



Philippians 2:1–18 (ESV)

2 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Lights in the World

¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. ¹⁷ Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. ¹⁸ Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

What Paul Taught about the Resurrection

Last week we looked at the conversion of the Apostle Paul found in Acts 9:1-19; 22:3-21; 26:12-29. While he was persecuting Christians, Christ appeared to him. He was blinded. Jesus spoke to Paul when a blinding light appeared in the sky. Then, a Christian named Ananias cured him of his blindness by the power of Christ. From that point on Paul was a new person, made new by the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

How does that miraculous account correspond to what Paul wrote in his many letters to Christians? To understand what Paul taught about the resurrection we will look at:

- What Paul taught about the resurrection in Philippians 2:1-18
- How Paul's teaching about the resurrection connected to Old Testament teaching
- How to Die and Rise with Jesus

What Paul taught about the resurrection in Philippians?

Paul writes, “It has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake” (Philippians 1:29). To join Christ in the resurrection, we must first Him in His death. Without death there can be no resurrection. This includes more than physical death. Christians must die to the things they leave behind when they believe in Jesus. There are treasures, dreams, and hopes that must die, but they will be replaced by eternal treasures, bigger dreams, and hopes of heavenly and spiritual blessings.

Christ also gave up everything. He left His high position in Heaven (Philippians 2:6). He “emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant” (Philippians 2:7). He further humbled Himself by dying on a cross (Philippians 2:8). God the Father “exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name” (Philippians 2:9). Paul is encouraging the Christians to be like Jesus, who gave up everything to become like a servant, and die on a cross.



Even in chains, Paul preached the Gospel to his captors.

Paul encourages his readers to “work out [their] own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12&13). “In the midst of a crooked and twisted generation” Christians should “shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain” (Philippians 2:16). So, when Christ returns, these Christians will be revealed as belonging to Christ, and they will receive their resurrection bodies for their new, eternal life with Jesus.

We may have had times when we lost a friend, or even a group of friends because of our faith in Christ, but I expect very few of us have lost everything, the way Paul did. He was well educated. He had been through rigorous training that prepared him for a position of leadership within the religious community. Because of his conversion to Christ all of his prestigious credentials were no longer recognized by the Jewish community. Whatever home he’d

had was gone. Whatever friends he’d had were no longer friends. He couldn’t go back.

The remarkable thing is, Paul didn’t want to go back. He considered his “new” way of life far superior to what he’d had before.

How Paul’s teaching about the resurrection connected to Old Testament teaching?

In Philippians 2:15 Paul refers to the Christians in Philippi as those who will “**shine as lights.**” Paul is drawing a comparison of these Christians to the “**wise**” in Daniel 12:3 who will “**shine like the brightness of the sky above ... like the stars.**” This passage provides amazing information about the resurrection. Some Bible scholars consider Daniel 12:1-3 the clearest Old Testament prophecy of the resurrection.

Philippians 2:14-16	Daniel 12:1-3
<p>¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.</p>	<p>12 “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. ² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. ³ And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.</p>

Philippians 2:15 does not mention the resurrection, but Daniel 2:1-3 does. It says, “**many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting**

contempt." This is definitely a reference to the resurrection. When Paul calls the Christians "**lights**" he is drawing a parallel to Daniel 12:3, where those Daniel calls "**those who are wise**" the people who were resurrected from the dead in the previous verse. These "**wise**" people will shine "**like the stars forever and ever**". Believers are now living a new kind of life, Paul says in Philippians 2:16, and they should hold "**fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.**" Paul is telling his readers to hold tightly to their grip on new life of Jesus' resurrection.

So, is this resurrection only referring to those who will go to heaven? To answer that let's look at Daniel 2:2-3:

² And many of **those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.** ³ And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. (Daniel 12:2-3, ESV)

Daniel 12:2 says that at the time that is coming "**those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt**" (Daniel 12:2). This resurrection refers to all people, both those going to Hell and those going to Heaven. Paul is saying that Christians have actually entered into the life of the resurrection ahead of those who will go to Hell. This is possible because they have joined Jesus in His death and in His resurrection. So, because Jesus entered the "age of the resurrection", those who are in Jesus can also enter into the "age of the resurrection". The full resurrection, when Christians will receive a new body, will come only when Jesus returns. But, in the meantime, Christians are made new in Christ by being given a new heart and a new spirit. Their body is still the same old body, not the new resurrection body. Physically, they are in this world. Spiritually, they are of the world to come.

Coming back to our concern about joining Jesus in His death and resurrection, we realize that the prophets hoped for this. They didn't fully understand it. Even though we live after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are still struggling to understand its full impact on those who believe in Him as Lord and savior. Some people have suggested that Christians experience their union with Jesus by living their lives, and deaths, in a J-shaped curve.

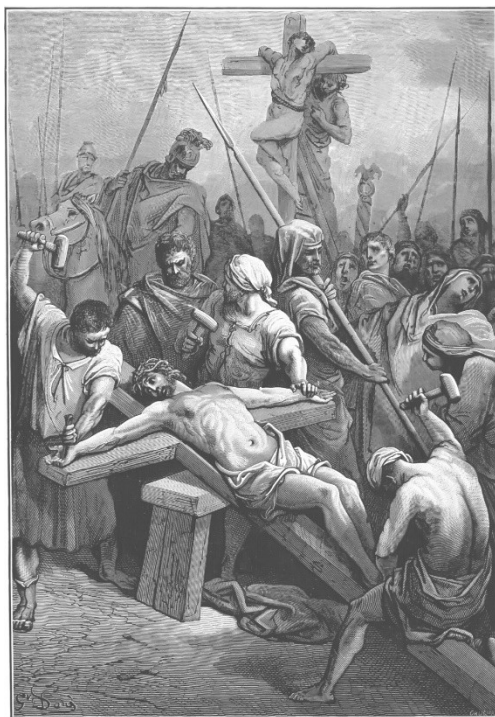
How to Die and Rise with Jesus

Recently I heard a sermon about "a J-shaped curve."¹ If we join Jesus in his death, we will go to the bottom of a J-shaped curve. But like a J-shaped curve, we will not remain at the bottom. We will not remain dead. We will rise again, because we share in Jesus' resurrection.

As Christians we recognize that we will be resurrected after we die, or when Christ returns, whichever comes first. But on a spiritual level we die and rise again repeatedly. We can suffer the pains of dying with Jesus in many different ways, spiritually.

The first way a believer can die with Christ occurs when evil comes at the believer from outside of himself or herself. This can come in the form of an illness, or the death of a loved one. It could even be harassment from other people. The Apostle Paul experienced a "thorn in the flesh" (2 Corinthians 12:7). It was sent by Satan, but God used Paul's suffering to teach Paul to "boast all the more gladly of [his] weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon [him]" (2 Corinthians 12:9). When believers die with Jesus then Jesus can fill that emptiness, as painful as it is, with the power of His resurrection. Paul speaks of how Jesus emptied Himself by humbling Himself and becoming a human being, and further humbled Himself, even to the point of dying on the cross (Philippians 2:6-8). Our attitude should be like Jesus' attitude (Philippians 2:5). We can't know when Jesus will use the power of His resurrection to bring healing to us. It may not come as quickly as we would like it to come, but we have the assurance that the power of the resurrection will come to us. As we have died with Him, we will be raised with Him.

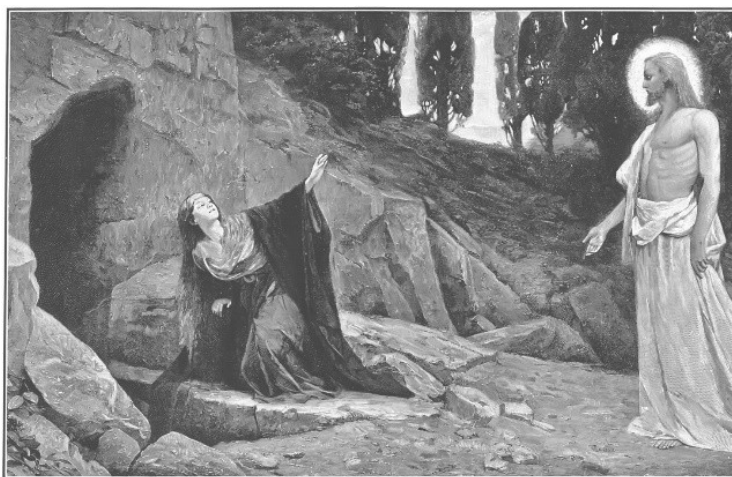
¹ Paul Miller who preached the sermon also wrote a book on the same topic: *J-Curve: Dying and Rising with Jesus in Everyday Life* 2019.



A second way of dying with Christ is repenting for our sins. This is when evil arises from without our own sinful nature. Whenever we repent of a sin, we die to that sin (Romans 8:16). We turn our back on that desire, choosing to live without it being satisfied. We ask God to help us live our lives free from that sin, not giving in to the desires that lead us to commit that kind of sin. Paul tells believers to hold “fast to the word of life” (Philippians 2:15) by doing “all things without “grumbling or disputing” (Philippians 2:14). So, we die to sin by refusing to give in to it, but we hold onto resurrection life in Christ when we free ourselves from sin. By the power of the resurrection, we will be able to live without satisfying our sinful desires. He will provide a way for us to do this. We may struggle, but He will always provide a path through the difficulty.

A third kind of dying with Christ happens when we are serving Jesus out of love for Him, but bad things happen to us when we are doing His will. Just as Jesus was rejected and despised when He was serving the Father, we may also be rejected and despised when we are obeying Him. Sometimes this is due to misunderstanding. Other times it is due to people’s sinful resistance to Christ. Whenever we die with Christ, we become freed from things that held us back from greater unity with Him. What we were striving to achieve previously will be set aside. But a greater, eternal unity with Christ will be ours. We will find that Jesus opens us up to new goals and purposes, that will take the place of old goals.

When things go badly, and we sense that a part of us has died, we can seize that time of sorrow as an opportunity to draw closer to Jesus. We can join Him in His death. Our great sorrow makes us aware of our need for His power. The parts of us that die become places where Jesus uses the power of His resurrection to give us new life. So, instead of despairing and feeling hopeless in times of loss and suffering, hold on tight to the resurrection life that is yours in Jesus. The sadness is real. It is painful. But at some point, Jesus’s resurrection will renew you with His resurrection life. If we can understand that life will follow this pattern, believers will be better equipped to face times of loss and sorrow.



Like a J-shaped curve, join Jesus in His death, and He will raise you up with Him in the power of His resurrection. Instead of “waiting for the other foot to fall,” Christians should expect to see the power that raised Jesus from the dead at work in their own lives.

Be Like Christ (Philippians 2:1–18)

So if **there** is any **encouragement** in **Christ**, any **comfort** from **love**, any **participation** in the **Spirit**, any **affection** and **sympathy**, complete my joy by **being** of the **same mind**, having the **same love**, **being** in full accord and of one **mind**. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility **count others more** significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not **only** to his own **interests**, but **also** to the **interests** of **others**. Have this **mind** among yourselves, which is yours in **Christ Jesus**, who, though he was in the **form** of God, did not **count** equality with God a **thing to be** grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the **form** of a servant, **being** born in the likeness of men. And **being** found in human **form**, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of **death, even death** on a cross. **Therefore** God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the **name** that is above **every name**, so that at the **name** of **Jesus every** knee should bow, in heaven and on **earth** and under the **earth**, and **every** tongue confess that **Jesus Christ** is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. **Therefore**, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not **only** as in my presence but much **more** in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all **things** without grumbling or disputing, that you may **be** blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of **Christ** I may **be** proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. **Even** if I am to **be** poured out as a drink **offering** upon the sacrificial **offering** of your faith, I am **glad** and **rejoice** with you all. Likewise you also should **be glad** and **rejoice** with me.

([ESV](#)) Exported from [Logos Bible Software](#).

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