

Resurrection (2)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 12 April 2020

Preacher: Philip Wells

[0:00] Well good evening everybody and welcome to this time this evening. I'm putting together a few thoughts for our meditation on Easter Sunday evening on the subject of the resurrection.

! So I'm Philip Wells and I'm one of the elders at Calvary and welcome to this time together. So let's pray.

Lord we've had many things to think about this week and we have this overarching wonderful deed of your almighty son who died on the cross and rose again from the dead on the third day.

And we pray that we might think most highly of him and most highly of what he's done. So please focus our thoughts and make them edifying and fruitful this evening for Jesus sake. Amen.

So what I'd like to do now is ask us to listen to Ruth's reading that she read this morning from 1 Corinthians 15 and let's hear the word of God together.

[1:20] I'll be reading from 1 Corinthians 15 from verse 1 to 28. Now brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.

By this gospel you are saved if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise you have believed in vain.

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, that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas and then to the twelve. After that he appeared to the twelve.

After that he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

[2:36] For I am the least of the apostles, and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect.

No, I worked harder than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. Whether then it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless, and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God.

For we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

[3:49] And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile. You are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

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

But each in turn, Christ, the first fruits, then when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come. When he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he has put everything under his feet.

[5:07] Now, when it says that everything has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

So, I'd like us to think this evening about the general way in which the New Testament understands the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and how we are to understand it.

And the more you think about it, the more you realize that it's a vast, vast subject that has many connections. If you were to take the resurrection out of New Testament teaching, whole sections would just shrivel up and collapse.

So, I'd first of all like you to think that the resurrection is not just a thing in itself. It is connected in three particular ways.

So, these are fairly general. So, first is this. The resurrection is always seen as part of a bigger process. Theologians call it the exaltation of Christ.

[6:40] That is to say, his resurrection from the dead is linked to his ascension into heaven. And his ascension into heaven is linked to his enthronement in heaven.

And his enthronement in heaven is linked to his reign in heaven. And his reign is linked in due course to his coming again. So, it's part of a bigger process.

So, that's the first thought to have in mind. And we'll pick up on that as we go through. The second thing to have in mind is that the resurrection of Jesus isn't to be seen as just something that affects him.

It does affect him. He is the author of salvation. But the resurrection is seen as something in which he affects other people.

In other words, what we would say the corporate implications. And this is to do with Christ's union with us. What he did, he didn't do just as an individual.

[7:48] He did it for us. Including us. Affecting all his people. And this is the New Testament teaching of Christ's union with his people.

Not just him, but him and his body. So, you have teaching like the ones in John's Gospel where Jesus says, I'm the vine.

And you are the, you know what he's going to say. You are the branches. And he talks about the branches abiding in him. Or it's the same sort of thing as we get in the New Testament when Jesus is shown to us as the bridegroom and his union with the bride.

Rather in the way that when man and a woman get married together, they share their fortunes.

All, what does it say? say, with thee my worldly goods I do endow. There is a union and a sharing of property and of benefit.

[9:00] And this is Christ and his people. You get the same sort of thing in the teaching of the head and the body. Christ is the head of the church. The church is his body. So that's the second thing, the corporate implications.

And the third thing is timescale. So Christ rose from the dead 2,000 years ago on Easter Sunday, what's now called Easter Sunday.

And that happened all those years ago. But what happened then will affect us in due course.

There is a sense in which we're tied to him across time. So what he did then will surely, in due course, affect us in the fullness of time. There's sort of order to it.

And we'll see that in a few moments. What he did then will affect us in the future. It also affects us now. And we'll see that.

[10:04] So those three general thoughts, that's part of a bigger process, that it has corporate implications, implications for other people joined to Christ, and that there's a whole thing about timescale.

So let's look at some texts together. And seeing as this is done by computer, you have the opportunity to pause. And if you're with other family members, you might like to discuss with them, or you might like to just have a little think yourself as we read some texts.

So the first text I'd like us to read is Psalm 110. So you can press pause if you're trying to find Psalm 110, but I'll just carry straight on with this.

And this is seen as a crucial key text in the New Testament. Psalm 110 of David Assam. The Lord says to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

I'll just stop there because the rest of the psalm goes on. I'm very happy for you to read it if you'd like to do that. I just want to take that first verse because that's, well, what's that saying?

[11:17] It is the Lord addressing my Lord, that's to say David's Lord, in these terms, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

It's a statement about the high position of this Lord. It's a statement about his reigning and his ruling.

It's a statement about his enemies being put under his feet. So hold that thought because that's going to crop up in a number of the texts that we're going to look at.

So having held that thought, let's see what it says in Acts chapter 2. So we're now going to Acts chapter 2. And this is Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost.

Acts chapter 2.

[12:44] So God raised him from the agony of death because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

So we'd like to stop and think, what is the importance of that word but there? But God raised him from the dead.

And if you don't want to pause, I'll go ahead and just comment on it myself. Isn't this God overturning the verdict, the guilty verdict that was on Jesus?

They put him to death. They put him to death. But God raised him from the dead. God said, it is not right for that to be the final state of my son.

It's not right for him. It's not right for him to be left apparently condemned, finished, guilty, forlorn.

[14:02] No, I'm going to raise him from that situation. It's impossible for death to keep hold of him. And God raises him from the dead.

I'm going to carry on. Verse 25.

I'm just going to stop there and say, do you see the connection of the resurrection with the enthronement?

That's what I said right at the beginning. Part of a continuous process. Verse 30. David foresaw the enthronement.

Therefore, he speaks of the resurrection. His body was not abandoned to the grave.

[15:40] His body did not see decay. God raised this Jesus to life. And we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God. You see here, we've gone from resurrection to exaltation at the right hand of God.

And he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit. You see, there's another connection. That the enthroned Christ is the Christ who pours out the Spirit on his people.

He has poured out what we now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven. Yet he said, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

Do you notice where that comes from? That's the Psalm 110 that we read at the beginning. Now we move to the implication of this. So Peter says that this resurrection, enthronement, outpouring of the Spirit is a demonstration, a proof, if you like, an assurance of the real true identity and status of Jesus.

That he is Lord in the biggest, most authoritative sense. He is Lord and he is Christ.

[17:11] So, you might like to pause again there and say, what is the implication, what's the action point from this? But I'll just go straight on.

And the people, in verse 37, say, what shall we do? Because they are the people who shouted out, as far as we can tell, let's assume this, they're the people who shouted out for him to be crucified.

And Peter says, repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The promise is for you and for your children and all who are far off, all whom the Lord our God will call. So there's the first text that I just thought we could look at together.

And what's the final action point from that text? Have a little discussion about that. And let me move on and say what I think the action point.

[18:21] The action point is to repent and be baptised. The action point is that this Jesus is the Saviour. And the only proper response to him being who he is, is to turn to him for the forgiveness of sins.

To be baptised, to be one of his people. To be saved, in other words. To be a Christian. To become a Christian. And that's what Scripture says about him.

Because he's raised, you ought to become a Christian. Amen. So that's one text there. Acts 2 that we've read. And I'm going to move on now to another text.

So you remember that the three connections I was talking about to begin with were the resurrection is part of a bigger process.

It's a process that the Father does. Of Christ's resurrection, ascension, enthronement and reign. And then I said it's part of a corporate implication that it affects people other than Christ.

[19:30] And then thirdly I said that it's something about timescale. That what happened to him will happen to us. And what will happen to us affects us now. So let's pick up 1 Corinthians 15 and come in at verse 20.

Where Paul says Christ has indeed been raised from the dead. So he was going through all the things that would be true if Christ hadn't been raised.

And he said well that's only hypothetical because he has been raised. Now listen to what he says.

The first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man.

The resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die. So in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn.

Christ the first fruits. Then when he comes. Those who belong to him. Then the end will come.

When he hands over the kingdom to God the Father.

[20:40] After he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

For he has put everything under his feet. And when it says everything has been put under him. It's clear that this does not include God himself. Who put everything under Christ. When this has been done.

Then the son himself will be made subject to him. Who put everything under him. So that God may be all in all. So I'm just going to pause there. And ask if you spotted anything.

You might like to just have a little chat about that. And I'll carry straight on. And say. Did you notice in verse 25. This bit about putting everything under his feet.

Well that comes from Psalm 110 doesn't it. And we have here a process don't we. That he's made alive.

[21:35] And he reigns. Until everything's been put under his feet. And then the final end. When everything is put in back to its very correct order. That everything is under Christ.

And Christ is under God. And God is all in all. So there's a. I don't know that one. So there's a timescale thing going on here.

And I just got interrupted. So that has lost my train of thought. There's also a corporate thing going on here.

Verse 22. As in Adam all die. So in Christ all will be made alive. So those in Christ.

Receive the benefits of what he's done. He's been made alive. And we shall be made alive too. And there's also a timescale thing going on here.

[22:32] Because he says there's an order to it. You see it in verse 23. Each in his own turn. Christ the first fruits.

Then when he comes. Those who belong to him. Then the end will come. So I invite you to ponder. The. That teaching there in 1 Corinthians 15. There's a whole lot there. And I'm not going to go into. A lot of detail on it. But. Have a think about that.

And a little discussion. And maybe a prayer. About the. What's being said here. About the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And.

There's an action point from this as well. There's a lot of teaching there. But there's an action point. And the action point. Seems to me to be in verse 58. And it.

[23:27] Verse 58 says. Therefore my dear brothers. Stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully. To the work of the Lord. Because you know. That your labor in the Lord.

Is not in vain. What's the action point? How does that work? He says. This is the. The world. This is the situation. That Christ has been raised.

He's seated at the right hand of God. You will be raised. There will be a world to come. A life to come. And. With that glorious.

Wonderful. Picture in view. What should you do? Well. He says. You should be getting on with the Christian life. Stand firm.

He says. Don't get knocked about. Stand firm. You know where you're going. You know what's going to happen. Let nothing move you. Don't be. Panicked.

[24:25] Made anxious. Bowled over. Let nothing move you. And be active. Be positive. Always give yourselves.

Fully. To the work of the Lord. Because that you know. That your labor in the Lord. Is not in vain. That's his action point. Isn't it? He says. Get on. Live the Christian life.

In a positive way. When he says. When I say positive way. I mean. Don't just wait. For people to do things to you. Don't wait for things to happen to you. But give yourself.

Fully to the work of the Lord. That's the action point. From the resurrection. Give yourself. Fully. To the work of the Lord. God. And I'm going to go.

To a third. Text. Text. Now. Which is. In Ephesians. Chapter 2. Verses 1. And I'm going to read.

[25:22] Verses 1 to 7. And again. We're thinking. About. The bigger process. We're thinking. About the corporate implications. We're thinking.

About the time scale. As it relates. To the resurrection. Of Jesus. So here's Ephesians. Chapter 2. Verses 1. I'm going to go to.

Verse 7. As for you. Says Paul. You were dead. In your transgressions. And sins. In which you used to live. When you followed.

The ways of this world. And of the ruler. Of the kingdom. Of the air. The spirit. Who is now at work. In those who are disobedient. All of us also. Lived among them.

At one time. Gratifying the cravings. Of our sinful nature. And following. Its desires. And thoughts. Like the rest. We were by nature.

[26:15] Objects of wrath. But. God. 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 the heavenly realms. In Christ Jesus. In order that in the coming ages. He might show. The incomparable riches. Of his grace. Expressed in his kindness.

To us. In Christ Jesus. It is by grace. You have been saved. Through faith. And so. He goes on. He says.

Not from us. Yourselves. It is the gift of God. Not by works. So that no one can boast. We are God's workmanship. Created in Christ Jesus. To do good works. Which God prepared.

[27:09] In advance. For us to do. There is something there. About works. And getting on. With the work of the Lord. But let's. Let's think about those verses.

Are they part of a bigger process? Well yes. It talks about. Christ being made alive. Or being made alive.

With Christ. Christ. And it also talks. In verse. That's in verse 5. In verse 6. God raised us up with Christ. And seated us with him. In the heavenly realms. So it's not just resurrection.

It's resurrection. Enthronement. And. Is there anything of corporate. Implication there? Is it just. Jesus. Or. Is it him.

Plus. Other people. Well. Is there. Well. The answer. Is there. In verse. Six. Isn't it? God raised us up.

[28:05] With Christ. And seated us. With him. In the heavenly realms. In Christ Jesus. Jesus. So. What he did. Sorry.

What God did. For him. Included. Us. And. It includes us. Not only. In what will happen. In the future. But what.

How we. How this affects us. Now. He says. We have already. Been made alive. With Christ. Verse 5. And we are already.

Raised up. With him. Verse 6. And in some remarkable sense. Seated with him. In the heavenly realms. In Christ Jesus. And certainly a future reference.

In the coming ages. He might show the incomparable riches of his grace. Expressed in his kindness to us. In Christ Jesus. So. I might like to stop.

[29:03] And just read that again. And. Ask one another. What. What they've noticed. In that. In those. Texts. And then I'm going to go on to an action point.

So. You might like to press pause. But I'm just going to go straight on. And say. What sort of action point. Does he have from this. Well. I would say.

That by the time you get to. Chapter 4. Verse 17. That's where he. The rubber hits the road. I tell you this. And testify.

Or insist on it in the Lord. You must no longer live. As the Gentiles do. In the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding. And separated from the life of God.

Because of the ignorance that is in them. Due to the hardening of their hearts. And he says in verse 20. You did not come to know Christ that way. You were taught. Verse 22.

[29:59] With regard to your former way of life. To put off your old self. And verse 23. To be made new. In the attitude of your minds. Verse 24. To put on the new self. Created to be like God.

In true righteousness. And holiness. And. We all know what he's saying. Don't we. He's telling us. To live. Because of the resurrection of Christ.

Because of all of that. We are to live. Resurrection lives now. In the sense. Not that we're superhuman. But that our lives have.

This quality of. Holiness. And goodness. And love. And compassion. And honesty. Integrity.

And purity. That belong. To the world of the resurrection. Rather than. The old world. Well I'm going to stop there.

[30:56] Let me just remind you. Of where I've tried to lead us. In these few thoughts this evening. I've tried to. Indicate to us.

That the. The resurrection of Jesus Christ. Is a great subject. It's linked. To a much. To the bigger process. Of his resurrection.

Ascension. Enthronement. And his reign. That's the scope of it. And I've also. Tried to say. That it doesn't. Not just him. But it affects us.

When he rose. He. Sort of took us. With him. And I've also said. That there's a time scale. Thing. There's something. That is. Promised for the future.

And something. That affects us now. We looked at some texts. And I invited you. To mull them over together. Which I hope. Is a helpful. Sort of thing. And I'd like to close.

[31:50] With prayer. Which you could. Perhaps amplify. Or enlarge on. By yourself. Or whoever you're with. So I'd like to pray.

First of all. On that action point. From Acts chapter 2. And the action point. Was to turn to Christ. Let's say a prayer. To that effect. We thank you.

For the greatness of Jesus. Shown in the resurrection. And please Lord. Don't let us be indifferent. To who he is.

But have our lives. Brought into alignment. With him. To turn to him. To find forgiveness in him. To give our hearts and lives to him. Amen.

And then. There was an action point. From 1 Corinthians 15. Wasn't it? Therefore. Always give yourselves fully. To the work of the Lord. Let nothing. Let nothing move you.

[32:47] Let's turn that into a prayer. Lord. Because of the resurrection. Of Jesus Christ. Please help us to be strong. Particularly in this time.

Of trial and trouble. Help us not to be. Wavering. Tossed around. We are weak. But there is strength in you. Help us to find that strength.

As we consider. The resurrection. And the future. And what is yet to be. Help us to give ourselves fully.

To the work of the Lord. Amen. And then we looked at Ephesians 2. And I was trying to say. That there.

The action point. From the way the resurrection affects us. Is that we should live holy lives. So please may I turn that into a prayer. And you could do the same thing at home perhaps.

[33:52] Lord. By your grace. Once we were. In darkness. And deadness. But. You have. Come into our lives.

And raised us. Raised us up with Christ. Given us new life. And we earnestly pray. That as we. Fight with sin. We would not be defeated by sin.

But the power of your Holy Spirit. Your resurrection power in us. Would actually be changing us. And making us more like. Our risen saviour.

So we pray that we may. Have. The. Stamp on us. Of. The world to come. Even while we live in this world.

Amen. Amen. So. Those are the thoughts. May God bless us. And help us in these days.

[34:50] We need that help. Don't we? We need his strength. God bless everyone. Now may grace. And mercy. And peace. Be with each one of us.

From God. Who is Father. Son. And Holy Spirit. Now and forevermore. Amen.