

Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! This is a statement that we love to say. It is this truth that everything concerning our salvation rests. Jesus' resurrection means so much to us.

How wonderful it is to be a child of God. We have God's name placed on us, we have his protection from the devil every day, we have his daily bread, and he have his presence everywhere we go.

That is because we have the truth that our sins are forgiven. We know that when God looks at us he doesn't see worthless sinners but instead he sees children dressed in shining robes of white that sparkle like the stars in the sky.

All of this became ours when Jesus rose from the dead and all of this can't be taken away from us. That last part is just incredible. God's love, heaven, salvation, and blessings can't be snatched away from us. The Devil, demons, angels, any person, or family member is not powerful enough to snatch away everything God has given to you and me. What security, what power, what peace God gives to us!

That must mean we can do whatever we want then right? Nothing can separate us from the love of God. That must mean we can do what we want because we are going to heaven no matter what we do, right?

The answer of course is "no," but if no one can take it from us then why can't we do what we want?

It is true that nothing can steal away what God has given to us, but we can certainly reject it. Salvation, faith, and heaven are gifts of God that we can turn away.

John in his letter spoke against those who taught that we can willfully live in sin and still go to heaven. These teachers thought that their sins didn't separate them from God because they weren't really sinning and in fact some even said that they had never sinned.

Can we have that same attitude toward our sins? Can we think that our sins are not that big a deal? Do we act as if our sins don't count anymore because we are saved by God?

Have you ever thought, "Oh, it is ok to have a little fun every now and then?" "I am doing what makes me happy, how can this be wrong?" "Sometimes it is better to ask for forgiveness than permission." "God is going to forgive me anyways."

Do we willfully sin? Do we see something we know we shouldn't do and still do it anyways? Do we sin thinking we will just ask for forgiveness later? What we are saying when we assume that God is going to forgive us when we willfully sin?

Listen to what John has to say about our sins, **"God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth."**

When we sin we are pushing our Savior and his blessings away. It is true we will sin from time to time. It is true that when we confess our sins our God promises to forgive us our sins. However, that doesn't allow us to become secure in our sins. It doesn't excuse our actions.

Our sins keep us out of the fellowship of God. When we don't feel that our sins are anything to cry about and willingly live as God forbids we are turning our backs on our God and walking away from the salvation that Jesus so lovingly handed to us. If we do something wrong thinking we will ask for forgiveness later, are we truly sorry and repentant? Instead of giving

God glory for his love we are telling God that his will isn't important to us and mock his forgiveness.

In fact John even tells us that when we feel that what we are doing is not wrong but ok we are calling God a liar. When we call God a liar we are saying that we don't need him nor his Son's life and death. We are throwing our relationship with God out the window. We are therefore living in darkness and not in the light of the Gospel because we have trashed it and God will not be patient, with those who trash his resurrection message, forever. We need to guard ourselves against every sin not just some.

How can we avoid neglecting God's glorious blessings? How can we remain in the light of God's fellowship and love?

God has given us his message. This is the same message that John is proclaiming in his letter. The word of God keeps us in the light. The Bible is the tool that the Holy Spirit uses not only to create saving faith in you, but it also strengthens you keeping you in God's light.

God's message of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection keeps us in the light of God. It reminds us that we are sinners and in need of a Savior. It shows us our Savior Jesus Christ and what he did to save us: how he was the righteous sacrifice we needed to turn aside the anger of our righteous Father, and now, stands alongside our Father in heaven pleading our case to him. God's Word also guides us to lead God pleasing lives out of thanks for God's great love.

God's word is the cure for the darkness of unbelief. When we are struggling with our own unbelief God's Word will tell us clearly what God says and the Holy Spirit will give us the faith to trust in God's message.

When we find a fallen brother or sister, God's Word is the tool given to us to call them back to God's flock.

When we are talking to someone about God for the first time it is God's Word that will bring them see who their God is and what he has done for them.

God has given us a beautiful gift when he gave us his saving and powerful message. Treasure the light of God's Word. Study it every day so you don't give the devil any opportunity to lead you astray from the Gospel truths that are yours. Share it with everyone you meet to lead them either back to their Savior or to meet him for the first time.

The truth of God's resurrection is for all people of all time. Jesus didn't leave anyone out of the plan of salvation. Our God, who wants all people to be saved, has given to us a powerful tool to give the blessings of Jesus' resurrection to all people: the Bible.

God wants you, your family, friends, enemies, all people to walk in the light of the resurrection. When he gave his message to you he gave you a powerful tool to secure your salvation all the way to the very end.

**It is as the hymn writer says: God's Word is our great heritage and shall be ours forever. To spread its light from age to age shall be our chief endeavor. Through life it guides our way. In death it is our stay. Lord, grant, while worlds endure, we keep its teachings pure throughout all generations. Amen.**