

The Resurrection: God Lives

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Preacher: Jonny Grant

[0:00] Well, turn in your Bibles, please, to 1 Corinthians. We're going to be looking at different parts of the Bible today.

But we're going to be looking or starting in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. So if you have your Bibles there, please open them to 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

Amen. We've been going through the big story of the Bible.

And we come this morning to the resurrection. So we're going to pray and ask for God's help as we look at this together. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for this truth of Jesus written from the dead, alive today.

[1:23] And while you are not present with us physically, we know that you are here present with us and in those who believe by your Holy Spirit.

And so we ask that by your Spirit, you would encourage us afresh in your truth. Build us up in faith.

Give us courage that we may be people who proclaim the Easter Rising. We ask for your help.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Well, on Easter Monday, the 24th of April, 1916, about 12 noon, Podrick Pierce read out the Proclamation of Ireland from the steps of the GPO in Dublin.

We declare the rights of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies to be sovereign and indefeasible.

[2:35] Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a sovereign, independent state.

The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and all its parts.

And we know from history that at the cost of their lives and the lives of many others, Ireland gained her independence from Britain after 800 years of foreign rule.

Now, while we might celebrate our national freedom, it's not a true freedom. We might be an independent, sovereign state, but Ireland is still very much a broken nation.

And I don't mean politically or economically. It's much, much deeper than that. As we've been seeing over the week, the story of the Bible reminds us that we are still living under the effects of an ancient but ongoing rebellion against God that has left us enslaved to sin, cursed by suffering, and separated from God.

[4:13] So despite the heroic acts of 1916, we are still not free from the sinful, violent acts of gangland war or the silent abuse behind closed doors.

While our past leaders promised a better life, we are still suffering tragic accidents like the family who drowned in Buncrana or cancers that rob us of family and friends.

Even though our proclamation of all those years ago offers happiness, we are still searching for a temporal happiness while at the same time facing eternal separation from God and all that is good and beautiful.

You see, we might celebrate a national freedom, but it is not a true freedom. Ireland is still broken. So what we need is a new proclamation. A proclamation that deals with the greatest problem of the people of Ireland.

[5:25] Sin, suffering, and our separation from God. Listen to the proclamation of God through the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15.

Let's read from verse 1. Great words, great truths. Chapter 15, verse 1. Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel that I preach to you.

Here is the good news that I proclaim to you, which you received, on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preach to you. Otherwise you have believed in vain. What is that gospel? What's that proclamation? Well, here it is in verse 3. For what I received, I passed on to you as of first importance, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Verse 20. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

[6:47] For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also comes through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

This is the proclamation of the true Easter rising. The true story of Jesus Christ, the God-man who is risen from the dead.

You see, it is the resurrection of Jesus Christ that is the hope for our lives and for our nation.

Through the resurrection, God reverses the effects of the ongoing rebellion against him.

It's because Jesus has risen that God has dealt with the greatest problems of all, the problem of sin and suffering and our separation from him.

So let's together this morning see how this new proclamation gets worked out, how God reverses the effects of sin, suffering and separation.

[8:00] First of all, we need to remember the story of death. 1 Corinthians 15 verse 22. Do you see what it says?

Verse 22. For as in Adam all die. The story of the Bible is telling us so clearly that each one of us here are all related to Adam, the first man.

Forget our nationality, the country of our birth, wherever we come from, each one of us, we all have Adam's nature.

So because Adam rebelled against God, we are people who are born who seek to live life without God. We're in rebellion against God. And the consequences are exactly the same.

Verse 22. Just as Adam dies, we too die. You remember what God said to Adam in the garden. You mustn't eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

[9:09] For when you eat of that fruit, you will surely die. And ever since that first rebellious action, death has ruined and wrecked our lives and the world in which we live.

It has destroyed us and it has broken us. Now we must understand the far-reaching consequences of this death that comes to all people.

three things very simply and quickly. Three deaths. First, we die spiritually.

You see, when Adam first sinned, his whole nature changed. And our nature is one of a sinful nature. So rather than love and obey God, we fight and we disobey Him.

In fact, we no longer have the capacity or the desire within us to choose what is right and what is good all the time.

[10:16] If we had the ability to choose right and good all the time, then this nation and this world wouldn't be the broken mess that it is. The reality is we are spiritually dead.

We are enslaved to a life of sin. That is our first death. Second, we die physically.

Adam's sin resulted in the curse of a physical death and physical suffering. So every single person, ourselves included, as we're born into this world, we all suffer through illness and sickness.

We get cancers and diseases. We face disability and weakness. But not only that, the world in which we live in is a creation that suffers.

That's why we hear of stories and countries where there are destructive hurricanes and devastating earthquakes. We live in physical bodies that suffer.

[11:21] And we live in a world that suffers. And the end result of it all is physical death. We live under a curse of suffering. So we die spiritually.

We die physically. And we die eternally. You see, Adam's rebellion ended in physical death.

And we, one day, will end in death. But that death is an eternal death. Because we've turned against God, because we've been, we are now separated from God.

Just as Adam was shut out from the garden, so we have been banished from the presence of God. We live a life without God, apart from Him. But that separation doesn't end with death, as if it's just a nothingness, an emptiness.

No, it tells us that it continues on eternally in hell. Hell is God's final judgment upon a world that continues to reject Him and ignore Him and exclude Him and push Him out.

[12:34] It's an eternity of being separated from God, from all that is good and beautiful forever. This is the tragic and sad story of death.

death. These are the effects of living in rebellion against God. This is what death has done to us. We are enslaved to sin. We are cursed by suffering. And we are separated from God. In Adam, all die.

that is the story of death. And that is what we as a nation face. But then there's the story of resurrection.

The story of life. Verse 21. Verse 21. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

[13:45] For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. In Christ all live.

You see, it is the resurrection that changes everything. C.S. Lewis, the great writer, put it like this as he was speaking about the resurrection.

He says this, Jesus has forced open a door that has been locked since the death of the first man. He has met, fought, and beaten the king of death.

Everything is different because he has done so. This is the beginning of the new creation. A new chapter in cosmic history has opened.

You see, death closes the door on life. The resurrection opens the door to new life.

[14:52] So what does the resurrection bring? Well, it reverses the effects of death. It is the beginning of a new creation, a new chapter in cosmic history where everything is now changed.

So look at the reversal that the resurrection brings about. First, resurrection freedom, overcoming our sin.

have a look at Romans chapter 6 verse 5. This is the first section we're going to look at. Romans chapter 6 verse 5.

Romans 6 verse 5.

If we have been united with Christ like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with Christ in his resurrection.

[16:07] You see, through faith, we are united to Christ. In our birth, we are united to Adam. Through our faith, united to Christ.

That means as Christ dies for our sin, we die to our sin. But it also means that just as Christ rises to live, so we also rise to live.

No longer to live for sin, but now to live for God. No longer are we enslaved to sin, we have now been given a brand new nature.

Look at verse 6. For we know that our old self was crucified with him, so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

Now, if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him, for we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again.

[17:08] Death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God.

Do you see how the resurrection reverses everything? Where once we were enslaved to sin, we are now set free to live for God.

Before we didn't have the desire or the capacity to do what is right or good, once we were spiritually dead, we had no choice but to sin. Now, we have been given resurrection freedom to live for God, to obey him, to love him, to forgive others, and not to retaliate, to love others, and not to hate, to bless others, and not to curse.

Of course, it doesn't mean that we're perfect, but it means that we now use our new freedom from Christ to fight sin and to serve God.

Look at verse 13 of chapter 6. So because of the resurrection, do not offer the parts of your body to sin as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death into life and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

[18:40] So God has given us a brand new way to live, a new way in which we can offer ourselves to God and to others to do good, to bring peace to the hurting, to bring healing to the broken, to bring grace to the lost.

Through the resurrection, the door has now been opened to a new way of living. It reverses the effects of death.

So first we have resurrection freedom. The second thing we have because of the resurrection is power, resurrection power, overcoming suffering.

Have a look at 1 Peter. 1 Peter chapter 1. If you've got a page number, it's always a difficult one to find.

If anyone has it, I'll call it out. it's on page 1217. 1217.

[19:55] Resurrection power. Overcoming suffering. Let's read chapter 1 verse 3. 1 Peter praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Because of the resurrection of Jesus, we now have and we enter into not a dead hope, but a living hope. And you see what that hope is?

Verse 4. An inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade, kept in heaven for you.

It's the promise to us that physical death and suffering do not have the last word on our lives.

Cancer, sickness, disability, and the grave is not the end.

[21:08] We have an inheritance that can never perish because of death, spoil because of our illness, fade because of suffering. It is kept for us.

But more than that, God keeps us for that inheritance. Look at verse 5. who through faith, faith in the resurrection, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

The power that raised Christ from the dead, the power that defeated death itself, the power that burst open the tomb and had Jesus walking again, is the same power that will shield us and keep us for heaven.

God will see to it that nothing in our lives or in this world will keep us from our inheritance. There is no death, there is no suffering that can steal away what God has for his people.

There is no sickness or disaster that can ruin what God has kept for us. Even when our own strength goes, even when our suffering shatters our faith and we doubt and we don't know whether we believe anymore, even in the darkest time of our lives, God's resurrection power will shield us and will keep us for eternity.

[23:00] Of course, that does not mean we are immune from suffering now. Look what it says in verse 6. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

you see, each one of us here, and some of you experience it today in more ways than others, that we live in a broken world which involves physical suffering and eventual death.

But God's resurrection power will keep you. He will not let you fall. Through the resurrection, the door has been opened to life.

It overcomes sin, giving us a new way to live. It overcomes suffering, giving us a power within to face everything that we may come up against.

The resurrection reverses the consequences of death. Third, then, the resurrection life, overcoming separation.

[24:22] For this, we're going to go to 1 Thessalonians. So you need to go back a few pages. Again, if somebody has the page number, I'll call it out.

1 Thessalonians chapter 4. 1, 1, 8, 7. 1, 1, 8, 7.

1 Thessalonians chapter 4. And verse 13. 1, 1, 9.

Resurrection life, overcoming our separation from God. Verse 13. Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, that is those who die, or to grieve like the rest of men who have no hope.

You see, many people today have no hope. For them, death is the end. It's what separates us from family and friends.

[25:42] One writer put it like this. Life has no reasons. A struggling through the gloom, and the senseless end of it is the insult of the tomb.

You see, for many, death is not only final, it makes a mockery of life. We live, we die, and that's it. But it's telling us that death is not the end.

In fact, to die without Christ is not just hopeless, it is serious. have a look at 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, or sorry, 2 Thessalonians chapter 1.

Just turn over a page, 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, verse 8. You see, for those who continue in their rebellion against God, for those who reject Christ's death and resurrection, who seek to live independently from Him, one day the risen Jesus will come again, and here's what it says, 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, verse 8.

He, that is Jesus, will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

[27:17] They will be punished with an everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of His power on the day He comes to be glorified.

You see, this separation is eternal. It is hell. It is to have an eternal existence without God, the loving Creator.

It is a life for an eternity without love, without beauty, without justice, without happiness. It's a life without God.

But through our faith in the resurrection, that separation does not need to be eternal. That separation can be corrected and put right and we can have life with God forever.

So go back to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 and verse 14. Look at the difference, the contrast that there is for those whose hope is in Christ.

[28:31] 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 14. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God and the dead in Christ will rise first.

After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. and so we will be with the Lord forever.

We will be with the Lord forever. Therefore, encourage each other with these words. To be with the Lord forever is to experience life as God intended.

[29:45] It is almost, we get a glimpse of it back in the garden of Eden before sin entered the world where man lived in that perfect harmony with the world and with God, where there was no sin, where there was no suffering, and when there was no separation from the creator and the giver of life.

The resurrection opens the door to life. It is what reverses the effect of death.

So on this Easter Sunday, as we remember the Easter rising, we are to proclaim the true Easter story.

The proclamation of 1916 has great words and we should be very proud, food, but it does not have power.

It does not have power to change the greatest problems of sin, suffering, and separation from God. Our faith rests not in men who died, but our faith rests in Jesus Christ, the God man who is risen from the dead.

[31:04] we may remember and celebrate events of a hundred years ago, but as a risen people today, we are to proclaim the true historical fact of the resurrection.

This is the hope for our lives, for this nation, and for the nations of the world. Let me reread the words we started with this morning.

1 Corinthians 15. Brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preach to you. Here is the good news.

This is the proclamation which you received, and which you have taken your stand. By this gospel are we saved.

If we hold firmly to the word we preach to you, otherwise, your faith is in vain. For what we received, we now pass on to others of first importance, that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, that Christ was buried, and that Christ was raised from the dead on the third day.

[32:26] proclaim the Easter story. The risen Jesus, who reverses the effects of sin, being enslaved to sin, cursed by suffering, separated from God.

Know the freedom, and the power, and the life of the resurrection, that bursts open the door from death, and takes us into a new life, now, and for all eternity.

Let's pray together. Amen.