

***The Third Day* by Tom Berlin**

Chapter 6: *Jesus*

Anna Mutzenberger and Nate Meyers, Elisha Interns

During the final chapter of his book, *The Third Day*, Bishop Tom Berlin highlights the examples of human nature throughout scripture. We read stories in the bible where individuals are seemingly on the right path, but in the end fall short when trying to live as God has taught them. We see it throughout the Old Testament in the stories of Moses and the Israelites following the Exodus, in the time of the Judges when people were trying to learn how to follow God's will, and in the words of the prophets warning the people to "get back on track" or it would not turn out well for them.

These examples of human nature in contrast to God's will continue in the New Testament. One example that Bishop Berlin highlighted was when Jesus had left the crowds and found a quiet place to rest. The people were so fascinated with Jesus's teachings and actions that they followed him. In this example not only do we see the humanity of Jesus when he needed time to be in prayer with God, but we also see the human nature of the crowd. They were so desperate to learn more and witness Jesus at work that they were willing to go out of their way to find him and disturb his rest.

When Jesus told the crowd that he had to move on to other cities and share the word of God elsewhere the crowd was angry. They selfishly wanted to keep Jesus for themselves. Even though Jesus had previously taught them that his mission was to spread the good news to other cities, the people could only focus on what THEY wanted in that moment.

There are examples of this in our world even today. Often times we know what the right thing, the Christ-like thing, to do is, but there are obstacles that keep us from actually doing the right thing when the time comes. These obstacles could be selfish desires, fear, negative influences like social media or the news, criticism from others, or even just feeling like our lives are too busy. We see these things spread in groups and systems in a way that multiplies fear, hurt, or oppression.

Each day we are given opportunities to act the way Jesus taught us, but how often do we actually do it? It is easy to know the things we are supposed to do, how we are supposed to act and even understand their importance. So why is it so difficult for us to follow through? Well, it's because we are all human. Sin is still very much a part of our human experience. We know that we are going to fall short. We know that there are still going to be times when we don't act as God has taught us.

Time and time again we miss opportunities to do what God has called us to do. But thankfully our human mistakes are not the end of the story.

It was what Jesus did through the three days that defeats sin and darkness. These three days represent the turning point for humanity, showing God's ultimate power and love. Jesus took upon himself the weight of the world in the monumental moment in all of human history.

As the nails pierced his hands and feet, he overcame the power of sin and death. Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection defeated sin, darkness, and death once and for all. Just as it states in 1 Corinthians 15:55-57,

"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?

The stink of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

We see it in the scripture, how the people respond and how their lives change. This can be seen with Mary Magdalene and her joy at the empty tomb as her tears of sorrow turn into tears of rejoicing as the Jesus shows himself alive again. The same joy can be seen with Thomas and he moves from doubt to belief.

The greatest example of transformational change can be seen on Pentecost as the disciples "were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them" (Acts 2:4) and they began their gospel mission. Through Christ we receive this same spirit and have the same calling as the disciples. There are people all throughout our community whose lives can be changed forever through the healing touch of Christ.

We are called to be witnesses of the resurrection in our own lives and communities. Giving personal testimony about how Jesus has come into our lives and overcome sin, addiction, or despair can forever change the lives of those around us. Your story is powerful. By sharing your message, others can relate and began to see just how great our God is. Share the gospel and your testimony boldly, just as the early disciples did.

We are called to be resurrection people. This means to live with hope because death and sin have no power over us. Christ is so much greater than any trial or tribulation we face, and Christ can truly do anything through us. Embody a new life in Christ, as Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:17: *"If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation"*. Being resurrection people means living with a mindset of victory, hope, and joy, even in difficult times. No matter what we are facing, we have the Creator of the Universe at our right hand, guiding and loving us every step of the way.