



PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

April 1, 2018

Raised with Christ

by Frank Himmel

Every Sunday, Christians assemble to remember Jesus' death and resurrection. His death was our atonement for sin, and His resurrection is our assurance that the Father accepted that atonement.

Jesus' death and resurrection were essential to our salvation, but so is our corresponding death and resurrection in a spiritual sense. The Bible says we are raised with Christ. . .

Through Faith

"Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12). The same divine power that raised Jesus is what provides new life for us. Receiving that power is conditioned on faith, trusting God to do what He promised and trusting the means He provided: Jesus' atoning death.

In Baptism

The same verse that says we are raised through faith says we are raised in baptism! Romans 6:3 says we are baptized into Jesus' death, and Colossians 2:12 says we are raised with Him in baptism. Why, then, do so many insist that faith is essential but baptism is not?

Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16).

To an Exalted Position

God "raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesus 2:6). God did merely raise Jesus from the dead; He exalted Him to the highest position (1:20-23). He does that for us, too. In a sense we already share in Jesus' heavenly glory: "our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20).

To a New Life

"Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3). Sin results in death, separation from God. God graciously forgives us in Christ and makes us alive again. The point of this verse, in its context, is that we must abandon our sinful ways (v. 2), not unduly relying on God's grace (v. 1).

Resulting in a New Focus

"Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth" (Colossians 3:1-2). A citizen of heaven needs to view life from a heavenly perspective. Our goals and priorities—and our corresponding choices and behavior—must reflect our new life in Christ. ■

Set Your Face

by Frank Himmel

“Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51, NKJV). To say that Jesus “set His face” to go to Jerusalem means simply that He resolved to go there; yet it was a resolve so solemn, so strong, so sure, that “you could see it in His face,” as we say.



Jesus’ crucifixion was still several months away. But His expansive work in Galilee was finished, and it was now time to turn to the most challenging phase of His ministry: the final showdown with Jewish leaders, culminating in His crucifixion.

Surely we understand the importance of resolve.

Saving for retirement takes resolve. In order to have that “nest egg,” we must commit to both putting money away on a regular basis and then not dipping into it for other things. Anyone can start a savings plan. To keep it up year after year, resisting the urge to treat yourself instead—that takes determination.

Losing weight takes resolve. Other factors are certainly involved, yet most “diets” fail in the long term because of lack of continued resolve. Losing a few pounds is

one thing; keeping them off on an ongoing basis usually means adopting a whole different outlook toward eating. It takes strong determination to keep making the right choices over the long haul.

Training for athletics, learning to play an instrument, mastering a craft, getting a degree, starting a business ... there are so many examples of the importance of determination.

Going to Jerusalem—in our case “the heavenly Jerusalem”—also takes resolve. And that explains why many will not get there. Years ago, then Texas senator Phil Gramm said of congress’s economic struggles, “Balancing the budget is like going to heaven; everyone is in favor of it, but not many are willing to do what it takes to get there.” Amen!

It takes humility to yield to the Lord and His way. Then it takes focus to stay on course and not be distracted by the world’s glitter. It takes dedication to keep going amidst life’s ups and downs. It takes determination to keep saying no to temptation; after all, Satan is a master at making it appealing. It takes courage to withstand the opposition of those who choose other roads, opposition that may even come from our own families.

Jesus understood very well what it takes. He said, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me” (Luke 9:23); otherwise, He noted, “he cannot be My disciple” (14:26, 27, 33). Set your face! ■

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER	Bruce Williams	Josh Baucom
SONG LEADER	Sam Walters	Albert Harrison Sr
OPENING PRAYER	Bruce Hollander	
LORD’S SUPPER		
BREAD	Howard Moore	
CUP	David Gray	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	John Baucom	
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Chris Brooks
CLOSING PRAYER	Gary Hagler	Daven Daniel