

Let's honour life not death – Auschwitz-Birkenau

Dear Friends,

In the last email we sent out (Building Update) we only spoke about the physical building, but we know a Prayer House is much more than a building. So, what about the prayer, the worship..... the spiritual stuff? Well, that has been happening too and in that the Lord has been leading us. So, here is a little snippet of what the Lord is showing us.

"Life flows through honour". God spoke that into Mark's heart a couple of weeks ago and we've been thinking about it since… When we honour someone, His life flows towards them, and when we don't, it doesn't. It also works the other way around. If we're not honoured by someone, we don't receive life from them. But that shouldn't stop us from honouring them.

In Auschwitz, the Jewish prisoners were taken from the cattle cars, lined up, and selected for immediate death in the gas chambers or a slow death in the camp. Those who were selected for "life" were stripped naked, their hair cut off and tattooed with a number. They were starved and worked until they could work no more. Then they too were sent to the gas chambers. Everything the Nazis did came out of a spirit of dishonour – and we can see the result of that from our bedroom window (our house overlooks Birkenau).

We often say that everything in the Prayer House is to be done in the opposite spirit to the Nazi spirit that went before. It doesn't matter how different someone's beliefs are from your own, or how crazy you think they are; we choose to honour and treat them with dignity and respect.

But this honouring doesn't stop with people. Whatever we honour, we attract, and what we attract can become a part of us. So, we shouldn't just honour people, **we should honour "life" itself**.

We live in a culture that honours death, and in the Church, we do the same without realising it. We say, "when we die, we'll go to heaven". And, by believing it we make death a door, a gateway to heaven. But I thought Jesus is the door? I thought He is the gateway to heaven?

The book of Hebrews says, "**We have boldness to enter the Most Holy Place** (meaning heaven) **through the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way that He opened up for us**." (Hebrews 10:19).

Our God is a God of LIFE. More than that, He is the source of life. He is the Fountain of Life. He is the Tree of Life. He is the River of Life. Jesus said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life" and "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life".

A few months ago, as I (Mark) was taking a group around the Fountain of Tears, I was explaining the identification between the establishment of the State of Israel after the Holocaust, and the resurrection of Jesus. And suddenly I was overwhelmed with the reality… of course… the resurrection of Jesus **demonstrates His complete victory over death**. I know it's obvious… we all know it… but do we really know it?

Then a couple of months later, God showed Mark this verse:

"**It has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel**. (2 Timothy 1:10)

Wow, where did that come from? When we declared this, we felt it resonate through the camp. Jesus destroyed death and as a consequence, He wants to release His life where death once reigned. That's true wherever we are, but especially here in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

In the valley of dry bones, Ezekiel was commanded to prophesy to the bones.

"**Dry bones hear the word of the LORD! This is what the Sovereign Lord says... I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD**". (Ezekiel 37: 4-5)

We all know the story. Ezekiel prophesied, and the bones came together, tendons and flesh appeared, and skin covered them. But there was no breath, no Spirit of life in them! The Jewish people have returned to their land and Israel has again been established as a nation. But they still need to return the LORD. They need His breath.

Then Ezekiel was commanded to prophesy a second time.

He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath... that they may LIVE.'" (Ezekiel 37:9)

This is a great passage, but the point here is that we speak life, we prophesy life, we focus on life, we honour life – both physical life and spiritual life – and break the fascination with death in this place!

Ezekiel was looking at a valley of death, but he transformed it into a valley of life.

God has a plan to transform Auschwitz-Birkenau into a place of life. That's because He wants LIFE for His people, and the Prayer House has a part in this.

What we honour we attract, and what we focus on will manifest around us. Our focus therefore is JESUS, the resurrection and the life! If, we have to look at dark things, we should always see them through the lens of the cross and the power of the resurrection, knowing that the end of the story is LIFE!

Ezekiel also saw the River of Life flowing out from underneath the Temple. And where the river flowed, salt-water was changed into fresh water, and large numbers of fish were found in it. **And where the river flowed, EVERYTHING in it lived**. (Ezekiel 47:9).

See, I am doing a NEW thing. It is now springing up. Do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. (Isaiah 43:19)

May God release a MIGHTY STREAM of the River of Life here in Auschwitz-Birkenau!

+++ SELAH +++

So, what's happening with the building?

Actually, not much visually has changed in the building since the last update. However, there has been a lot preparation and planning, and a lot of different things are about to happen. The work will start next week and continue through to the end of January.

We won't say any more for now – it will all be in the next update!

We have had some wonderful groups visiting us this year. For all of you who have come, thank you so much for all that you have deposited here and for the encouragement you are to us. And at the same time we want to thank all those who have given so generously to the Prayer House, to see it come into being. We still have a long way to go!

If you have not visited us before, why not think about coming yourself or bring a group in 2020!

Love and blessings

Mark & Cathy

Fundacja Living Stones
ul Boczna 4
32-600 Brzezinka Oświęcim
Poland
+48 519 433 612
f.livingstones@gmail.com
www.livingstones.com.pl

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