one poor. (Acts 4:32-35)

Most people don't know about this, but it is exactly what happened immediately upon news breaking that Jesus had been raised from the dead, and had ascended to heaven. Check the verses. We have no record of Jesus commanding his followers to form this exact system. But when the report of Jesus' resurrection hit, it was an overpowering proof that God was God, His love was real, and so they wanted to live like that. As there was no one poor, there was also no one idle among them.

Our city needs resurrection too. No matter if someone is privileged or underprivileged, affluent or homeless, social programs and political debates will not fill the void. "Financing the future" will not change the heart. People need hope.

No one is attracted to religion known for being too focused on money, or being too judgmental. Therefore, what we really need is the sharing, the teaching, and the praying with each other, like in Jerusalem, 33 AD. Organized religion must live like that, with everyone moving in the overpowering hope of Jesus' resurrection. One heart, shared resources, good works, pure living.

How many of our worries could be soothed if there was a warm family of families supporting us through it all? And if we knew they needed us to support them too? And if we knew we had what our whole city needs?

Friends, that is resurrection life. It's real, it's happening, and we need you to be part of it!

WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT



LOOKS ARE DECEIVING. GOD'S PROMISES AREN'T.

We all wish we could walk by sight. We want to see the results of God's work. Lower COVID numbers, more citizens involved in their communities, increased charitable giving, real solutions to long-term social problems, love and acceptance of all people.

We all want to see it. But we don't always get to. The responsibility remains: we need to be the right kind of person, even if we've never seen any of it.

"We walk by faith, and not by sight." That's 2nd Corinthians 5:7. Do you think the Jerusalem church was inspired to do what they did, because they had already experienced it happening? No; that is only circular reasoning. They were moved because of what they believed.

The fact is, that community was not paradise. We read of

two members, a husband and a wife. These two committed fraud by claiming they were donating the full price of their property, but lied, and were actually holding some back. (Acts 5:1-11)

You see, no experience on earth is free from sin. There are mixed motives, half-hearted efforts, ambitions tinged with egotism. Our work is like this -- useful, but not 100% pure.

Only what God teaches and promises us is pure and life-giving. Only God's word confers on us the freedom from guilt, from fear of hell, from selfish pride, and from despair.

What I mean is, whoever values experiences over the word of God, however healthy and positive the experiences appear, will always try to manipulate the truth.

For instance, why did that couple in Jerusalem defraud their community?

Because they desired to appear righteous. Why didn't they just believe they were right with God because God forgave all their sins? Because they walked by sight, not by faith. "Not all have faith." 2nd Thessalonians 3:2

Therefore, if we are to see the purposes of God for our community, we must stop being so fascinated by what we see, and by how others see us. We must stop walking by sight. Instead, we must believe what we have heard from God.

This is not an emphasis on an academic knowledge, but on the precious treasure of assurance that I have been made right with God - not because of me, but in spite of me, and because of something outside me. Because of Jesus.

That is faith. To rely on the

If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.

... But in fact Christ has been raised.

1st Corinthians 15:14, 20

promise that your sins were punished long ago in Christ when He was crucified, and were blotted out on the third day when He was raised from the dead, that is the faith that makes you a child of God. That is the love of God being poured into your heart.

Every member of the Jerusalem church who believed that promise began to love as God had loved them, to be merciful as God had been merciful to them, to forgive as God had forgiven them.

Don't take your eyes off what Jesus did. But you fortify yourself with Christ, no matter what the world looks like around you.

BACK TO OUR FIRST LOVE

The reason this newsletter has been about the Jerusalem community of 33 A.D. is because those days are recognized as the "First Love" of Christianity. They embraced the heavenly gifts so heartily, that the personal possession of earthly gifts had lost its value to them. The eternal soul of one's neighbor was precious and worthy of all sacrifice -- orphan, widow, and the poor.

It was, however, not the dominating thread of history. Charity was soon aped by a system of funding the bureaus of the medieval church-state complex. It became taught that your donations and efforts paid off your sins, and merited you a ticket to heaven. Such is the corruption of true religion.

So give your children the purity of Christ's teaching. Talk to them about it every day without fail:



"Whoever would be great among you must be your servant ... For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

Mark 10:45