

## CHAPTER 1

# REST in Jesus' VICTORY!!

This was an experience that defies explanation. A profound realization took over my whole being as I stood by my mother's hospital bed a few hours before she passed away. Her journey was about to end, seven years after the first cancer diagnosis. She had prepared herself well for this moment and had the most positive and grateful spirit that I have ever witnessed. She was dying with the full assurance of her salvation in Jesus, and therefore her soul was filled with peace beyond understanding. Her attitude was such a gift to all of us who love her dearly, because she kept referring to her impending death as just a "*siesta*," a little nap, until she wakes up to see the face of Jesus at the Second Coming.

As I contemplated her beautiful and sweet face, which was filled with an expression of rest and peace, I also noticed her shallow breathing and realized that the time she had left on this earth was very short. Suddenly, every biblical doctrine that I had ever believed, studied, or

## I Will Give You *Rest*

taught; all the stories from Genesis to Revelation; the entire plan of salvation through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as explained in the Scriptures; seemed to be swallowed up by a gigantic funnel that resulted in one single core belief that was either **all** true or it wasn't. At that moment, there was room for only **one final reality**:

- She had been saved through Jesus, or she had not.
- Either I would see my mom again, or I wouldn't.
- Either Jesus wins, or He doesn't.

That simple. That profound. That **real!**

In the midst of this very personal and yet cosmic realization, I watched her take her final breath and, in that one instant, cease to be a living soul. At that moment, one reality trumped all my other thoughts, feelings, and beliefs: She was resting in Jesus; evil could no longer

*S*he was  
in complete  
*rest* in Jesus.

touch her, pain could no longer reach her, the devil could no longer bother her. She was in complete *rest* in Jesus.

And that was true not merely because she had died, but because she had passed away with the full assurance of her eternal salvation in Jesus' salvific work on her behalf. The truth was that she had entered God's True Rest long before she died! She ceased her life with a "*sabbathed*

## Rest in Jesus' Victory!!

soul,” as described in Hebrews 4:9–11: “So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered *His rest* has himself also *rested* from his works, as God did from His. Therefore let us be diligent to enter *that rest*” (emphasis added).

I turned to Facebook to share my mother's passing with our family, friends, and prayer and ministry partners. And yet I could not post the news without the reminder of this **one** ultimate reality. My post was accompanied by a triumphant two-word cry: **Jesus wins!** This headline became the title of my homily that I gave a few weeks later at her memorial service.

When the rubber meets the road, when we are at our wit's end, when we come to the end of our journey, or when the life of a loved one is about to slip away, we better have a clear, unquestionable, and assured reality: *rest in Jesus*, because **Jesus wins!**

### It's all about Jesus!!

In one of the most fascinating chapters of the Bible, two men, who also are mourning the loss of a loved one, discuss the baffling events of the previous two days as

*We* better have a clear, unquestionable, and assured reality: *rest in Jesus*, because **Jesus wins!**

## I Will Give You *Rest*

they walk toward a town called Emmaus. They have a great many questions and yet no answers. Their hopes have been shattered by their helplessness in the face of cruel reality. All that they have ever believed in seems to have been swallowed up by a gigantic black hole of hopelessness, leaving them in complete darkness and despair.

In the midst of their confusion, they are suddenly joined by the resurrected Jesus, even though they don't recognize Him. They try to explain to the "stranger" that up until two days ago they had strong religious beliefs and convictions, which are entirely useless now. Were the Law and the prophets not true? How could the Messiah die? Had they really believed in a lie? How will their hearts ever be able to believe again?

And in the midst of their despair, Jesus decides to help them see something very important, something crucial: all the Scriptures were written to convey **one core reality**. "And He said to them, 'O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?' *Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures*" (Luke 24:25–27; emphasis added).

Jesus had joined them in order to funnel all of their understanding of doctrines and teachings of the Law and

## Rest in Jesus' Victory!!

the prophets, all of their religious concepts, into one single reality called the “gospel” or the “good news,” and to explain to them that all these teachings pointed to that **one** reality: Himself! For those of you who like the original words in Greek, the verb used for “to explain” in verse 27 is *diermeneuō*. The English word *hermeneutics*, which is used in academic circles in reference to the methodology of interpreting biblical texts, is part of this Greek word. Jesus, in fact, is offering them a fascinating and exciting theology class, remind-

Everything was  
pointing to Jesus!

ing them that they need to start from the beginning: everything they ever read and believed from the Jewish Scriptures, from Genesis on, was pointing to Jesus' death and resurrection. Yes! Every Sabbath celebration, every Day of Atonement, every service in the sanctuary, every annual Passover Feast, every jubilee, everything was pointing to **Jesus!**

Aside from the bewildered looks on their faces, something unprecedented happened to them. An untamable Woo-hoo!—the type that is bursting at its seams—was born in their hearts! And the same two men, who moments before had been overtaken by their darkest fears, now had their hearts burning with uncontainable joy in the light of this new understanding! They had to