The Command to Observe

SCRIPTURE

"Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night." Deuteronomy 16:1 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

The Passover was given to the Today, the Christian world observes the resurrection of Jesus by keeping Easter once a year or Sunday every week. But how are we to observe it? Is it with bunnies, eggs, and sunrise services? Or has God given us a specific way to commemorate the resurrection? Is there a deeper meaning to it that we realize. We'll be looking into these questions this week.

The resurrection is central to our faith, but the "method" of its observance has often been borrowed from pagan customs rather than biblical command. We must be careful not to replace God’s instructions with our own traditions. True observance is not about cultural festivities; it is about spiritual reality.

As we begin this week, let’s ask God to clear our minds of tradition and bring us back to the text. How does "He" want us to remember His victory over the grave? Is it possible that we have been observing the resurrection in a way that misses the point? Let us open our hearts to the "law of the Spirit" and learn to observe His life in the way He intended.

PRAYER

Lord, I want to honor You in spirit and in truth. Clear away the clutter of human tradition from my mind. Teach me how to truly observe Your resurrection—not just as a holiday, but as a holy reality in my life. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Deuteronomy 16:1–8
- Exodus 12:1–14
- 1 Corinthians 5:7–8
- Romans 6:1–14
- Colossians 2:12–13

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did God call Israel to remember its deliverance?

2. Read Deuteronomy 16:1–8. How does this passage deepen today's understanding of God's work in our lives?

3. What would it look like for you to remember a way God has delivered you and give thanks?

The Newness of Life

SCRIPTURE

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Romans 6:4 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

How do we observe the resurrection? Romans 6 gives us the biblical answer. We don't observe it once a year at Easter or by going to church once a week; we observe it by walking daily in "newness of life".

Paul draws a direct line between Christ's physical resurrection and our spiritual walk. Just as Jesus came out of the tomb with a glorified life, we are to come out of the waters of baptism with a new quality of life. The old man—the selfish, angry, prideful self—is buried. The new man—empowered by the same Spirit that raised Jesus—is alive.

"Newness of life" means that your life today should look different than your life before Christ. If you are still reacting to stress the same way, still treating your spouse the same way, still handling money the same way, then have you really experienced a newness of life?

To observe the resurrection is to be a living demonstration of it. It is to show those around you that Jesus is alive because He is living in you. It is to have a "resurrected" marriage, a "resurrected" temper, and a "resurrected" purpose. Only this resurrection has the power to change the world.

PRAYER

Father, forgive me for celebrating the resurrection while living in the oldness of the flesh. I want to walk in newness of life today. Let the power that raised Jesus from the dead be active in my mortal body. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Romans 6:1–14
- Colossians 2:12–13
- 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Deuteronomy 16:1–8
- Exodus 12:1–14

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does resurrection power change the way we live after conversion?

2. Consider Romans 6:1–14. What does this passage add to the main lesson of today's devotional?

3. What would it look like for you to turn away from one habit belonging to your old life?

The First Fruits

SCRIPTURE

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." 1 Corinthians 15:20 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

In the Old Testament economy, the day after the Sabbath during Passover week was the offering of the First Fruits. The priest would wave a sheaf of barley before the Lord. This sheaf was a guarantee that the rest of the harvest was coming. It was the promise of more to follow.

Christ is the fulfillment of this type. He rose on the very day of the First Fruits offering. He is the "Wave Sheaf" presented before the Father. His resurrection is the guarantee that the "rest of the harvest"—that’s us!—will also be raised.

Because He lives, we shall live also. This truth takes the sting out of death. When we stand at the graveside of a loved one who died in Christ, we are not looking at a permanent end; we are looking at a planted seed. The First Fruits have already been accepted, so the full harvest is secure.

This week, "observe" the resurrection by letting go of the fear of death. Let the reality of the First Fruits give you a living hope. You are part of a harvest that death cannot destroy. Because the Head is risen, the Body will rise too.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, You are the First Fruits. Thank You for blazing the trail through the tomb. Because You live, I don't have to fear death. Give me the confidence of the harvest today. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- 1 Corinthians 15:20–23
- Leviticus 23:9–14
- John 11:25–26
- Romans 6:1–14
- Colossians 2:12–13

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What hope does Christ as the firstfruits give to believers?

2. How does 1 Corinthians 15:20–23 help clarify the spiritual principle in today's reading?

3. What would it look like for you to share the resurrection hope with someone who needs encouragement?

Seeking Things Above

SCRIPTURE

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." — Colossians 3:1 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

Here is a practical test of whether you are "risen with Christ": What are you seeking? The resurrection changes your center of gravity. A dead man belongs to the earth; a risen man belongs to heaven. If we are truly observing the resurrection, our affections should be set on things above, not on things on the earth. This doesn't mean we become so heavenly minded that we are of no earthly good. It means our motivation comes from above. We work, we play, and we love, but we do it all with an eye on eternal things, seeking to honor Christ in everything we do.

PRAYER

Father, I confess that my affections are often glued to this earth. I worry about things that won't matter in eternity. Help me to seek things above today. Calibrate my heart to the values of Your kingdom. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Colossians 3:1–17
- Matthew 6:19–21
- Philippians 3:20
- 1 Corinthians 15:20–23
- Leviticus 23:9–14

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does seeking things above change about ordinary priorities?

2. Read Colossians 3:1–17. What connection do you see between this passage and today's Scripture?

3. What would it look like for you to reorder one decision around eternal rather than temporary values?

The Power of His Resurrection

SCRIPTURE

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." — Philippians 3:10 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

Paul’s consuming passion was to "know Him." But notice what he wanted to know specifically: "the power of his resurrection." Paul wasn't content with just the historical fact; he wanted the experiential power. What is the power of the resurrection? It is the power to overcome the impossible. It is the power that conquered death, hell, and the grave. If that power can raise a dead body, surely it can raise a dead marriage. If it can roll away the stone, surely it can roll away your addiction. We often live powerless lives. We are defeated by the same sins year after year. We are like soldiers with a nuclear weapon in our backpack, fighting with pocketknives. The power that raised Jesus is available to us (Ephesians 1:19-20). It is the power to say "no" to sin and "yes" to righteousness. To observe the resurrection is to plug into this power. It is to stop saying "I can't" and start saying "I can do all things through Christ." Don't settle for a weak religion. Press in, like Paul, to know the power that brings life out of death.

PRAYER

Lord, I am tired of living a powerless life. I want to know the power of Your resurrection. Release that energy in my life today. Help me to overcome the "impossible" obstacles in my path through Your strength. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Philippians 3:7–14
- Romans 8:11
- Galatians 2:20
- Ephesians 1:19–20
- Colossians 3:1–17

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does knowing the power of Christ's resurrection involve in the present?

2. What encouragement or instruction does Philippians 3:7–14 offer in light of today's devotional?

3. What would it look like for you to depend on Christ through a challenge that exposes your weakness?

The Living Hope

SCRIPTURE

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." — 1 Peter 1:3 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

The resurrection births a "lively hope"—or a living hope. A living hope is different from a wish. A wish is "I hope it doesn't rain." A living hope is a certainty that anchors the soul. It is alive; it grows, it breathes, it sustains us. Because of the resurrection, we are not people of despair. Even when the world gets dark, even when the news is terrifying, the Christian has a living hope. We know the end of the story. We know that the Tomb is empty and the Throne is occupied. This hope changes how we grieve, how we suffer, and how we endure. It is the anchor that holds in the storm. If you are feeling hopeless today, it is because you have taken your eyes off the Empty Tomb. You are looking at the waves instead of the Savior. To observe the resurrection is to be a prisoner of hope. It is to be the most optimistic person in the room—not because of the economy or politics, but because Jesus is alive. Let that living hope revive your spirit today.

PRAYER

God of Hope, thank You for birthing me into a living hope. When despair tries to settle on me, remind me of the empty tomb. Let my life radiate a hope that makes the world ask for the reason for the joy within me. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- 1 Peter 1:3–9
- Romans 15:13
- Hebrews 6:18–20
- Philippians 3:7–14
- Romans 8:11

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is Christian hope living rather than merely wishful thinking?

2. How does 1 Peter 1:3–9 support or expand the lesson we have considered today?

3. What would it look like for you to recall a promise when discouragement arises?

Sabbath Summary & Reflection

SCRIPTURE

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." — Revelation 1:18 (KJV)

SABBATH REFLECTION

This week, we have redefined what it means to Observe the Resurrection. We moved away from cultural traditions to biblical realities. We learned that to observe it means to walk in newness of life, to set our affections above, to tap into His power, and to live with a living hope. On this Sabbath, let us rest in the presence of the One who is "alive for evermore." He holds the keys. He has unlocked the prison of death, and He can unlock the prisons in your life. • Reflect: Has your "observance" of the resurrection this week been practical? Did you see a change in your behavior ("newness of life")? • Evaluate: Are you relying on His power to overcome, or are you still trying to white-knuckle it? • The Invitation: As you enter a new week, the call is to Live the Resurrection. Practical Application: Next week, when you wake up each morning, remember that you are risen with Christ. Surrender your old habits to Him and choose to walk in newness of life throughout the day.

PRAYER

Risen Savior, You are alive! Be alive in me. I surrender my old life to the grave and claim Your new life for my own. Let me walk in the power of Your resurrection every day until I see You in glory. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Revelation 1:17–18
- Romans 6:4
- 1 Corinthians 15:55–58
- 1 Peter 1:3–9
- Romans 15:13

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do deliverance, newness of life and the hope of resurrection connect?

2. How does Revelation 1:17–18 bring together the spiritual lessons of this week?

3. What would it look like for you to celebrate Christ's victory through a renewed commitment to obedience?