

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

In Numbers 21, we read the account of the bronze serpent,

how the people complained against the Lord because they weren't getting to the Promised Land fast enough, taking the long way around the land of Edom... and they were fed up with the manna.

These complaints were not the lamentations of the faithful,

struggling in this world to conform their corrupt will to the Father's good and gracious will.

These were the complaints of faithless men, women, and children who wanted their own way...now!

"Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?

For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food."^{Numbers 21:5}

Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.^{Numbers 21:6}

When they repented/cried out to Moses for God to take the serpents away, God didn't take them away.

Instead, He gave them something to look at and to train them to trust Him and His Word of salvation.

He had Moses make a bronze serpent and lift it up on a pole so all could see it.

And He promised them that if they were bitten, they could look at that bronze serpent and live.

No doubt, some did not believe the promise... thought it was crazy... and died in their disbelief.

Yet others, who initially thought it was crazy, looked anyway... and lived... and believed.

Earlier in John's Gospel, Jesus had made reference to this account when He spoke to Nicodemus:

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life.^{John 3:14-15}

Here again, in our text for meditation, Jesus is offering the same solution:

Look to Me and live...and I will raise [you] up on the last day.

We read as follows in Jesus' name:

[Jesus said,] All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given Me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."^(ESV)

This is Your Word, heavenly Father; sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth. Amen. (John 17:17)

Look... believe... and live... ..and be raised on the last day to life eternal.

That is the will of your heavenly Father for you.

That you **look** to Jesus... **believe** in Him... and have life ... so that you may **rise on the last day**...

And in order to accomplish that, the Father sent His only-begotten Son to live, die, and rise.

Jesus came down from heaven to do His Father's will.

And while this included healing and performing other miracles, Jesus points out that the main, the essential, purpose of His coming was that He would suffer and die and rise again,

so that He **would lose nothing of all that He was given, but raise it up on the last day.**

In other words, that He would not lose a single soul elected to eternal life,

but would redeem them, call them, wash and sanctify them, and finally raise them in glory.

And what a comfort to hear Jesus Himself say, “**whoever comes to Me I will never cast out.**”

You have these promises, but when you have been traveling for 70, 80, 99 years
and have seen and endured so much suffering...

Or have lived half or an 1/8 of that, but you consider that your **days have been few and evil.** Genesis 47:9

It's easy to forget these great promises... and to forget God's gracious will,
and wonder if God has forgotten you... or worse, cast you out.

It's easy to faithlessly mumble and groan about the constant wandering,
and even begin to loathe the daily blessings He gives when relief seems to be nowhere in sight.

It's easy for us to doubt these great promises... especially as we see death all around us...
on the news, or hearing gun shots down the street, or having close loved ones die.

As we contemplate what we have experienced and think we know about death,
it can look as if there isn't anything beyond this life.

But, thankfully, we aren't the first to struggle through these thoughts, grumblings, and doubts.
When Jesus walked the earth, there were those in the same position,
some even refusing to believe in the resurrection of the dead.

And our Lord knows your thoughts, your grumblings, your doubts, even your disbelief.

Yours are really no different from those who were alive when Jesus walked the earth Himself.

And instead of instantly taking these serpents of doubt away,

He gives you something to look at, so that He may train you to trust Him & His Word of salvation.

So meditate on what Jesus offered by way of samples of His great love and power,
even over death.

We have one such sample in today's appointed Gospel text,

where we heard of Jairus' request for Jesus' help for his dying daughter.

When Jairus had left her bedside to find Jesus, she was at the point of death.

But, it seemed, that the world, even Jesus was against him.

Jesus got hung up by the thronging masses and

Jesus Himself had tarried to speak to a lady He had healed from years of suffering.

It was at that point that the report had come that the girl had died. It was too late.

Can you imagine the man's disappointment and hopelessness, his doubts about Jesus,

or even about God's good and gracious will... that He would allow this 12-year old girl to die?

Yet Jesus continues on the path and comes to Jairus' house, now surrounded by mourners.

Those mourners find an opportunity for laughter when Jesus insists she is only sleeping.

They know death. They have seen it before. It is different than sleeping.

Yet Jesus walks in, holds her by the hand, speaks a few words and she sits up,

as if merely awakened from a nap.

And with that resurrection, all doubts, disappointments, grumblings, and disbelief vanish from Jairus.

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You know, it is never for the people who died that Jesus chose to raise the dead.

Those who died are being pulled back from their rest and the glorious presence of God

to return to this life of corruption and sin and struggles and wanderings.

It is always for the survivors... and for you who yet remain here...

so that they may see... believe... live... and be raised from the dead on the last day.

This impossible task of reversing death was no difficulty for Him.

He merely speaks a word, as if to awaken them from sleep:

whether Jairus' daughter, "*Talitha cumi*" Mark 5:41;

Or the son of the widow of Nain, "**Young man, I say to you, arise**" Luke 7:14;

Or "**Lazarus, come out**" John 11:43.

And what do you suppose His words were on Good Friday when He died and returned to paradise, and all those **bodies who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.** Matthew 27:52-53

But none of these show the great power of God as does Jesus' own resurrection.

It may be one thing to call someone else back from the dead,

it is quite another to raise yourself from death with your own power.

And this, after having all the sins of the world imputed to Him, given to Him, so that He might suffer the punishment and condemnation and hell for all people.

While He was being lifted up on the cross, according to His own promise and word,

He trusted His heavenly Father's will. He did not doubt the Father's goodness.

Nor did He forget His Father's promises as He endured the pain and forsakenness of God, ultimately committing Himself into His Father's hand.

But it was because He perfectly trusted and believed His Father, that He rose from the dead.

It is proof to you that all of your doubts, all your grumblings,

all your forgetfulness (in good and difficult times) has been atoned for and forgiven Romans 4:24-25 through **Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.**

His resurrection, too, is for the survivors... for you to know with full certainty

that you, too, will rise on the last day by the power of Jesus.

Just as He said, **Because I live, you also will live.** John 14:19

Jesus' resurrection displays His complete mastery over death. THERE is Life itself flexing His muscles,

but only as if yawning after a power nap, as He awaits the day when He will call all the dead to life.

On that day, Jesus, the Lord of Life, will show that He has never forsaken, nor forgotten His own.

On that day, He will bring back the souls of all the faithful, who have reposed with Him in heaven,

and will give them back their bodies, now glorified, no longer to wander and struggle,

but to live eternally in peace in the new heaven and new earth.

It is easy, during our wandering, our sojourning here to only look at the things we see.

But your heavenly Father's will is that you look at the things you hear.

Look to Jesus, the Lamb who was crucified for the sins of the world.

He is no longer lifted upon a cross, but lifted up to the right hand of God the Father.

Believe His Word, which has never failed.

Know that you are forgiven, and live in the comfort and joy of His resurrection.

And on the last day, you will be raised up from the dead to eternal life in glory.

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Soli Deo Gloria