

First Born From The Dead

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[0 : 00] Okay, I'm going to talk to you about how Jesus is, what Colossians 1 says, he is the firstborn from the dead.

The firstborn from the dead. You know, if you grew up in the church, the resurrection, Easter Sunday is a pretty run-of-the-mill thing that you've done before.

It's one of the most concrete apologetics of the Christian faith. Jesus rose from the dead. And as happens with many things in life, is the things that we hear a lot, the things that we are told, and even the most fundamental things are sometimes forgotten.

Okay, and the resurrection, I think, along with everything else, can be forgotten in its significance. And this is a big deal.

This is an incredibly big deal. Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, there would be no Christians. No Christian without the resurrection. In fact, Paul says that if Christ wasn't raised, our preaching is in vain.

[1 : 16] All our preaching is vain. And we're actually the most to be pitied in the world if Christ wasn't raised. But as it says, in fact, Christ was raised from the dead. Amen?

So I'm going to talk to you about specifically how Jesus is the firstborn among the dead. Like I said, that comes from Colossians 1, verse 18, which says, He is the head of the body.

I'm a little excited there. He is the head of the body of the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent.

Okay? Jesus is the firstborn among the dead. Romans 8, 29 says, There's this idea that Jesus, when He was raised, was the first in His significance.

Okay? This wasn't the only, Jesus wasn't the only person that was resurrected. You can think of Lazarus. There's people who died and came back to life.

[2 : 34] But Jesus was significantly, uniquely the firstborn from the dead in that not only was He raised from the dead as the firstborn or as the preeminence, but that He lives never to die again.

All those who were resurrected, if they were, died. Okay? Okay? Okay? Okay? And death is a lingering, a lot of times haunting thing for many, many people.

Christians as well. But as we will go on, a Christian should not fear death. Not even in the slightest. Okay? But the world fears death.

Death is the final thing in life that haunts many people. Marcus Aurelius says that, about death, he says, But death and life, honor and dishonor, pleasure and pain, all these things equally happen to good men and bad.

Okay? Death, whether you're good, whether you're bad, whether you're rich, whether you're poor, however much pleasure or pain you have, death is something that happens to everyone.

[3 : 50] You cannot escape it. Okay? And Jesus came so that He might destroy death. All right?

And death is something that if we're going to be in the world, that we have to understand in terms of how to deal with it.

And if Jesus didn't deal with it, then we also, like the world, would be swallowed up by it. Okay?

Okay? And so, my question to you, Christ Church, is where is your faith in regards to the resurrection of Jesus?

And where is your faith in regards to death? How do you think about death? How do you think about death in regards to this world, which the Bible says is passing away?

Okay? And how does the resurrection of Jesus, the fact that Jesus is the firstborn from the dead, change us as Christians? Okay?

It makes us Christians. Okay? John 3 makes it very clear. Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus, and he says, Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.

[5 : 07] I leave with this kind of title of the firstborn from the dead, because it reminds us all that when Jesus was lifted up, when he was crucified and he rose from the dead, he is the firstborn that guarantees people being born after him.

Okay? Romans 8 says that he is the firstborn among many brothers. So it's not just that we look at Jesus and we see, okay, that's awesome.

He's the Lord. He conquered death. It's not just him in his isolation. It's that what that means is that he has offspring after him.

That he has a host of captives that he has led unto life after him. That's good news, is it not? Isaiah 53 near the end says, in view of his resurrection, Isaiah 53 goes on almost completely about Christ's suffering, specifically for the sins of his people.

But then in verse 10 it says, He will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. Okay, so not only do we see in Isaiah 53 the excruciating pains of a suffering servant, but the promise that after his suffering he will see the fruit of his hand.

[6 : 43] He will see his offspring. Okay? This is good news for us. All right? If you trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins, if you trust in his atoning blood, what scripture calls the atoning power of the righteous, more specifically the atoning power of the one and only righteous one, Jesus, then you are numbered among his offspring.

That's good news, Christchurch. So he's the firstborn from the dead. What, I ask you, what would pain, what would suffering, maybe even the suffering of, you know, a woman in labor, of childbirth, what would the pain of enduring those things be if there wasn't an eager expectation of new life on the other side, of a baby being born?

Okay? What motivates somebody to go through such pains? It was the same with Jesus at Calvary. The scripture says that it was the joy that was set before him that made him endure the cross.

Okay? And we, too, will share in the sufferings that we would actually go after something greater. You know, suffering is not, there's nothing worse than meaningless suffering.

Right? And if you're a Christian, no suffering is meaningless. Okay? Every pain that you endure, any view of God's mercy, will be later realized.

[8 : 17] It will be later seen as, even however much we say it's meaningless, it will be a very precious thing. We might be even found saying that we shared in Christ's various sufferings by enduring ourselves.

And so, Christ is the firstborn among the dead. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead wasn't just a statement about Jesus' divine identity, although it was.

It was also a guarantee that he alone would not be the only one who would enjoy eternal life. Okay? Him being the firstborn of the dead, he has the offspring, as I said.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead was very much the genesis of salvation. It was the beginning. It was his inauguration. It was his stamp and his seal on something way back in the garden that the seed of the woman would one day crush the head of the serpent.

Okay? We see in the garden that on the day that they ate of the fruit, it says that they will surely die. Death reigned from Adam up until Jesus came and confronted death in his own grave.

[9 : 37] This is good news for us. The serpent was laid waste by Jesus' resurrection.

And one day, that will be completely sealed and completely done on the very last day when he's cast into the lake of fire. And then will come the saying that says death is swallowed up in victory. We got a foretaste of this when Jesus rose from the dead. When Jesus rose from the dead, it was a guarantee. However many feelings we have about whether or not it was significant, how that affects us now, it was a guarantee that one day, in its totality, death will be swallowed up.

Death is inescapable, like I said. You know? But one day, the most inescapable thing in this life, every single one of us will die, with the exception maybe if, you know, we see the day of the Lord. But if we don't, we're going to die. Death will be swallowed up in victory. That inescapable, haunting feeling, haunting thing that all men face will be swallowed up in the victory of Jesus.

[10 : 56] And this is good news. Jesus rose from the dead, which makes him the leader of all his people, out of death.

His rising from the dead is a proclamation to death, that he is that. He's the preeminent one.

Revelation 1 says, he says, I died, Jesus speaking about himself, I died, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and Hades.

May the Lord give us faith in regards to believing if we've fallen short of remembering the resurrection. Where is your faith in the resurrection? If you're a Christian, if you've been born again, there is no being born again.

There is no hope in the future if Jesus wasn't raised. This is the thing that must empower us to live a life, even a life of suffering. We have to look into not just his pains that he suffered, but the seal after, that he did come out of the tomb and it was empty.

The scripture says, I think in Matthew's account, that when Jesus died on the cross, that the earth shook, that there was actually a resurrection of dead saints.

[12 : 23] But then something happened in the temple. It says that the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom, actually, it says. And to us, to our Gentile minds, that might seem strange or insignificant, but there's a lot of significance there, especially if you were a Jew and heard about it in its time.

The curtain was the division, or the veil, you would say, between the rest of the congregation of Israel, between the common man and the Holy of Holies.

That which is sacred and undefiled by man. And the Holy of Holies in the temple was where the sacrifices happened once a year.

And the veil separated. It was a sign that sin had to be separated from God. The sin of man had to be kept away from God because God is holy.

When Jesus died on the cross, it says that from top to bottom, that veil was torn. In what way was that significant? Well, number one, that God's dwelling place changed.

[13 : 41] It wasn't exclusively hidden in the way that he dwelt in a temple made with hands. It changed that his dwelling place actually became with man.

That the separation from the Holy of Holies was done away with. That actually that the sin that separated us from God, God of his own volition, took responsibility for his own children and died the death that they deserve to bring him to God.

Okay? When we think about, it's easy to think about a veil in the temple and maybe the ritual behind that. But what about the veil in your heart?

What about your own struggle with your sin? Do you feel separated from God? How close to God do you feel? Do you sometimes feel close to God?

Do you say to yourself, there's something between me and God. There's something. God is just an arm's length away, but he's not quite close.

[14 : 49] I think Jesus dying on the cross and that veil being torn was a statement that there is nothing that stands between us and God. Amen. Okay? That you, as a common person, as a deviled sinner, can come into the Holy of Holies with no veil.

With no curtain. Okay? I just would want to be a Jew in that day trying to ponder what happened. You know? Like, this curtain is torn up and we just crucified Jesus.

Something's going on here. You know? At the very least, right? But the powers of the heavens were shaken. Death itself was laid in his grave when Jesus died and rose.

And so, we need to think about, if we're in Christ, where is our faith in regards to this sweet promise of what Jesus did?

Okay? Not only in his death, which we talk about a lot, and rightfully so, but in his resurrection. Romans 4 says that he was raised for our justification. Okay?

[16 : 02] Do you believe that, Christ's church? Do you believe that with your sins that regularly plague you? Do you believe that on your good weeks and your bad weeks? Do you believe that Jesus being raised from the dead was a work that we did not do?

That it was a punishment that he went on the cross that we deserve? And it was completed. He gave up his spirit. The KJV says he gave up his ghost and said, it's finished.

Okay? It's done. If anything, that I want you guys to hear today is that that is true. If all of you go home, say to yourself and your own soul that it is finished.

Christ rose from the dead, and one day we will see that in its fullness. Amen? Amen. I'm going to read real quick from Luke 24.

This is about the resurrection. You guys can open up there if you want, but I'm going to go through it very quickly. Luke 24, starting in verse 1.

[17 : 04] On the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

But when they went in, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said, why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but he but has risen. Remember how he told you while he was still in Galilee that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified on the third day and on the third day rise. And they remembered his words. And returning from the tomb, they told all these things to the eleven and to the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary, the mother of James and the other women with them who told them, who told these things to the apostles. [18:15] For these words seemed to them an idle tale and they did not believe. They did not believe them. For Peter rose and ran to the tomb, stooping and looking in when he saw the linen cloths by themselves and he went home marveling at what had happened.

Okay, so first day of the week happens. The women go to the tomb. They have an encounter with these angels and it says when they went into the tomb, they did not find in the body of the Lord and they were perplexed.

Okay? You would think after Jesus' teaching about what's going to happen, hey, I'm going to die. The Son of Man will suffer and die but he's going to rise. You would think, like, yep, we believe that. Of course it's going to happen, you know? But it says that they're confused. They're perplexed. They didn't see the body and they're like, what's happened? I think sometimes in Christianity there could be a faith that is a kind of blind faith that we just accept things without any evidence or any speculation.

And I think that's against even the witness of the Bible, especially in regards to the resurrection, is that they didn't understand what they were seeing.

[19:40] Why? Because they were using normal reason. This tomb is empty which doesn't make sense. This... People don't rise from the dead, right?

So they're thinking in a carnal way but let's not make any mistakes that this is a witness to us that they weren't just hoping in this kind of ethereal way.

They... God proved to them what he said he would do in fact. And we see that here that they were perplexed about it. And then when the women came to the apostles they told them all that had happened and they said it seemed to be an idle tale.

So they're still in disbelief. Okay? And then we move on. In verse 13 it says that that very day two of them were going to the village named Emmaus and about seven miles from Jerusalem and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened while they were talking and discussing together Jesus himself went with them but their eyes were kept from recognizing him and he said to them what is this conversation that you're holding with each other as you walk?

And they stood still looking sad then one of them named Cleopas answered answered him are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there these days?

[21:16] and he said to them what things? Jesus is trying to gather intel tell me about it what happened? And they said concerning Jesus of Nazareth a man who was a mighty prophet in deed and word before God and all the people still in disbelief he's not God he was just a mighty prophet and keep going what do they say?

He says mighty word and deed before God and all the people and how our chief priests and rulers delivered them up to be condemned to death and crucified them and we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel fill in disbelief you know yes and besides all this there's not a third day since these things happened moreover some women of our company amazed us they were out to him early in the morning and when they did not find his body they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels that said that he was alive some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the woman had said but him they did not see so the news comes still don't believe it so they go check it out and they're like where's the body?

yeah it's not here but we didn't find them and he said to them oh foolish ones so Jesus yeah directly confronts all of that he said oh foolish ones and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? and beginning with Moses and all the prophets he interpreted to them and all the scriptures the things concerning himself and so they drew near to the village to which they were going he acted as if he was going farther but they urged him strongly saying stay with us for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent and so he went in to stay with them and when he was at table with them he

took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them and their eyes were opened and they recognized him and he vanished from their sight they said to each other did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road while he opened to us the scriptures and they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem and they found the eleven and those who were with them and gathered them saying the Lord has risen indeed and he has appeared to Simon then they told then they told what had happened on the road and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread so Jesus reveals himself not like a a you know superhero coming down you know out of the sky and saying

I'm here it's me but he's cryptic about it he comes specifically to specific people and he reveals himself in ways that they would understand they recognize the way he broke the bread and blessed it something was different about him and not only that but he was on this earth alive for 40 days teaching and revealing himself all the more this really happened sometimes we can think this is a this is an idle tale ourselves okay it was long ago but still as true and as new then as it is today for us okay spiritually speaking Christ is dwelling with us by his spirit man how I would love to be taught by him for 40 days post resurrection but Jesus said it's better that I go and send you to the spirit to teach you bring to remembrance all the things that I taught and then all that will be brought one day in the end so how how do we reckon with all these things how do we as a church say

[25 : 30] Lord what does what does the power of your resurrection mean on our lives this is what Paul said that I might know him and the power of his resurrection Christ church do we have faith that that not only will God destroy death for us for that one day whatever sufferings we endure will be for the glory of God and ultimately at the end will be worth it every single sacrifice every single cross that we bear will be worth it okay let's not lose hope in the small areas that we sacrifice but realize that Christ was the one who led an example and did not fail he lived a perfect life a sinless life never once did he sin and he was crucified in weakness but the scripture says he was but he lives by the power of God amen where we at

I have two points I was thinking about three but I'm like God do that two resurrection points in light of Jesus rising from the dead number one I was thinking about and praying about our church and just thinking about Lord how would you have us think about the concrete and undissolvable truth that you rose I came up with two things number one we lack nothing we lack nothing Romans 8 31-32 what then shall we say to these things if God is for us who can be against us he who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all how will he not also with him graciously give us all things what are the things in your heart that you more regularly tell yourself you don't have what are they

Christ church what are the things that you say that you're constantly saying I need this I need this I'm not whole until I have this what are the things what are the little things in relationships that you desperately envy and want what are the things that unsettle you what are the things that the world promises that say you must have this when the truth is in Christ we lack nothing we lack nothing God has given us everything in Christ God has given us Jesus he's given us himself and we lack nothing Christ is enough for you right now apart from all the things that are your wants and desires although they might not be bad but the truth is do you believe that Christ is enough for you right now he is he is enough for you presently and if any if any of you have a lingering feeling that goes something like this like I'll come to

God when X Y and Z happen or I'll come to God once I'm ready or I'll come to God insert your own thing that hinders you remember that the veil was torn on purpose okay outside of you doing anything to bridge the separation God tore that veil and today you can come to Jesus presently okay that's point number one we lack nothing point number two resurrected identity I think identity is a crucial thing if we are in Christ then we have to know who we are we have to know who we are and Christ has made us sons through his resurrection resurrected identity Romans 6 tells us that our old self was buried with Christ as he died was buried into the ground into death so that we would also be raised with him to walk in newness of life although we wrestle with our old passions our faults and foibles the Bible says that our old self has died do you reckon your old self dead in that respect all the things that presently aggravate you about yourself about others the old self has been crucified with Christ

Romans 6 says so that we might walk in newness of life resurrected identity do you know who you are in Christ I was listening to Tim Keller talk and he was talking about why did Jesus with Mary reveal himself the way that he did you guys can recount when he's talking with Mary he's the

