

## He's Alive

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I had a “first” earlier this week. Tuesday morning, I received a phone call with news that a friend of mine had passed away; at least the person calling had received information to that end and was wanting to know if I could confirm the news. I was shocked by this news as I had just spoken to my friend late last week and there was no indication that his health was in jeopardy. The person who called me had tried to verify the news through other sources but to no avail.

Upon receiving this news, my heart sank. I began to think of my friend’s spouse and children and the sadness they must have been feeling. I began to think of future plans and what those times would be like without my friend’s presence. I began to pray for my friend’s family and to hold onto the hope that somehow this news has been delivered in error and everything was really okay.

In an attempt to try to confirm the news, I called my friend’s cell phone, but no one answered. I began to scour my Facebook page to see if other mutual friends were sharing this tragic news, but there wasn’t a hint of any such news.

Imagine my surprise when I received a phone call from my friend’s cell phone about a half an hour after first receiving the news. I braced for the worst, fully expecting to hear the voice of my friend’s spouse or one of his children tearfully sharing what I feared most in this moment.

Imagine my joy to hear my friend’s voice! He was alive and well and the rumors of his demise were greatly exaggerated! My heart moved from sadness and fear to joy and elation! My friend was alive!

As I’ve reflected upon this experience this week, I’ve been reminded of the Good News of the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

John records the disciples’ experience in John 20:19-21: “On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’”

Perhaps I got just a small taste of the joy the disciples experienced when they learned that their friend Jesus was alive and well.

Of course, there is a major difference between their experience and my experience earlier this week. My friend didn’t actually die. Just like the rest of us, someday (and I hope it’s a day many, many years from now) my friend will experience death. Someday each of us will experience death and there will be no phone call proclaiming that it was a huge mistake or misunderstanding. Death will visit each one of us.

Jesus died and laid in the grave for three days. Jesus conquered death once and for all. The disciples experienced the joy of knowing that their friend Jesus had died and was now alive and well! He had defeated the undefeatable death. Everything would be different from here on because death did not have the final victory!

We serve a savior who died and defeated death! We serve a God who has defeated what we could not defeat. Because of Jesus' victory over the grave, we share the hope of the same victory over the death and the grave.

Jesus sends us into this world to proclaim this Good News! I've retold my own experience with my friend's alleged death several times this week, but I have an even greater story to tell in recounting my experience with Jesus and His victory over death and the grave! Jesus is Alive!

Christ's Peace,  
***Lance***

