



April 2003

The Lord is risen indeed (Luke 24:34)!

Jesus is risen, and He's alive in me! And that same life is available to everyone by God's grace through faith. That's the only message I need to share. There is not a problem in the world that the risen life of Christ is not sufficient to address.

"I have been crucified with Christ; it no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me (Galatians 2:20)! About 14 years ago when I was seeking real hope in life, a dear man shared this verse with me...and for the first time, I saw a glimmer of hope not in and of myself, but in the risen Christ living in me. For the next 11 years, I believe God used real life experiences, Luther Rice Seminary, the GraceLife Conference, and a young boys' group at church (Royal Ambassadors) to nurture me in this life. In a very real way, *"He made me lie down in green pastures and led me beside the still waters, and He restored my soul" (Psalm 23:2-3).* God was equipping me to genuinely live and to share the very life of Christ with others. [See my personal Psalm 23 on the back.]

During that 11 years, apart from the Royal Ambassadors, I testified to other people a total of probably one hour of the hope that Jesus is alive. Over the past three years, I have been given the opportunity to literally testify thousands of hours of this amazing truth. I work as an engineer...I have had long-term discipling relationships with about 25 people...I have helped teach GraceLife Conferences to over a 100 people from nearly every Christian denomination...I send this "equipping" newsletter to 180 families ...and I am helping minister life to 25 boys at a boys' home. And Jesus continues to nurture me in His life through all of this.

Is all of this a measure of my spirituality? Not at all. Jesus is all-sufficient all by Himself...He doesn't need me to be successful for Him. This is simply my testimony of HIS LIFE in me. I *"boast only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14).* I realize that what I DO means nothing apart from BEING a testimony of the new creation through the cross (Galatians 6:15). These are not things I am trying to do for God...it is who I am...it is who He has made me to be.

My heart's desire is to equip other people to experience the life of Christ in the unique ways God has created them. I have wrestled with the word "equip" because I am so sensitive to the temptations to train up my own self-efforts. I take God at His word when He says *"You are complete in Christ" (Colossians 2:10)* and *"Christ is your life" (Colossians 3:4)* and *"You are a new creation, old things have passed away" (2 Corinthians 5:17)* and *"You are blessed with every spiritual blessing" (Ephesians 1:3)* and many other like verses.

So, we truly are fully equipped with the life of Christ through the Holy Spirit! How could we ever be further equipped? As I considered this vital question, I learned something wonderfully amazing. Ephesians 4:12 is a key verse describing the "equipping" of Christians. What I learned is that the original New Testament Greek word for "equipping" in this verse is *katartismos*, which means "a process as completed." It is the only time this word is used in the New Testament. It is different from the Greek word *katartisis* used in other places in the New Testament, and which means "a process in progress." [These definitions are from "The Complete Word Study New Testament" by Spiros Zodhiates (AMG Publishers, Chattanooga, TN, 1991).]

This definition affirms my conviction that "equipping" is an unveiling of an already completed miracle...the unveiling of the life of Christ in us...it is not the adding to that life. This is consistent with *Ephesians 4:22-24* that exhorts us to *"put off the ways of the old man (that person who has already been crucified with Christ), and put on the ways of the new man (the person who has already risen with Christ). The new man is truly righteous and holy, and is who you really are."* [my paraphrase]. So the essence of equipping is training to be who you already really are, and trusting God to enable you to surrender old ways of living. Wow! No more striving to be someone I already am! The cry of Jesus on the cross "It is finished!" is so much more personal now. We are free to testify, "He is risen, and He lives fully in me now."

Note: Joy continues to receive good doctors' reports, but she has had a restless month. She has lost a lot of muscle tone and stays fairly uncomfortable. She will be starting slowly with water-based physical therapy after her doctor in San Francisco reviews x-rays from last week. The doctors project 2 to 3 years for Joy to re-gain some muscle tone and stamina. If it weren't for the truth of already being complete in Christ, Joy and I would never have any true hope. But we both testify, "Jesus is alive and well in us."

Next GraceLife Conference!

Brevard Community Church (Brevard, NC) Friday evening May 16 and Saturday May 17

You can read my article "One Calling" at www.livingcovenant.com/InspiringArticles.htm

Gregg Gibbons for Christ Life Ministries 211 E. Curtis St. Simpsonville, SC 29681 864-228-HOPE gjeggrace@earthlink.net
A satellite office of Christ Life Ministries in Hendersonville, NC

Psalm 23

by Gregg Gibbons

The LORD is my Shepherd...

As a shepherd, the Psalmist David could relate to the LORD as his personal Shepherd to lead him in all things (John 10:11).

We, too, can personally identify with Christ...to me, the LORD is my Engineer.

He orders all the details of my life...where I came from...where I am...and everything that will ever happen to me (Matthew 10:30).

In Him I place all my trust to lead me in His perfect loving ways, even when things seem out of control (Proverbs 3:5-6).

...I shall not want (lack).

I used to fall so short in my self-efforts to achieve goodness and happiness (Romans 3:10-12).

But now the Lord has given me His righteousness as a gift (Galatians 2:20-21) and His life as my joy (Galatians 5:22, John 17:13).

I am now complete in Christ and, therefore, I lack nothing (Colossians 2:9-10)!

He makes me to lie down in green pastures...

God makes me lay down my self-efforts (Philippians 3:8). The pastures where I then rest are lush green, and full of life (John 15:5).

God nurtures me there in my true identity and life in His dear Son (Romans 8:16, John 6:51).

...He leads me beside the still waters.

God then leads me to a quiet place to assure me of the finished work of His dear Son through the cross for re-creating me (Galatians 6:14-15).

He leads me beside still waters to show me my reflection is now a reflection of Christ Himself (2 Corinthians 3:18)!

He restores my soul.

This truth restores my soul (mind and emotions). God turns my focus from temporal things to the indwelling eternal life of Christ (1 John 5:11-13).

My mind is being renewed and my emotions are being healed by beholding the glory of His presence (Romans 12:2, Ephesians 4:20-24).

He leads me in the paths of righteousness...

God delights in ordering each of my steps (Psalm 37:23)... the unique ways Christ expresses His life through me (Colossians 1:29).

Christ leads me in His righteous paths, not an external guide, but as my very life (Colossians 3:4).

...for His name's sake.

All of my life is for God's glory (Isaiah 43:7).

Jesus is the very radiance of God's glory through me (Hebrews 1:1-3)!

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

There are many times life seems to be a "shadow of death," but the reality is that I am now one with Jesus the Light of life (Ephesians 5:8, John 8:12)!

I can walk with my head high at all times as a testimony of His grace (2 Corinthians 2:14).

I will fear no evil, for You are with me...

I see now how the Psalmist David begins to address God more intimately as "You" instead of "He."

I, too, want to be transformed from talking about Jesus to talking to Jesus. And I want to teach Jesus, not just about Jesus (Colossians 1:28-29).

Jesus, you have not given me a spirit of fear (2 Timothy 1:7). You have given me...You (2 Corinthians 9:15)!

...Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

Your rod is Your living Word that protects me from deceptions (Hebrews 4:12).

Your staff is Your living Spirit, my Comforter, who faithfully lifts me up when I fall (John 14:16).

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

Father, You celebrate the life of Your Son in me for others to see, including those who are against You (Philippians 3:18).

They seek to do good works for righteousness in addition to the cross (Philippians 3:18),

while they watch as I feast solely on the lavish riches of the grace of Christ (Psalm 34:8, 2 Timothy 2:1).

May they be drawn to You, Lord Jesus, in me...and to sup freely with us (Ephesians 2:19-22)!

You anoint my head with oil...

You have given me Your mind (1 Corinthians 2:16), and yet I don't understand. Oh Spirit, illumine my mind (Psalm 18:28).

Without You, I could never understand Your truths that set me free (John 8:32).

...my cup runs over.

Jesus, You are the fountain of water springing up from within me (John 4:14). Your life overflows me (2 Corinthians 2:14)!

Oh Father, use me as Your cup to serve Jesus to a hurting world. I am surrendered as clay in Your strong yet tender hands (Isaiah 64:8).

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me always...

Mercy is not getting what I do deserve – death. Thank you, Lord, for Your forgiveness of all my sins forever (Colossians 2:13).

Grace is getting what I don't deserve – life. I desire to bestow Your goodness and mercy on everyone I meet (Luke 10:33).

...and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Jesus, I used to think that I only invited You into my heart. But, now, I see that You first invited me into Your heart (Ephesians 1:6)!

Your grace opened the door, and I can now make myself at home in You. You are my dwelling place (Psalm 90:1).

I am now free to be who You created me to be...in You...with You, Lord Jesus...my Engineer...my Life...my Home...forever.