

Weekly Encouragement

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Resurrection Power

By Peter Eng

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You will probably not remember the name Nafissatou Diallo. I don't either. I had to look it up. This hotel housekeeper working in New York is an easy symbol of a powerless immigrant working in a powerless job. But she is able to tap into three sources of power: the justice system, an Attorney General ready to believe her, and the power of the lie. She accused then-IMF chief DSK of raping her.

DSK is no saint. But did he commit the crime as charged by Diallo?

Upon further questioning, and the examination of the evidence, it turned out she was lying all along. When I first heard the story, I had tended to believe her because it was hard to imagine the sheer audacity of a powerless person to lie in such a manner. Furthermore, something did happen between them. But she was no more than a blackmailer. When caught in her lie, she just rolled around on the floor and said she did no wrong because she was not under oath.

In another instance, a servant girl made a right

observation and had power. On the night Jesus Christ was arrested, she noticed one of the men standing around the courtyard fire was with Jesus, the man now beaten and tried.

Even though she was a powerless servant girl in the social structure, she had great power. Her remark, whether casual or malicious, had the power to break Peter's badly shaken confidence. She caused Peter to deny he knew Christ. Once that first denial was made, second and third denials became necessary. ([Luke 22](#))

There is a destructive power. It is available to most people at some point in their life. Diallo and the servant girl did not always have this power, but a combination of circumstances gave them the power. Sometimes that power comes naturally, by telling the truth, like that servant girl. At other times, the power comes through a lie, as in the case of Diallo.

Thankfully, most people do not seek to destroy others when they hold that power momentarily. Some do, and they wield it to great effect.

Doing good takes power. A lot of it. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." ([Gen 1:1,31](#)). It took God to create a good and beautiful world. It doesn't take much for man to destroy it starting with Adam.

It costs God everything to become man in the person of Jesus. Yet for a month's salary of a casual worker, Judas betrayed him. The power of God at the incarnation would end in the death of Jesus because he had a self-seeking disciple in cahoots with a high priest interested in preserving his position under the aegis of Rome.

We have reason to despair that evil seems to triumph so easily and good only with such effort.

This is why the resurrection of Jesus is vital. Jesus died like any man, but arose the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. Death is the ultimate power from which none can escape. In his resurrection, Jesus defeated the ultimate evil.

Paul the apostle was Saul the persecutor of the church. He denied the resurrection of Jesus until Jesus met him one day. When he understood it, he declared, "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins." ([1 Cor 15:17](#)).

All the optimism and all the good teachings of the world cannot escape the condemnation of death. Evil seems to have easy power over good.

God's work of good operates beyond our optimism or good teachings. God's first great good was at the creation. In the resurrection of Christ, all creation is shown the way to God's redemption, and points us to a new heaven and a new earth.

There is destructive power. We wield that power. But there is creative power too. However it appears weak and so easily subverted by destructive power. Victims of destructive power need no convincing. But it takes understanding and faith to receive the creative power of Jesus at his resurrection.

This is not a resuscitation of a dead person who will still die. It is the transformation of a corruptible body into an incorruptible body. It is not about a soul leaving a body. It is about a soul returning to body. It is not about denying the pain of death. It is to fully accept the horror of death but to embrace more dearly the promise of our resurrection in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the hope for all humankind that "though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet." At his death, Jesus paid the price for sin. At his resurrection, he established once and for all his power over sin and death. The greatest evil is defeated by the greatest good. The resurrection of Jesus is much more than a miracle. It is God's proof to us that the power to hurt and harm has been defeated, and will be defeated.

The psalmist looked forward to that day when he said, "the way of the ungodly shall perish." ([Psa](#)

[1:6](#)). The resurrection is not the day the ungodly perish. It is the day the ungodly are redeemed, and it looks to the day the way of the ungodly shall perish. Jesus came to save us, the ungodly, so our ungodly way will perish.

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Rev. Peter Eng is an ordained minister from the Reformed Tradition, but he is truly global in perspective. He served the Lord in various capacities starting from his teenage years in the 70s. His undergrad studies were done in Singapore, his grad studies in the USA, and post-grad studies in the United Kingdom, with additional post-grad research in Germany.