

MEDITATIONS ON DEATH AND RESURRECTION FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Epistle Reading for the Funeral Service

To You, O Lord, have I cried. My God, do not refuse to hear me
lest I be like those who go down into the Pit (*Psalm 28:1*).

The reading is from St. Paul's *First Letter to the Thessalonians (4:13-18)*.

Brethren, we do not want you to be ignorant concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will arise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall be with the Lord forever. Therefore, comfort one another with these words.

Blessed are those whom You have chosen and taken to dwell in Your courts,
O Lord. (*Psalm 64:4*)

Their memory will endure from generation to generation. (*Psalm 101:13*)

The Gospel Reading for the Funeral Service

The reading is from the holy *Gospel according to St. John (5:24-30)*

The Lord said to those Jews who had come to Him: "Amen, amen I say to you: whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. Amen, amen I say to you: the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself; and He has given the Son authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth: those who have done good, to the resurrection of life; and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment. I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of the Father who sent me."

St. Paul's Letter to the Romans

Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with Him in a death like His, we will certainly also be united with Him in a resurrection like His.

Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, He cannot die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. The death He died, He died to sin, once for all; but the life He lives He lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life.

- Romans 6:3-5, 8-11, 13



Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. If Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who lives in you. Indeed, I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

- Romans 8:1-2, 10-11, 18

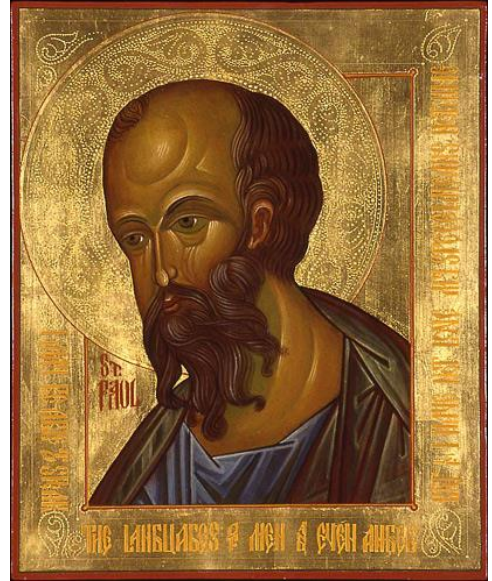
St. Paul's 1st Letter to the Corinthians

For what I have received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures and that He appeared to Cephas (Peter) and then to the Twelve. After that, He appeared to more than 500 of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living – although some have

fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all – as to one untimely born – He appeared to me also.

- *1 Corinthians 15:3-8*

Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep: for since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead also comes through a human being. For just as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But in this order: Christ, the first fruits; then, when He comes, those who belong to Him. Then the End will come, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father after He has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For “He has put everything under His feet” (*Psalms 8:6*).



- *1 Corinthians 15:20-27*

But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?” How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as He has determined, and to each kind of seed He gives its own body. So it will be with the resurrection from the dead. The body that is sown (buried) is perishable but it is raised imperishable. It is sown in dishonor but is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness but is raised in power. It is sown as a physical (natural) body but is raised a spiritual body.

- *1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-44,*

Listen and I will tell you a mystery: we will not all sleep, but we will be changed in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable and we will be changed. For this corruptible body must be clothed with incorruptibility and that which is mortal must be clothed with immortality. Then the saying that is written will come true: Death has been swallowed up in victory (*Isaiah 25:8*)! Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting (*Hosea 13:14*)? The sting of death is sin. But thanks be to God! He has given us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

- *1 Corinthians 15:51-57*

St. Paul's 2nd Letter to the Corinthians

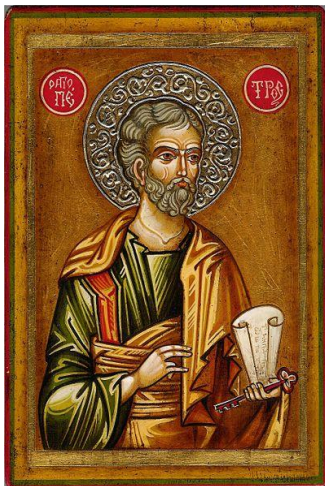
We know that the One who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us – with you – to Himself. Therefore, we do not lose heart, for our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please Him whether we are at home in the body or away from it; for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive what is due them for the things done while in the body whether for good or for evil.

- 2 Corinthians 4:14, 5:1,4,6-10

St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians

I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body whether by my life or my death. If I am to go on living in the body, that will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet, what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again, your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

- Philippians 1:20-26

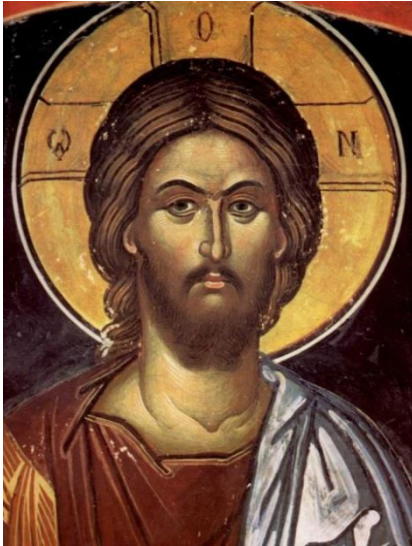


St. Peter's 1st Letter

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy, He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

- 1 Peter 1:3-5

The Gospel according to John



Jesus said: "Amen, amen, I say to you: the Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing; for whatever He does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all that He Himself is doing; and greater works than these will He show Him, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Amen, amen, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes Him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

- John 5:19-24

Jesus said to those Jews who had come to Him: "I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the desert and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven – that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" So Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is truly food, and my blood is truly drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me.

- John 6:48-58

Jesus said to Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live; and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

- John 11:25-26