

# Resurrection Realities

## Romans (Resurrection passages)

The celebration of what we call Easter began very early in the Church and has continued without interruption to this day. The word Easter itself is maybe not the best term to describe this day, although it has become tradition. Personally I like the term "Resurrection Sunday," because it is on this day especially that we remember and celebrate that day when the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

The resurrection of Jesus is a real historical event that literally happened almost two thousand years ago outside the city of Jerusalem. Two men, or angels, who stood beside the empty tomb first announced the good news saying, **"He is not here; for He is risen, as He said"** (Matthew 28:6). And as Luke later wrote in Acts 1:3, **"He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs."** The real resurrection of Jesus is what we celebrate on Easter.

And I know that most of you believe in the resurrection or you would not be here this morning. So I will not be trying to convince you this morning of the reality of Jesus' resurrection. If you are still having trouble with believing Jesus is alive from the dead, please see me after the service and I will be glad to give you many good reasons to believe it is true.

But this morning rather than asking "Is the resurrection of Jesus real?" Since we have been studying verse-by-verse through Paul's letter to the Romans, I want us to go again to Romans to see what we can know is real because of Jesus' resurrection. Romans teaches us at least five realities from the resurrection. These realities are so meaningful to us today. They will answer some of the most pressing questions in your life: the question of doubt, the problem of guilt, the struggle with weakness, the anxiety of loneliness, and the fear of death. If you wrestle with any of those problems today, this message is for you.

First of all, the resurrection deals with our question of doubt. The resurrection reality is that:

### 1. Jesus Christ is really the Son of God. (Romans 1:4)

***"1 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God 2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, 4 and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."***

The resurrection verifies that Jesus really is the Son of God. It is clear throughout the gospels that Jesus claims to be the Son of God and that those who followed Him believed it to be true.

Listen to what Jesus said to the Jews in Jerusalem in John 10:36-38:

**36 "do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? 37 "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38 "but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father [is] in Me, and I in Him."**

Here Jesus clearly claimed to be the Son of God, to do the works of His Father and that they Father is in Him and He is in the Father. In John 5:18 it says, **"Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God."**

The charge against Jesus at His trial was that He claimed to be the Son of God. John 19:7 says, **"The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.'"** At His crucifixion the chief priests and others mocked Jesus in Matthew 27:43 saying, **"He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'"**

Peter preaches at Pentecost in Acts 2:32, 36, **"This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. ... 36 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.'"**

So Paul says in Romans 1:4 that Jesus was ***"declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."***

The resurrection declares that Jesus really is who He said He was. He is the Son of God. By raising Jesus from the dead, God the Father declared it even more emphatically than when He spoke from heaven at Christ's baptism saying, **"You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,"** (Mark 1:11).

If Jesus would have died and remained dead, He would be like the millions who came before Him and the millions who came after Him. But that is not what happened. Christ's resurrection authenticates His claim to be the Son of God. It verifies what Christians have believed through the ages. Jesus is really the Son of God. He is God in human flesh. He is God with us. As Thomas declared when he saw the risen Jesus Christ, He is **"my Lord and my God!"** (John 20:28).

So the first reality of the resurrection is that Jesus Christ really is the Son of God.

The second reality of the resurrection deals with our problem of guilt. It is:

## **2. We really can be justified by faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 4:23-25)**

***"23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification."***

The resurrection of Christ Jesus made it possible for us to be justified, declared righteous before God. Verse 25 says Jesus **"was delivered up because of our offenses."** Our sins deserved death. But Jesus took our sins upon Himself at the cross. He died on that cross though He had done nothing to deserve death. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, **"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."**

What the resurrection shows is that Christ's death finished what God intended, the full payment for our sin. God raised Jesus from the dead as a crucial validation of the efficacy of His death. It was the Father's way of saying, ***"Your death accomplished its intended purpose."***

If Jesus didn't rise, then His death is the death of an ordinary man, and it has no saving value. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:17, **"And if Christ is not risen, your faith is**

**futile; you are still in your sins!**" But Christ did rise from the dead. He was raised by the Father for our justification. He was raised in order that in the sight of God we might be declared righteous; in order that our sins could be forgiven; in order that we could become the righteousness of God in Christ. John Stott wrote,

"The resurrection assures us of God's forgiveness. Forgiveness is one of God's best gifts. I remember reading of a certain psychiatrist who said, "I could dismiss half my patients tomorrow if they could be assured of their forgiveness." The truth is that all of us have some skeleton or two in a dark cupboard at home — something we've done or said or thought, of which, in our best moments, we are deeply and sadly ashamed. Our conscience nags us, torments us, condemns us."

But Christ's resurrection means we are justified and justification means we are forgiven. We are reconciled to God. We have peace with God. We are free from the death penalty of sin. But you might say, how can I know that I can be forgiven and justified?

These verses in Romans 4 connect us to Abraham, who believed the word God gave him and it was counted to him as righteousness (Romans 4:17-25). He was justified by faith. What did Abraham believe? He believed in resurrection. Hebrews 11:17-19 says,

**17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," 19 concluding that God was able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.**

Righteousness is always associated with faith. And saving faith is believing in the death and resurrection of Christ. Romans 10:9-10 tells us how that faith works in us to save:

**"that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."** (Rom 10:9-10)

Salvation is demonstrated by our confession that Jesus is Lord. True saving faith is a matter of the heart, or inner person. That's why you must, "... **believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead,**" to be saved. Faith is the root; confession is the fruit. We are saved by grace through faith in Christ alone, but if our faith is in the risen Christ, it will always bear the fruit of salvation.

So the reality of the resurrection is first that Jesus Christ is really the Son of God that He claimed to be and second that we really can be justified by faith in the risen Christ.

The third point is an answer to our struggle with weakness. The resurrection reality is:

### **3. Sin's power over us really has been broken. (Romans 6:4-5, 9-11)**

**"4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the *likeness* of His resurrection,"**

When we believe in Christ, we are united to Him in His death and resurrection. Union with Christ means that when God looks at us, He does not see our unrighteousness, but

the righteousness of Christ. It means that we have died to sin with Him and will also live to righteousness with Him (Romans 6:8).

This union is only made possible by the resurrection of Christ. We could not be united to a dead Christ. Baptism is a picture of this union. Baptism pictures for us the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. And it also symbolizes the fact that believers are united to Him in His death, burial and resurrection. When we go through believer's baptism by immersion we are declaring what Paul writes in Galatians 2:20, **"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."**

Romans 6:8-11 tells us what this union with Christ in His death and resurrection means for us,

**"Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.."**

The resurrection of Christ Jesus means that sin's power over us has been broken. Sin and death no longer have dominion over us because we are in Christ. And Christ Jesus has died to sin once for all. Death has no claim on Him, He won the victory over death. Christ's resurrection proves that He won the victory over sin and its consequence, death.

And verse 4 says that in this union with Christ we are now able to walk in newness of life because **"Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father."** The resurrection reality is that sin does not rule over us. Jesus does. The life we live by faith we live in Christ—united together with Him. So just as He was raised to life, so now we also can walk in newness of life. We live now new creations in Christ Jesus.

Romans 7:4 says, **"Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God."** There is a new power working in our lives, and that power produces fruits of righteousness. We no longer live by the laws of bondage. We have new directives, new disciplines, new goals, and new purposes for our existence.

This means that as we walk with Christ through the filling of His Holy Spirit we do not have to give in to sin. Our new direction in life is toward righteousness, not toward sin. Christ's death and resurrection completely and finally conquered sin and death. We share in that victory in union with Christ. Knowing that Christ has won the victory gives us the desire and power to overcome sin as we walk with Him.

So first we had the reality that Jesus Christ really is the Son of God; second, that we really can be declared right with God by faith in the risen Christ; and third, that in our union with Christ in His death and resurrection, sin's power over us has been broken.

Our fourth reality is a help with the anxiety of loneliness:

**4. Christ really dwells in us by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:11)**

**“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.”**

Twice in that verse Paul teaches that the Holy Spirit of God dwells in us. Jesus had promised this in John 14:16-17, **"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."**

After Christ had risen and ascended, He was able to send the promised Holy Spirit to continue His work on earth. That promise was fulfilled in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit came upon the believers in Jerusalem. Peter spoke to those who witnessed that event and said this about the risen Lord Jesus, **"Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear."** (Act 2:33).

This means that Christ's earthly ministry continues today through His people, in whom He dwells by the Holy Spirit. This also means that Christ will help His people by the Spirit, teaching them, strengthening them, convicting them, guiding them as they walk this new life with Christ.

The resurrection realities are that Jesus Christ really is the Son of God; that through faith in the risen Christ we really are justified; that in union with the risen Christ we really have power over sin; that the risen Christ really dwells in us through His Holy Spirit.

The final resurrection reality from Romans deals with our fear of death:

#### **5. Christ really will judge the world (Romans 14:9-12)**

**9 For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.** (Romans 14:9-12)

Jesus rose from the dead to be Lord and judge of the living and the dead. Verse 10 says, **"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."**

Paul, Preaching in Athens in Acts 17 says,

**30 "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 "because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."** (Acts 17:30-31)

How do we know that Jesus is really the judge of all the world? Because God raised Him from the dead. Peter says the same thing in Acts 10, after preaching about Christ's death in verse 39 and His resurrection in verses 40-41, Peter says in Acts 10:42 **"And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead."**

The resurrection reality is that by raising Christ from the dead the Father has appointed Jesus Christ to be judge of the living and the dead. The resurrection not only authenticates Jesus as the Son of God, ensures our justification, breaks the power of sin in our sanctification, and guarantees our inheritance through the indwelling Holy Spirit—but ultimately the resurrection establishes the righteous reigning judgment of Christ. Romans 14:12 says that, “**each of us shall give account of himself to God.**” All of the world will one day be judged for the things they have done and be held accountable before God. Unbelievers will be held accountable for breaking God’s law, facing the condemnation of God and going to hell. Believers will be held accountable for the things they have done, and will be rewarded by God in heaven based on their actions as believers. The sign God gave to confirm this fact was the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

If you do not believe in Jesus Christ, this judgment should be a cause for tremendous fear. You will face the wrath of God and suffer an eternity in hell because of the sins you have committed. But this judgment does not have to be a thing to dread. This same judge is also our deliverer, our savior. It was He who gave up His own life on the cross to pay the penalty for your sin. It was He who was raised for your justification. If you will trust Him now, belief that He died for you and was raised again, today you can have eternal life, forgiveness from all your sins, and you will be made to stand at the judgment for you will stand united with Christ.

## **Conclusion**

So what difference does all this make today? As I pointed out, these five resurrection realities answer five of the most significant problems that we face:

1. The question of doubt. How can we know what is true? The resurrection verifies it: Jesus really is the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead.
2. The problem of guilt. How can I be forgiven? The resurrection assures us of God’s forgiveness. Because Christ is raised we really are justified before God by faith.
3. The struggle of weakness. How can I find power to change? The resurrection provides it. In union with the risen Christ we really have power over sin.
4. The anxiety of loneliness. Does anyone really care? The resurrection means God comes near to us. Because Christ rose His Holy Spirit really dwells in us.
5. The fear of death. What happens when I die? The resurrection guarantees that there is life beyond the grave and we can stand before God in the judgment. This same Christ who died and rose again is the judge of us all.