

Resurrection Sunday—2019

“Because He Lives!”

(4/21/19)

We have come here this morning to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the single greatest event in the history of the world—and the cornerstone of the Christian faith.

Without the resurrection there is no Christian faith, no salvation—and no hope for man.

And that’s why I’d like to spend our time this morning looking at the implications of the resurrection—a message I’ve entitled, **“Because He Lives!”**

The resurrection of Jesus has both eternal and practical implications for the Christian.

I. The Eternal Implications of the Resurrection

A. The resurrection guarantees that our sins are forgiven

1 Corinthians 15:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ And if Christ is not risen, [arguing from the negative] your faith *is* futile; you are still in your sins!

I realize that we are living at a time when the whole concept of sin seems antiquated and irrelevant in the minds of many—but in the eyes of God, nothing could be further from the truth!

The Greek word translated ‘**sin**’ literally means to “*miss the mark*”.

It was an archery term for hitting the bull’s eye on a target.

The Bible, in Romans 3:23, says that—“*all have sinned (all have missed the mark)*”.

Of course, that begs and question—“*what does the mark or the ‘bull’s eye’ represent?*”

It represents the glory of God—even as Paul said in Romans 3:23—“*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*”

“*What is the glory of God?*”—sinless perfection.

There has only been one Man in the history of the world who was born, lived and died sinless—that Man is Jesus Christ!

The only way for us, as fallen sinners, to be perfect, sinless, and blameless in the eyes of God—the only way for us to make it into heaven is for us to be—“*in Christ*”.

The Bible says that either a person is ‘in Christ’ or they are ‘in sin’—both of which being designations of existence representing a state of being.

All of mankind falls into two categories, two positional state of beings—either they are ‘children of God’ or ‘children of the devil’, children of light or children of darkness.

Either they are ‘saved’ or ‘lost’—either they are ‘heaven bound’ or ‘hell bound’.

The state of being ‘in Christ’ (salvation/eternal life) is predicated upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead—as He told His disciples, “*because I live, you will live also.*” (John 14:19)

If Jesus didn’t rise from the dead, we would still be lost because we would still be in our sins—

Romans 4:24-25 (AMP)

²⁴ ... Who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵ Who was betrayed *and* put to death because of our misdeeds and was raised to secure our justification (our acquittal), [making our account balance and absolving us from all guilt before God].

B. The resurrection guarantees that those who have died before Jesus’ return are not lost

1 Corinthians 15:17-18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ And if Christ is not risen... ¹⁸ Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. (Explain)

This was a major concern for the first century church who were expecting Jesus to come back at any moment (for sure in their lifetime) to rapture them.

As the older believers began to die off and Jesus hadn’t yet returned—they mourned for them thinking they were lost [perished] because they didn’t ‘make it’ till Jesus returned for His Church.

Paul the apostle addressed this concern in 1Thessalonians 4—

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 (NLT2)

¹³ And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died...

And so, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead guarantees that those believers that die before the rapture are not lost and will absolutely be raised in glory!

C. The resurrection guarantees that believers who are alive when Jesus returns for His Church will be taken as well

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 (NLT2)

¹⁵ We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. ¹⁷ Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up [‘raptured’] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ So encourage each other with these words.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23 (NLT2)

²⁰ But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died. ²¹ So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. ²² Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. ²³ But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back.

D. The resurrection guarantees that we shall reign with Jesus someday

Revelation 1:5 (NLT2)

⁵ ...[Jesus Christ]—He is the faithful witness to these things, the first to rise from the dead [never to die again], and the ruler of all the kings of the world...

Revelation 20:6 (NLT2)

⁶ Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection [rapture]. For them the second death [Lake of Fire] holds no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him a thousand years.

E. The Resurrection guarantees we will be raised from the dead never to die again.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44 (NLT2)

⁴² It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. ⁴³ Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. ⁴⁴ They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies...

Now, none of these truths are new, most of you here this morning know them well—they are basic to our Christianity.

II. The Practical Implications of the Resurrection

But the resurrection of Jesus has some profound practical implications on our lives as Christians—right now.

A. The resurrection guarantees an abundant life right now for the Christian

John 10:10 (NKJV)

...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

Jesus is talking about resurrection life (eternal life)—which is a *quality* of life not just a *quantity* of life (Explain—life in all of its fullness).

God never intended the Christian life to be bland and boring—He intended it to be an adventure—not pain free, but not a continual ‘downer’ either.

John 15:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full.

B. The resurrection guarantees a life of power

Philippians 3:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection...

Ephesians 1:18-20 (NKJV)

¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*,

The power of the Holy Spirit, through the resurrected, ascended Christ, is available to all Christians.

Ephesians 3:14-16, 20 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might [divine, dynamic, supernatural power] through His Spirit in the inner man...²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us...

C. The resurrection guarantees a life of victory

1 John 5:4 (NKJV)

⁴ For whatever is born of God [‘raised to new life’] overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith (the saving faith that puts us ‘in Christ’ and gives us access to His victory over the devil).

Romans 8:37 (NKJV)

³⁷ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Now this doesn’t mean we have no part in our victory or that we have no responsibility to exercise any effort in bringing about that victory.

Let me give you a few things you can do so that the victorious life God intended you to live will become a reality in your life.

1. Take responsibility for your sin

You’re not a victim and you don’t have a disease.

Repent for making excuses and not forsaking the ‘idol’ in your life. (A disease is something you get—a behavior is something you do)

- 2. Purge your house and anyplace else you spend time (car, office, etc.) of the thing that has a hold on you—cigarettes, alcohol, internet, cable TV, certain foods, etc.**

Acts 19:18-20 (NLT2)

¹⁸ Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices. ¹⁹ A number of them who had been practicing sorcery brought their incantation books and burned them at a public bonfire. The value of the books was several million dollars. ²⁰ So the message about the Lord spread widely and had a powerful effect.

- 3. Plan your day ahead of time—where you are going to go (and not go).**

Victory comes by living ‘on purpose’ (Daniel) and planning your escape before the temptation strikes (Joseph).

- 4. Start each day in prayer giving yourself totally to God as a ‘living sacrifice’ and trust that Jesus will live His life through you.**

James 4:8a (NKJV)

⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you...

- 5. Don’t forsake the fellowship of other Christians at church—the Holy Spirit often empowers us thru the Body of Christ.**

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NLT2)

²⁴ Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. ²⁵ And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

- 6. Confess your struggles and trespasses to a close Spirit-filled believer (or believers) and ask them for prayer support.**

James 5:16 (NLT2)

¹⁶ Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

7. Remember, God has ‘deposited into your account’ all the power you need to live a life of victory—but you draw on that power by faith.

Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)

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.

8. The best defense is a good strong offense

Fill your day with God and the people of God—be proactive.

And remember that spiritual warfare (and therefore victory) starts in your mind for what controls your thinking—

Romans 12:2 (NKJV)

² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Philippians 4:8 (NKJV)

⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.

Colossians 3:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

The resurrection was never intended by God to be one day on a calendar—He intended it to be a dynamic everyday way of life.

As I said when we started—I have named this message, “**Because He Lives.**”

Literally every blessing in the Christian life that God has promised us and made available to us was made possible because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead—everything, because He lives!

It reminds me of a song by the same name, written by Bill and Gloria Gaither—

*“God sent His son, they called Him Jesus, He came to love, heal and forgive.
He lived and died to buy my pardon, an empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives.
Because He lives, I can face tomorrow. Because He lives, all fear is gone.
Because I know He holds the future and life is worth the living—just because He lives.
How sweet to hold a newborn baby and feel the pride and the joy he gives.
But greater still the calm assurance this child can face uncertain days because He Lives.
And then one day, I’ll cross that river, I’ll fight life’s final war with pain.
And then, as death gives way to victory, I’ll see the lights of glory and I’ll know He reigns.
Because He lives, I can face tomorrow. Because He lives, all fear is gone.
Because I know He holds the future and life is worth the living—just because He lives.
Because he lives. Because he lives”*

Paul the apostle reminds us—

2 Corinthians 4:14, 16-18 (NLT2)

¹⁴ We know that God, who raised the Lord Jesus, will also raise us with Jesus and present us to himself together with you...¹⁶ That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. ¹⁷ For our present troubles are small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! ¹⁸ So we don’t look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

All because He lives!!