

United in Jesus' Resurrection

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[0:00] So my first question is, what is the status of Jesus at the moment? That's the first question. If we have some sort of link with him, who is it that we're linked with?

! Where is he? Where is he at? And so on. So let's have a Bible open somewhere.

Let me just tell you where we're going to go next. Let's open up Colossians chapter 3, verse 1, which says, Since then you have been raised with Christ.

So the question is, what does that say first of all about Jesus? It says he is raised. And just to recap what we looked at this morning, his resurrection is a bodily, physical, touchable resurrection body. That's what the Bible is saying. It's not just saying that he's, in some wispy, floaty sort of way, living on much the same way as Robin Hood lives on in people's mythology and hearts and so on like that.

[1:26] It's saying that Jesus, at a particular point in time, was dead. And that at some subsequent point in time, was no longer dead.

It doesn't happen to anybody else. It happened to him. He was physically raised from the dead. So let's please be clear about that. He was able to walk around.

He was able to talk to people. People were able to touch him. He ate things. He was physically raised. That's what's said. Now, let's think a little bit more carefully about this raising.

This raising from the dead is not merely resuscitation. Of course, other people in the Bible are raised from the dead. So, for example, Lazarus was raised from the dead.

So he, too, was dead. You remember this story? He was dead. And he was definitely dead because Jesus had made sure that there was sufficient time elapsed before Jesus got there to know that he was definitely dead.

[2:33] And remember that Jesus said, Lazarus, come out. And such was the power of Jesus' word that the dead man came out. Now, I would think that I want to establish a difference between Lazarus' resurrection and Jesus' resurrection, which is simply this, that Lazarus was resuscitated in the sense that he came back to life, but he died again.

He just came back to the same sort of state that we're in. We're alive, but we're still going to die. So Lazarus went from dying to being alive, but he would die again.

Now, Jesus was different because Jesus didn't come alive so that he would die again. He came alive so that he would never die again.

And he, Lazarus moved, as it were, back into the state that we're in. But Jesus moved out of the state that we're in because we live in the realm of sin and death and mortality and weakness and all of those things.

And Jesus went out of that. That's extremely important that we understand that. And that's why, if you're quick with your Bible, Romans chapter 6, it says that, Romans 6, 9 and 10 says, So, extremely important that we grasp this.

[4:17] He entered what you might call deathlessness. There's no death in the realm that Jesus is now in. Death has no power. It has no presence.

It has no say. It's done and dusted. It's gone. That's where Jesus is now. That's the state that Jesus has entered. Let's say something else about it. It is the state where sin no longer has a presence or a reign or a say or a contribution.

So, I think that is there in 620. I wonder if I meant 520. I think I meant 520. That little bit I read earlier on where it says, And I admit that that text doesn't perhaps say it as emphatically as I would have liked it to said it.

But I think it's still true that this place where Jesus is now, the sphere where Jesus is, is one where sin has been paid for.

There's no more sin to be worried about. Where sin does not have the say. Where righteousness is the thing and rules.

[5:42] And these all go together. Deathlessness, righteousness, sinlessness. That's where Jesus is. And I say, 614. 614, would that do it?

614. Yeah, sin shall not be your massacre. You're not under law but under grace. Yeah. 1 Corinthians 15, verses 44-45.

I want to also say that the place where Jesus is, we're talking about a physical resurrection. We're talking about a status which is different to that we're in.

We're in under death and sin. Jesus is not under that. I also want to say that it is, there is the power of the spirit in the resurrection.

So I think this 1 Corinthians 15, 44 will indicate that. So it's, Paul is talking about the difference between the pre-resurrection body and the post-resurrection body.

[6:46] He says, the body, this is 1 Corinthians 15, verse 42. The body that is sown is perishable. It is raised imperishable. It is sown in dishonor.

It is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness. It is raised in power. It is sown a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body.

So we need to stop and think about that. A natural body is a translation of saying a body that is energized by the things that our bodies are energized by, the biological, psychological functions of this sort of life.

It says it's a soulish body. That's what it says. And he says, what it's raised as is a spiritual body. Now you might think, ah, well, that contradicts what he says before.

Because if it's spiritual, it's a sort of wispy, floaty, you can't quite touch it sort of body. That's not what is meant by a spiritual body. That's not what is meant by a spiritual body.

[7:55] Think of, please, a steamship. Think of, please, a steamship. Now, a steamship is not wispy, floaty, can't touch it because it has the word steam in it.

It's not made of steam, is it? A steamship is made of metal but driven by steam. And a spiritual body is not made of spirit but is driven by spirit.

And the body that Jesus has is in the realm of the spirit in a way that our bodies are not. Our bodies are sort of driven by the mechanisms that I just mentioned.

And this body of Jesus is in a, if you like, a different dimension. But that's a bit of a misleading way of putting it. But that's what I'm trying to say, that's the sort of thing I'm trying to say. It's a spirit-driven, spirit-inhabited, spirit-empowered body.

And that's why it goes on to say, verse 44, there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. And then he's relating it to the two heads of our race, of Adam and Christ.

[9:12] Verse 45, so it is written, the first man, Adam, became a living being. That's what Adam does, a living being with all the soul and stuff that we have.

And the last Adam, the last triumphant head of the new human race, life-giving spirit.

He is the one who empowers and transforms and fills with spirit, the spirit, the Holy Spirit.

Do you get the sort of idea of that? It's a very powerful idea. So Jesus, we're saying, is in deathlessness. He's in sinlessness, righteousness.

He is in the power of the spirit. And he is exalted to the holiest and most powerful place in the universe. Which there are multiple texts which say this. Let's just pick off a few of them.

[10:12] The Acts 2 text is when Peter is preaching and he says, I want to tell you about this Jesus whom you crucified, but God exalted him.

And he says in Acts 2, 32, 33, God raised this Jesus to life. We are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

So he's making many points, but where is he? He's exalted to the right hand of God. That's where Jesus is, in that place of holiness and power.

And the Philippians reference, which I'm sure you're familiar with, is the bit where it says that being in the very nature of God, he did not count equality with God something to be grasped, but he made himself a nobody.

And taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. And therefore, God has highly exalted him.

[11:27] Exalted him to the highest place. Given him the name that is above every name. That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow. In heaven and on earth and under the earth.

And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. To the glory of God the Father. That's where Jesus is. Exalted to the highest place. He is, let me, this is probably open to correction, but let's put, he is in, he is now has been given the name that is above every name.

He is indistinguishable from God. He has all the aspects of divinity are his in full, openly so, recognizably so. That's where Jesus is. That's who he is.

That's where he's at. So my first thing I wanted to establish is, what state is Jesus in? The risen Jesus. This is the state he's in. It's a glorious, exalted, magnificent place that he's in.

Okay. Second thing is about us. All right. So let's do this one bit at a time. First bit. There is consistent teaching that we believers.

[12:42] Nah, that's the wrong slide. Right. Wait a minute. I think I've got all in a muddle.

Just bear with me a second. What have I done here? All right. Right. I think I know where I am.

Okay. So there's consistent teaching that what has happened to him involves us. That we are taken up into, taken up by what happened to him.

He was raised. We are taken up into that somehow. That's what I'd like us to think about a little bit. We are used to thinking of what Christ has done for us.

He died for us. But we are now told we must think of what Christ is doing to us. What Christ has done in us.

[13:51] Okay. That's slightly different, isn't it? So what he has done for us. He died for our sins, according to the scriptures. What he's doing to us.

What he's doing in us. Right. Let's think first about future.

So there is, this is something he will do to us. And will do for us. Sorry. And will do in us.

Future resurrection. Look at some of these texts. 1 Corinthians 6.14. I'm just trying to clear my, the points of my argument.

Christ is raised and exalted to a high place. This involves us. Step one. It will involve us in the future. And 1 Corinthians 6.14 says.

[15:03] By his power, God raised the Lord from the dead. And he will raise us also. Okay. Future. That's what he's done to Jesus.

Time gap. We will have the same thing happen to us. Okay. We will be raised. Same thing in 1 Corinthians 15.22.23.

It's about order. It's about one thing after another. It's about things in their turn. 1 Corinthians 15.22 says.

As in Adam all die. So in Christ all will be made alive. Everybody who belongs to Adam dies. Everybody who belongs to Christ will be made alive.

Future tense. Each in his own turn. So you notice there's going to be a time sequence here. Christ the first fruits. So Christ is raised first.

[16:05] Then when he returns, those who belong to him. Christ will do something to us.

Christ will do something in us. Because he is raised, we will be raised too. And the argument for that is that we belong to him.

The argument is the union that we have with Christ. Find the same thing in Romans 6 verse 5. And these, the time scale is future.

We belong to him and we will have resurrection done to us in the future.

Romans 6 verse 5 says. If we have been united with him like this in his death. We will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

[17:16] There's just, is anybody sitting with a Bible in front of them that doesn't have those, those tenses. United with him, we will be united with him in his resurrection.

We're okay with that? And the reasoning is union. Something that will happen to us because he's raised. Now what I want to say here is, there is also a consistent teaching that something now happens to us because he is raised.

That was about what will happen to us but there's also a teaching about what has happened to us now. The teaching about the future is based on union.

We belong to him, we're in him. And the union also affects the present and indeed the past. There is a spiritual dynamic in us, something done to us now from Christ's resurrection.

Let's look at these texts. So Ephesians 2, 6. If you take verse 4, Ephesians 2, 4.

[18:37] But because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions.

It is by grace you have been saved and God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

So those are all past tenses. It's not saying what God will do, it's saying what he's already done. And that's quite remarkable. We are already, in some sense, says Paul, we're already raised with Christ.

We're already seated with him in the heavenly realms. We are co-raised with him. There's a way of saying with in the original which sort of links us up.

We are co-raised with him. When he was raised up, he did the heavy lifting and we were actually, in some way, attached to him.

[19:44] And when he raised, we were raised too. And when he is exalted, we are seated with him in heavenly places. That's what it says. Let's look at Colossians 2.

Colossians 2, 9 to 12. He's trying to explain to the Christians at Colossae what's happened to them. And it really is something.

You know, if you thought that being a Christian was a matter of going along to church every now and again and that's more or less it, he says, actually, that's not the idea at all.

There's a deep change that God does in somebody. So Colossians 2, 9 says, For in Christ all the fullness of the deity lives in bodily form and you have been given fullness in Christ who is head over every power and authority.

In him you were also circumcised in the putting off of the sinful nature. Not with the circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ. Having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead.

[21:05] He says, you are caught up now in union with Christ. Signified in your baptism, water doesn't make this happen but it's signified in baptism and in baptism you are with Christ buried and with Christ raised.

It says, you're raised with him through your faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead. Which is a remarkable thing, isn't it? He says, now the resurrection of Christ is affecting us.

It's doing something to us and in us. Not just for us but to us and in us. Now we are raised through the power of God.

And 3, 1 to 4 which is what Corinne read. He says, since Colossians 3, 1 to 4 since you have been raised with Christ.

That's what he's going to argue from. He's going to say, that's where you are. We've thought about where Christ is and his exalted position and in some way each of us who are believers are linked up with him.

[22:29] Whatever is true of him comes into our lives. He is exalted. He is seated at the right hand of God. He is in the realm of deathlessness.

He is in the place of righteousness. He is in the power of the spirit. And in some marvellous way that becomes true of us as Christians.

Now I hasten to add it is not in a complete way because we wait for the resurrection of the body.

That's when all of that will be fully true of us.

But even now it is true of us in a genuine way. And Paul says you need to get that. It's an amazing thing to believe, isn't it?

He says this is the truth of it. Because that's the truth about Jesus and if you belong to him it becomes true of you. And he says you've got to realise this. You've got to think this.

[23:27] It's not make-believe. It's coming into line with what's true. So Colossians 3 it says since you have been raised with Christ set your hearts on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on things above not on earthly things for you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears you also will appear with him in glory.

One of the things about evangelical Christians is that they say you must be born again. You might even have said that yourself. You will have believed that if you've been coming to this church for any amount of time.

The great evangelist George Whitefield was criticised because he preached you must be born again.

Do you remember this? Why do you preach Mr. Whitefield you must be born again? And to which the answer from Mr. Whitefield was because madam you must be born again which is of course entirely logical.

[24:37] That's another way I think of expressing this inner change which Christ brings which he says you can't be a Christian without it. You must be born again is one way of putting it and I think it's the same thing perhaps in a slightly different way of putting it but you must be raised with Christ.

The resurrection power of Jesus comes into your life if you're a Christian. You're not the person you used to be. You're not what you will be yet in the future but you're not the person you used to be. There's a power at work within you. So let's look at the applications of this very quickly. We've been looking at the consistent teaching that we believers are in the present taken up by taken up into Christ's resurrection.

What cash value does this have? Well in Ephesians 1 18 it's a prayer.

Ephesians 1 18 Paul prays for his readers and he says I pray I pray verse 18 that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened.

[25:53] I pray that you guys would have your eyes open to see this to realise this. The hope to which he's called you pray that you will realise how wonderful are the promises that God has made for your ultimate future.

Really pray that you would grasp that. And he says in verse 19 his incomparably great power for us who believe that power is like the working of his mighty strength which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.

And he says that's another thing I'm praying. I'm praying that you would know and understand the power that's at work within you as a Christian.

I pray that you would realise that. You as a Christian are incredibly weak but the power of Christ is incredibly strong and you must be fully aware of both those things.

He says I really pray you would get that and that's a good prayer isn't it because we tend to forget both those things but he prays that we would understand those things our own weakness at the what he actually says is that the hope that's set before us and the power that Christ is working within us.

[27:32] So that's I think that's an important thing for us to take on board. Second thing is that that I read in Colossians he says if you've been raised with Christ it will change the sort of things that you think about the sort of way you think and the sort of things that you think are worth seeking.

We're creatures that seek things aren't we? We're creatures that seek you might be seeking a real bargain on eBay you might a certain sort of person might be seeking really good reductions 60% off in Maplin that's my aim for next week is to buy something all sorts of things we might seek to look good all sorts of things we might seek but what Paul says is given the exaltation of Christ and given that I'm that's my that's where I belong he says seek things above make those the things that you are really excited about and thinking about and longing for seek or set your hearts on is the translation where Christ is seated at the right hand of God and think about set your minds on things

above not on earthly things for you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God we need to be reminded of that don't we because all the thought patterns around us are entirely to do with this world I mean there are some worthy things that we can think about in this world and there are some very unworthy things that we can think about in this world but Paul says let your whole mindset be determined by Christ exalted he is exalted the king is exalted on high I will praise him that's the thing to mould our thinking set your minds on those things and he will go on in Colossians to say this is not just a mental exercise it is a mental exercise but it is more than that he says as you're thinking those thoughts this spills out into the way you live and there are things that you no longer do because you no longer think that way so for example in chapter 3 verse 5 he says you put to death whatever belongs to earthly nature sexual immorality impurity lust evil desires greed which is idolatry he says that's the things that you don't think anymore and therefore you don't do them anymore he says the things that you do begin to think and therefore to do is in chapter 3 verse 9 where he says do not lie to each other since you put off your old self with its practices and put on the new self which is renewed in knowledge of its creator and he goes on in verse 12 to say as God's chosen people holy dearly loved clothe yourselves with compassion kindness humility gentleness patience forgiving one another putting on love which binds all together in perfect unity and

Chris Hawthorne last week very perceptively I think said these are all community virtues aren't they it's about how as people of the risen Christ we relate to one another as his people indeed as his body putting on like it says compassion kindness humility gentleness they're ways of relating to one another aren't they that's what he says because Christ is exalted we belong to him and that's done something to us and in us that's how we begin to think and these are the things that we begin to put into action the argument is it's not an argument which says try harder it's an argument which says be what you are you're risen with Christ act like it that's where you belong act like it think like it does it just click did it come to the end oh it did sorry

I think that was telling me I'd finished does it do it again let's pray we thank you Lord Jesus for your exaltation that you are exalted on high to the highest place and we can hardly believe but we read it and we take it as it said that in some way we are taken up with you into your current resurrection your current enthronement please Lord open the eyes of our hearts to see this please Lord help us to know this power at work within us and help us to think it and live it and to be transformed by it so that even though we're still here on earth there might be something truly heavenly about us and about our relationships about this community of your people as a church and we ask it all in

[33:51] Jesus name Amen Amen