

Our 'Crucifixion' and 'Resurrection'

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It's 'Holy Week,' the time each year when Christians commemorate Jesus' betrayal, arrest, beating, sentencing, death on the cross, burial, and then – on the third day, resurrection from the dead. This is the central event in all human history, the 'hinge' upon which the fate of mankind rests. Try as Satan and his forces of darkness may, Jesus remains a polarizing figure everywhere in the world, in large part because of His death and resurrection. As James Allen put it almost a century ago in his famous poem "One Solitary Life,"

Nineteen centuries have come and gone
And today Jesus is the central figure of the human race
And the leader of mankind's progress
All the armies that have ever marched
All the navies that have ever sailed
All the parliaments that have ever sat
All the kings that ever reigned put together
Have not affected the life of mankind on earth
As powerfully as that one solitary life

It's tempting to generalize that last assertion – that Jesus has affected 'the life of mankind on earth.' It's grand and glorious, but can easily dissipate into a meaningless axiom. *Super! Jesus has affected everyone!* But what is truly magnificent is when He affects *one life – yours*. Jesus saves people one-at-a-time, and He changes lives that way, too. Jesus changes the world one-life-at-a-time.

He does it by His life. We are saved by faith: The cross paid the penalty for sin, and the moment we believed in Jesus, we were '*crucified with Christ*,' His death became ours, the spiritually dead 'me' was no more, and our eternal life began. But as Paul puts it in Galatians 2.20, *the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God*. His resurrection became ours, too. We need the power of the resurrection in our lives each day.

Until we 'graduate to glory,' we will 'struggle against...spiritual forces of wickedness' (see Eph. 6.12). This struggle can get downright messy. It's easy to focus on failures, and get down on yourself. That's Satan's plan. Don't go there. Remember your 'crucifixion' and 'resurrection' with Christ. His death and resurrection are still 'working' for you each day. Trust in Him, take it to Him in prayer, and leave it with Him.

Are you spinning in a lie that keeps on telling you that you're not good enough?
And when you're looking in the mirror, do you see someone impossible to love?
Full of fragile broken pieces
We're all rough around the edges

We ain't perfect, no
We ain't even close
We got holes in our hearts
We got scars we don't show
But all that baggage we keep on dragging around
Ain't it time we start laying it down?
Lay it down at the foot of the cross
Give it to the One who can carry it all
Even at our worst, to Him, we ain't lost causes
Just beautiful messes

("Beautiful Messes," by Connie Harrington, Hillary Scott, and Ben Glover)

