

Remember the Resurrection

Preached by Phillip Kayser at DCC on Sunday, April 17th 2022

Back in 1984 Robert Savage said something that has stuck with me. He said, "If we could forget our troubles as easily as we forget our blessings, how different things would be." Let me re-read that: "If we could forget our troubles as easily as we forget our blessings, how different things would be." Forgetfulness is one of the chief robbers of faith and hope. We forget the many things God has done in the past; we forget His promises; we forget doctrines that completely contradict our emotional state. And its not just us. It seems to have been a common problem in Bible times. When the women arrived at the tomb on resurrection day, the angels told them, "He is not here! He has risen!" And seeing the surprise of the women, one of the angels said,

Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

They are commanded to remember. And the text goes on to say, "And they remembered His words." And that remembrance instantly produced joy, faith, and action. Matthew Henry coined a word for us pastors in his commentary on 2 Peter 1. He called us "remembrancers." People who help others to remember. He said,

This [office of remembrancers] is the office of the best ministers, even the apostles themselves; they are 'the Lord's remembrancers' (Isa. 62:6).

And he goes on to say that we ministers need to repeatedly remind our members of God's promises because we tend to live below them; and to remind them of God's doctrines, because our lives are sometimes inconsistent with them; and to remind them of God's commandments, because we often neglect our duties. Jesus had to repeatedly remind his disciples about His death and resurrection. And they repeatedly forgot. All the way back in John 2 Jesus predicted His resurrection. Verse 22 says, "Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said." They remembered, and remembering the word gave them renewed faith. It changed them. It's not enough to preach on a doctrine once - especially such an important doctrine as the resurrection of Jesus.

And because of the importance of this doctrine, Paul reminds us in our text (2 Timothy 2:8), "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel..." Remember. Today we will be remembering one of the greatest acts of redemptive history - the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. And it is my prayer that this remembrance will produce renewed faith, hope, and action in us. Paul gives us three reasons why we are remembering this glorious act of God.

I. We are to “remember” the resurrection because it is an important doctrine

First, we are called to remember the resurrection because it is an incredibly important doctrine. It is a *foundational* doctrine. Without this doctrine you do not have Christianity. And there are three things in this verse that inform us about its importance.

A. A fact anticipated in the Old Testament (“of the seed of David”)

First, it was a fact anticipated in the Old Testament. We see that hinted at in the words, “of the seed of David.” There were two streams of Jewish interpretation about the Messiah - one stream denied that the Messiah would suffer, die, and rise. The other stream did believe in a suffering Messiah who would descend from David, who would die, and who would rise again. A lot of people don’t realize that all of the Christian doctrines preceded the birth of Jesus - yes, even the Trinity. There are commentaries on Genesis going back to the Babylonian exile that clearly teach the Trinity. Well, the same is true of the doctrine of the resurrection. For example, the first two pictures in your outline are pictures of an ancient stone inscription from Israel called the Gabriel Stone. It is dated to the first century BC. It represents at least one stream of theology that existed before Jesus was even born. That stone speaks of a coming Messiah who would come back to life after three days. And there are other ancient Jewish writings that said the same thing. They knew the Old Testament Scriptures that speak of Christ’s death and resurrection.

This is why it was so surprising to me to see Dr. William Lane Craig argue that the Old Testament did not speak of a resurrection of the Messiah. And even more weirdly, he claims that the OT passages that the apostles used to teach the resurrection of Jesus have nothing whatsoever to do with Christ’s resurrection. For example, of Psalm 16, he says, “The Psalm is not about rising from the dead but avoiding death!” In other words, he is accusing the apostles of very bad proof texting. And yet he teaches at Biola. The Evangelical church has become absolutely nutso. When someone asked Dr. Craig why the apostles would use a passage that has nothing to do with a resurrection to try to prove a resurrection, he responded,

The answer [is] that they wanted to show that Jesus’ resurrection was in some sense a fulfillment of Scripture, and, since the Old Testament has almost nothing to say about the resurrection, they had to apply novel interpretations to passages that weren’t really about the resurrection. Now if that sort of hermeneutic strikes you as dishonest, understand that for an ancient Jewish exegete discerning such deeper meanings in the Scriptures was normal procedure and would be seen as a strength of one’s view. Giving a novel interpretation to familiar passages was seen as providing additional insight into Scripture.¹

¹ <https://www.biola.edu/blogs/good-book-blog/2019/old-testament-prophecies-of-jesus-resurrection>

I say, "No! Absolutely No! This kind of answer makes Dr. Craig a dangerous teacher." Paul is quite clear in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that Jesus "rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." Even the specificity of the third day has to be found in the Old Testament Scripture. Let me introduce you to just a few of the Old Testament passages that point to Christ's resurrection. Hosea 6:1 laments that some saints had died, but verse 2 says that they would rise and live on the third day in the sight of the Messiah.

"After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight."

And then it goes on to speak of the gradual growth of the Messianic kingdom. So Christ and a handful of Old Testament saints would rise on the third day as a kind of firstfruits. And of course, all the earlier Old Testament passages that dealt with the festival of Firstfruits prophesied a resurrection of Jesus on the third day. Hosea is simply giving an amplification of the teaching of the Festival of Firstfruits. Firstfruits is describes in Exodus chapters 23 and 34, Leviticus chapters 2 and 23, Numbers chapters 18 and 28 and 32. And there are other passages that deal with that Festival that prophesied the resurrection of Jesus on the third day. So even the specificity of third day is clearly taught in the Old Testament. Passover symbolizes His death. Unleavened Bread symbolizes His burial. And the third day of the festival - the day called "Firstfruits" symbolizes His resurrection along with a handful of Old Testament saints.

Isaiah 26:19 says the same thing. Isaiah pre-records the words of the coming Messiah as saying this:

Your dead shall live; together with My dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust; for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

You could not get a more clear testimony to Jesus rising from the dead and then raising up some other dead people with Him. And of course, that was fulfilled in Matthew 27:52-53, which says,

and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

Matthew Henry points out that the people who got in on the firstfruits resurrection were martyrs. The apostles were *not* using bad exegesis, or even reading deeper meanings into the text that can't be found there. And Dr. Craig's assertions to the contrary is an absolute slander against the apostles.

Using ordinary grammatical historical exegesis you can see that the Messiah was prophesied to be of the seed of David, and before him, of Boaz, Judah, Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, Noah, Seth, and Adam. And of course, Christ's death and conquest of death in resurrection was prophesied all the way back in those earliest chapters of Genesis. True, it is only hinted at, but it is there. Genesis 3:15 promised that though Satan would bruise Christ's heel in His death, Christ would subsequently crush Satan's head - implying His

continued life. Psalm 2:7 is interpreted by Acts 13:33 as a prophecy of Christ's resurrection when it says, "today I have begotten You." David prophesied of Christ's death and resurrection when he said, "My flesh also shall rest in hope, for You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption." Psalm 22 describes Christ's death and then the answer to His prayer in resurrection.

So, the importance of this doctrine can be seen by the number of times Christ's resurrection was predicted in the Old Testament. Jesus would not just die to deal with sins. He would live to be able to give us life.

B. A fact fulfilled in history ("was raised from the dead")

The next phrase in 2 Timothy 2:8, "was raised from the dead," shows that what was predicted in the Old Testament was fulfilled in history - and the apostles and many others were witnesses to that fact. 1 Corinthians 15 describes the witnesses to this resurrection, saying,

1Cor. 15:4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. 7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. 8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

The evidence for the historical veracity of the resurrection of Jesus is so strong that some Jewish rabbis no longer try to disprove it. They still don't believe in Jesus, but they do believe He was raised from the dead. And they shrug their shoulders and say that other strange miracles have happened in history too. The May 7, 1979 edition of Time Magazine highlighted a book written by an orthodox rabbi, Pinchas Lapide, who says that the evidence for Jesus' resurrection is overwhelming as a historical fact. And Paul says the same here - it is a historical fact that is undeniable.

C. A fact with ongoing significance (ἐγγεγερμένον is in perfect tense)

Next, the importance of His resurrection can be seen by the tense of the verb Paul uses in this verse. The perfect tense indicates something that had happened in the past but which has an ongoing relevance. In other words, He was raised and continues to be a living Savior forever. That perfect tense implies that He didn't die again. He remains raised.

So how important is the resurrection of Jesus? In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul said that there could be no Christianity without it. He said,

16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. 17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

We are called to remember the resurrection of Jesus because it is a critically important fact for our Christian faith. And every Sunday is a resurrection Sunday that memorializes the

fact that the work of redemption is finished, and therefore we are commanded to rest on the first day of the week, not the last day of the week. The Old Testament prophesied this changed from seventh day Sabbath to first day Sabbath and each Gospel account records an ending of the seventh day Sabbath and the beginning of a first day Sabbath with the resurrection of Jesus. Firstfruits had never been called a Sabbath in the Old Covenant. But each Gospel record of resurrection day calls it a First Day Sabbath in the Greek. This is why we are commanded in 1 Corinthians 16: “as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also; on the first day Sabbath let each one of you lay something aside...” (vv. 1-2). We look backwards to the finished work signaled by the resurrection every Sabbath whereas Old Testament saints looked forward to the resurrection every Sabbath. The very change in the day signaled the earth-changing significance of this fact of the resurrection. The resurrection was a pivot point on which all of history hinged. And Christ’s body was the first evidence of all things beginning to be made new because His body was the first thing of the Old Creation to be glorified. It is the first part of the New Creation order.

II. We are to “remember” the resurrection because of its power (context)

And this brings us to the second main reason that we need to remember the resurrection, and that is that its transforming power continues to be a power at work in us. Where His death atoned for our sins, and His burial disposed of our sins, His resurrection guarantees His power over all the effects of sin in us. It gives us hope. In other words, the resurrection is not just a doctrine to be believed; it is a reality that changes us. Romans 8:11 says it this way:

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

To me this is astounding - if the Spirit raised Jesus from the dead (which He did), and if the Spirit is inside of us (which He is), that means that the same power that raised Christ from the dead is working right now in our mortal bodies. This New Creation power is accessible to us if we will receive it by faith. Again, this means there is an astounding relevance to the doctrine of the resurrection for our day-to-day living. And the context of our verse develops the extent to which this resurrection power continues to be at work. Let’s look at the context.

A. It gives us power to stand for Christ (vv. 1-3)

Verses 1-3 show that it gives us power to stand strong for Christ. Already in chapter 1 Paul had been teaching on the resurrection and how it had brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. And in that chapter Paul says that this good news enabled *him* to endure suffering, have hope, to stand fast, and to experience the Spirit’s power at work in him. Was that simply a mental trick? No. It was the present power of Jesus in His life. Chapter 2 picks up with a “therefore” and applies the same reality to Timothy by saying,

2Tim. 2:1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

If grace resides in a living Christ, not a dead Christ, then that grace can enable Timothy to stand just as strongly as Paul did. Timothy was fearful, timid, and weak in himself. But Paul reminded him that through Christ's resurrection life Timothy too could have boldness to stand strong. It's not a personality issue; it's a grace issue.

And then verse 2 says that Timothy can train other faithful men the same things he has learned so that they can teach other faithful men. Generation after generation of disciples can experience the same power of the risen Lord that Paul did. Verse 3 shows that this resurrection power can enable Timothy to endure hardship.

3 You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

A man who has the living resurrected Jesus working His grace through us by the Holy Spirit can stand strong in every deadly circumstance.

Let me illustrate this. When I was a child I was fascinated by water spiders - sometimes called diving bell spiders. This strange spider spends almost all of its life underwater even though it can't breathe underwater. The way it survives in the hostile environment of the water is that it builds a silk sack and attaches the sack to something underwater. How does it live in this sack? It has to draw air from above the surface on its many hairs, and then bring the bubbles of air down to the sack. It then flicks air bubbles from its hairs into the sack, filling the sack with air. The kingdom of air is invading the water. The sack also acts as a gill, filtering a good deal of its needed oxygen from the water itself - and scientists are still trying to figure out how this sack is able to do that. The spider mates underwater, lays eggs under water, eats underwater, rests, and pretty much lives most of its life underwater. The very waters that could spell its death without that oxygen, protect it from other prey. It briefly surfaces to replenish its oxygen supply once a day. Well, Christ's resurrection power that He gives to each saint enables us to stand strong for him in the hostile waters of this world and to thrive and prosper in those waters.

B. It gives us power to strive for Christ (vv. 4-5)

Verses 4-5 show a second way in which this resurrection power transforms us. It gives us power to *strive* for Christ. Standing strong is not enough - we must strive to advance His kingdom - just as those water spiders propagate 30-70 new spiderlings every few weeks and take dominion of the underwater invertebrates, water mites, larvae, tadpoles, small fish, and other underwater creatures. Well, Paul calls us to strive on behalf of the kingdom of heaven. He says,

4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

Both warfare and athletics involve enormous exertion, and it is exertion according to rules of a different kingdom. We are not called to be at peace with this world. We are called to colonize this world. And he doesn't call us to exert ourselves in our own fleshly strength. Paul calls us to strive by the power that flows from a resurrected Savior. The Lord's prayer

says it all - "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." So, it's one thing to stand strong in tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword, but in Romans 8:37 Paul calls us to do more - he calls us to be more than *conquerors* through Him who loved us. Indeed, every time a pagan is converted to be a Christian, the kingdom of heaven grows in this hostile environment. And it has been growing non-stop from a tiny mustard seed into 2.5 billion Christians worldwide today. Eventually, the kingdom of heaven will be so pervasive on earth that everything will be transformed - or as 1 Corinthians 15 words it, every enemy will be put under Christ's feet.

But if we become forgetful, we will pass out spiritually and die. Like the water spider, we must continually connect with the kingdom of heaven. We must daily derive our spiritual air from the living Christ and His heavenly kingdom. That alone will give us the energy to conquer and spread.

C. It gives us power to serve each other faithfully (v. 6)

Third, the living Savior gives power to serve each other faithfully. Verse 6 says, "The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops." As dominion creatures we rightfully think about the ROI (or Return on Investment) of our efforts. Is it worth it? And Paul says that it is. There is a huge ROI in heavenly rewards as well as in earthly benefits. But that ROI is only for the faithful, hardworking farmer - not for the lazy one. Only as we are faithful do we bear fruit that glorifies the Father. And I prefer the farmer analogy to the spider analogy anyway. Jesus uses the farmer analogy in John 15, saying,

John 15:1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

So to summarize this second point - why should we remember the resurrection of Jesus? Because that doctrine reminds us that its not enough to have head knowledge about facts. We need the abiding presence of Christ and His kingdom with us, and when we have His presence, He transforms us and transforms others through us. We must be bringing the air of the kingdom of heaven into our earthly realm like those water spiders.

III. We are to “remember” the resurrection because it is foundational to the Good News (vv. 8-13)

The third reason Paul wants us to remember the resurrection is that it is foundational to the Good News we are called to share with others.

A. There is no good news without it (v. 8)

Verse 8 says, “Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead *according to my gospel.*” Gospel means “good news.” It is good news to believers but bad news to the enemies of Christ. It’s bad news to them because it reminds them that they will have to answer to a living Person who governs the universe. So in verses 8 and following those committed to this doctrine are also committed to fight against the enemies of Christ with spiritual weapons.

B. Though the enemies of Christ oppose it, (v. 9), Paul brings that message for the sake of the elect (v. 10)

He first of all says that even though enemies of Christ oppose this doctrine of the resurrection, Paul brings that message for the sake of the elect. He doesn’t worry about those who will never be part of the kingdom of heaven. His focus is on the kingdom and upon the elect who are yet to join that kingdom. Verses 9-10:

9 for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. 10 Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

The word of Christ is not chained because Christ is not chained. What happened when Paul was free? The kingdom expanded. What happened when Paul was in prison? The kingdom of heaven expanded as fellow-prisoners and guards became Christians, and those guards shared the Gospel where Paul could not even reach. Paul said elsewhere that Christ always leads us in victory. Christ stands behind His Word. And when you have a message that Jesus Himself stands behind, it gives you what it takes to deliver the message despite opposition.

C. The Gospel can be summarized in the words death, life, reign, and faithfulness (vv. 11-13)

And that Gospel message or good news can be summarized in four words: death, life, reign, and faithfulness. Verses 11-13:

2Tim. 2:11 This is a faithful saying: for if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. 12 If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. 13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

This whole paragraph speaks eloquently to the benefits of our union with Jesus. What happened and continues to happen to Jesus, happens to those who put their faith in Him.

When He died, we legally died. Our old identity no longer controls us. And we need to remind ourselves of that fact. A convert from the homosexual lifestyle is not a Gay Christian. No. His identity is in Christ and he died to that old life. So that's the critical word death. Christ's death means our death to our old life.

But the Gospel also has the word "life." When Jesus came to life, *we* legally came to life. But here Paul adds that we shall also continue to have life with Him in the future. That word "life" gives such encouragement. When we feel hopeless, lifeless, and without power, we can call out for His life to made manifest in our weakness - and it will.

Then comes the word "reign." Those who endure (and all the elect will endure; they will persevere because Christ preserves us - those who endure) will reign with Him. We don't just submit to *Christ's* reign. *We* are given authority to reign in life and in eternity. Astoundingly, Ephesians 2:6 says that God has already "raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." We are seated together with Jesus on His throne. This is why Revelation 2:26-27 says those who overcome by faith are seated with Jesus, rule with Jesus, and can even exercise His rod of iron to smash the nations and bring them into submission to King Jesus. Astounding! Everything that happens to Jesus happens to those who cling to Him in faith. We have the privilege of reigning - if we can remember our position and live consistent with that position. Do you pray with the authority that is true of one who is seated with Christ in the heavenlies?

But if we deny Him (that's in the future tense indicating that this would be the denier's future state - a state that is impossible for a genuine believer - but if we persevere in denying Him), He will deny us. That's the sober part of our Christianity. You cannot survive without Jesus any more than a water spider can survive without air. To deny Jesus is to deny your eternal life. And we need to be reminded of that fact. We need to go to Him throughout the day for air. Yes, God preserves the elect, but He does so by making the *elect* persevere in their faith. Without perseverance or endurance, there is no evidence of faith. A water spider who does not come up for air, dies. A Christian who does not seek those things which are above, dies, and shows himself to not be a true Christian.

The fourth word of the Gospel is "faithful." It helps to balance what I have just said. Just because we might be temporarily unfaithful (like Peter was) does not mean we have forever denied Him. God remains faithful to us because He cannot deny Himself, and to cast off His seed would be to deny Himself. It is a marvelous summary of the good news of Christ's death, resurrection, reign, and faithfulness to His own. Remembering each of those words gives us stability, balance, and perseverance.

IV. We are to "remember" the resurrection because it is essential to the ongoing health of the church (vv. 14-26)

I will end with one more thought - Paul calls us to remember the resurrection because it is essential to the ongoing health of the church. Paul wants Timothy to call his *congregation* to remembrance. Verse 14 says, "Remind them of these things." The congregation must also remember. And Paul once again repeats the idea that just as the resurrection was

transformational for him, and just as the resurrection was transformational for Timothy, it can be transformational for the whole church.

In verse 14 he calls them to not strive over the wrong things: “Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.” Some Christians strive over non-kingdom issues. We need to know what is worth fighting and dying over and what is inconsequential to the kingdom.

Verses 15-19 show that there is a division between true believers and enemies of Christ *right within the church*. One of Apologia’s latest episodes was exposing the dangerous and counterfeit Christianity of Brandon Robertson - a person who excitedly uses Christ’s statement to the dead Lazarus - “Lazarus, come out,” to affirm that Jesus loves LGBTQ+ people just the way they are and wants them to come out of the closet. “Come out” says Jesus. That is a novel exegesis that makes no sense of the passage whatsoever. And people like Brandon Robertson are parasites that need to be cast out of the church. Just as water spiders must protect their air kingdom from invaders, church discipline must be re-instituted against the enemies of Christ who sneak into the church. And certainly those who deny the doctrine of the resurrection are to be rejected out of hand. Starting to read at verse 15:

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. 17 And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, 18 who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. 19 Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

He is saying that those who deny a literal resurrection are not His, however much they may protest to being His. There are some doctrines that absolutely must be guarded. And sadly there are those who deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus within the evangelical and Reformed camps in exactly the same way that Jehovah’s Witnesses do. The truth of Christ’s resurrection brings division - the right kind of division. Since those truly united to the Savior will live and act accordingly, it eventually weeds out the tares. or to use the analogy of vessels, he says in verses 20-21.

2Tim. 2:20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. 21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

Paul continues with personal sins that contradict who we really are. Just as viruses and bacteria can destroy a water spider’s ability to function properly underwater, these sins will take us out if we do not fight vigorously against them by Christ’s resurrection grace. Verses 22-26:

22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 23 But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. 24 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

Are there predators of water spiders? Yes, there are. Frogs and herons definitely eat them. But the worst killers of spiders are internal parasites, bacteria, and viruses. And I would say that the worst things to hurt our Christian walk are the internal sins that we fail to daily confess and put off. Colossians 2:20-23 says that if we died with Christ, we should put off the doctrines and commandments of men. The next chapter says that if we were raised with Christ, we should seek those things which are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Everything we need to live our lives on earth comes from heaven. Daily we need to be praying, "Your kingdom come; Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." And seeking those things which are above doesn't make us so heavenly minded that we are of no earthly good. It's the exact opposite. The rest of Colossians shows that it transforms everything we do in our bodies, in our homes, in our businesses, and in culture. Just as the water spider is surrounded by air in a hostile environment, may we be surrounded by the things that come from Christ. He is risen, and this living reality needs to impact all that we think, say, and do. May it be so, Lord Jesus. Amen.