

Why the Resurrection?

In the nearly 2000 years since the resurrection of Jesus Christ, I am sure there have been thousands upon thousands of sermons preached, hundreds of books have been written, it has been debated in the highest of circles and the lowest of places. And the reason for that is because the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the key to all of Christianity. If there is no resurrection, then there is no Christian faith.

The apostle Paul agreed when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:17-19, **“And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.”**

Why do we put so much emphasis on the fact that Christ rose from the dead? Today I want to focus on just three aspects of the significance of the resurrection.

1. It is God's confirmation of the virtue of Jesus' life.
2. It is God's verification of the value of Jesus' sacrifice.
3. It is God's validation of the victory of Jesus over sin and death.

Preacher G. Campbell Morgan wrote, “Upon all the virtue of His life, and the value of His death, and the victory of His conflict, God set the seal in the sight of heaven and earth and hell, when raising Him from the dead.”

In Acts Chapter 2, we find the very first sermon in the early church. The appalling event of the crucifixion and the glorious event the resurrection had happened fifty days ago. Since then the apostles and other disciples have met the risen Lord Jesus many times. Ten days ago they saw Him ascend into heaven in a cloud. And since then they have been prayerfully waiting in Jerusalem for Jesus to send the Holy Spirit as He promised.

Now it has happened. While they all were gathered in one accord, **“Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”** Acts 2:2-4.

Peter begins to preach to the crowd that has assembled to hear what the apostles are saying. The sermon actually began in verse 17 when Peter used a passage from Joel to describe the coming of the Holy Spirit. But let's pick up this morning with verse 22:

Acts 2:22-36

- 22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know--**
- 23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;**
- 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.**
- 25 For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.**

- 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.
- 27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.
- 28 You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'
- 29 "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.
- 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,
- 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.
- 32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.
- 33 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.
- 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand,
- 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." '
- 36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

It's obvious from reading the words of Peter that day, that he had just one focus – the resurrection. As he reached the culmination of his message that day, he announced: **"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."** (Acts 2:36)

The resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate proof that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. We don't have time this morning to dig into all the details of Peter's sermon, so I just want to emphasize three points:

1. The Resurrection Confirms the Virtue of Jesus's Life.

Peter began his morning message, saying, **"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know."** (Acts 2:22). Miracles, wonders, and signs are three words the New Testament uses to refer mighty acts of God. The word "miracle" refers to what was done; the word "wonder" refers to the effect a miracle had on people; and the term "sign" indicates the purpose of the miracle. These miracles were signs that God was with those who did them.

Jesus performed miracles of healing, miracles of nature, and even miracles of restoring life. And all of them were carefully documented by not just one, but four biographers who believed so fully that Jesus was the promised Messiah, that they gave their lives for sharing their faith. When confronted with the signs and wonders of Jesus, Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish high council, concluded: **"Rabbi, we know that You are a**

teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." (John 3:2). Can we conclude anything less? The miracles of Jesus are powerful evidence that He was, in fact, the Christ, the Son of God.

But if Jesus had just gone around doing good—healing people, feeding a crowds, casting out evil spirits, teaching people—and then He finally died and was never heard from again, He would not be Lord and Christ, He would simply be a good example. But the resurrection confirms that the life of Jesus is infinitely more than just a good example.

As Peter says, "**Jesus of Nazareth,**" was "**a Man attested by God to you.**" And the resurrection was God's ultimate testimony that Jesus was righteousness and sinless. Jesus died like a criminal. But He did not die for any crimes that He had done. He was doing the will of the Father. Verse 23 says, "**Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death.**" The crime was committed by those who crucified this innocent man.

But verse 24 says, "**whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.**" It was not possible for death to hold Him because He had done nothing to deserve death. The Bible says, "**The soul who sins shall die.**" Death could not hold Jesus because He was the sinless Son of God.

So the resurrection confirms the virtue of Jesus' life. Second,

2. The Resurrection Verifies the Value of Jesus' Death.

As we saw in verse 23, the death of Jesus was not some horrible accident. And the resurrection proves it. If Jesus had simply died, been buried, and was never heard from again, His death would have been little more than just a tragic mistake. But it was no mistake. It was "**by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God.**" It was God's plan that His Son would die as a substitute for our sins. The resurrection gives meaning to the cross.

While it may have been the Jews and the Romans who were responsible for the crucifixion, they were really only carrying out God's purposes and his plans which He had made before the creation of the world. Men may have found Jesus guilty of crimes He never committed; men may have even nailed Him to the cross. But God had another plan in mind – the resurrection!

Peter uses two different Psalms as a witness of the resurrection. Both of these were well-known Psalms of King David. But as Peter so clearly points out in his message, there is no way that David had spoken these words about himself. They were undoubtedly prophecies of the Messiah.

The first Psalm he uses is Psalm 16:8-11. He quotes that Psalm in Acts 2:25-28. That Psalm revealed that the person being spoken about would not be abandoned to the grave and his body would not see decay. David obviously couldn't have written that about himself, because, as Peter points out, he had died and the location of his grave was well known to his Jewish listeners. But those words are a witness to the fact that Jesus' body was raised from the dead by God.

Peter later writes about the value of Jesus' death in 1 Peter 3:18, **"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit."**

The resurrection verifies the value of Jesus' death. And thirdly,

3. The Resurrection Validates the Victory of Jesus Over Sin and Death.

In Acts 2:34-35, Peter also quotes Psalm 110:1, **"The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'**" Again, this could not refer to David, since he did not sit at the right hand of the Father. But Jesus, having been resurrected and having ascended into heaven was and is in that position of honor and authority.

The resurrection completes the victory that Jesus won on the cross. When Jesus died He cried out in victory, **"It is finished!"** And by raising Him from the dead, the Father validates that victory.

Verse 33 says, **"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."**

Jesus is enthroned in heaven with all things under His feet as the victor over all the forces of evil. Sin cannot touch Jesus, death has no power over Him. Satan is dethroned from this world—all because Jesus rose from the dead.

No wonder Peter, when he could have preached on just about any topic for his first sermon, chose to focus on the resurrection. Without the resurrection our faith is futile and we would still be dead in our sins.

All of this call for a response from us. But it's not enough to just ponder the proof of the resurrection and believe it as a fact. It's not even enough to seize the significance of the resurrection and recognize that through the resurrection God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ. How will you respond today. Peter calls for this response in verse 38, **"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."**

Repent means to turn away from yourself and your sins and turn to God. Romans 10:9-10 says, **"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."**

Are you ready to confess that Jesus is Lord, is the rightful King and Master of your life? Will you believe in your heart in Jesus as the risen Lord and Christ? Will you come to be saved today?