

We know from Ephesians 2 that we were dead in trespasses and sins. We may read further of our estate in Romans 3. To the disciples in His day, the Lord foretold something of this personal ruin to Peter in John 13 and when he denied the Lord Peter understood it himself. But if we look with contempt or disappointment at him we need only ask ourselves how many of us have always been consistent or never failed. Our pleading was absolutely futile in the light of the stern justice of God and when we realize that we are on a program to understand one of the great truths of the resurrection life: that it is one of forgiveness and resultant fellowship with God.

B. In the second place we must see the reality of forgiveness.

This truth would come to Peter when the Lord asks for him as in Mark 16:7. We read of it for ourselves in Colossians 1:14 and we must understand that when he bore our sins on the cross (1 Peter 2, Colossians 2:14, etc) He paid a full penalty so that *we could know forgiveness of all sin (sins): past, present and future.* The best way to know this forgiveness, however, is to practice forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32)..we may remember the fact of a hurt but we forgive the consequence and the reality of the forgiveness we enjoy becomes the practical extension of the forgiveness we can give.

C. In the third place then, we must grip the reassurance of fellowship.

See how the Lord established this with the apostles after the resurrection in John 21. Listen to the invitation He gives us in Matthew 11 to come to Him and be identified with Him. Note the fellowship that is ours in I John I with the Father and the Son and with one another. With forgiveness comes a return to healthy relationships and that is why there is no room in the Christian community for grudges, meanness of spirit, or spiteful recriminations. Our movements towards others should follow the path of the Lord's movements to us.

III. Conclusion: The resurrection life is remarkable in the peace that it brings and the reality of fellowship with God that is part and parcel with the truth that we are forgiven. It is a great life and we should enjoy it and show it in all the aspects we know. It is our love for one another that will be the great witness that we are His and if we fail in that..well, He still forgives and grants us the opportunity of enjoying the company of God and the blessing of His will.