

# He is risen!

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[ 0 : 00 ] I don't know about you. I grew up that at Easter services, the service begins with the minister saying, Alleluia, Christ is risen. And everybody responds, He is risen indeed. Alleluia. We say, Alleluia. We rejoice that Christ is risen. But why do we rejoice in that? That's my question this morning. Why do we rejoice in the resurrection? Professor William Milligan, Aberdeen University, about 140 years ago, he said the resurrection is treated less as an essential and integral part of the work which the Lord Jesus Christ was sent into the world to accomplish, less that than as something that follows on after that work, almost an afterthought.

And I'm not sure much has changed 140 years later. Is Jesus' resurrection more than an afterthought? I wonder for you how it figures in your thinking. My prayer, my prayer is that thinking more about the reasons for Jesus' resurrection, that it will cause us to say with greater enthusiasm, Alleluia, Christ is risen. This is not going to be an exhaustive examination of the implications of Jesus' resurrection. That would take far more than one sermon. That will take a lifetime of preaching.

But I hope that it will be to you encouraging this morning. First implication, Jesus Christ was raised for our justification. Raised for our justification. Now, my suspicion, my suspicion is that most of us get as far in our heads as the first half of Romans chapter 4 verse 25. We say to ourselves, He was delivered over to death for our sins. We get that part, right? We get how the cross deals with sin. But the second half of that same verse says, He was raised to life for our justification. Delivered over to death for our sins. Raised to life for our justification. So Paul says, the cross is not enough. Paul says, good Friday on its own would not be good. The two, death and resurrection, cross and empty tomb, the two are indivisible. We can't have one without the other. We can't have as individuals, we can't have new life in Him, we can't have a resurrection, hope, without our sins being forgiven first at the cross. The resurrection is essential. I mean, who would imagine? Who would imagine without the events of Easter Sunday?

[ 2 : 40 ] Who would imagine that the crucifixion of a carpenter from Nazareth was anything more significant than a corrupt government disposing of a troublemaker? I mean, tragic, but hardly earth-shattering. Strange darkness coinciding with it. It just kind of shrugged off as one of those things. Without the resurrection, we wouldn't still be talking about a crucified criminal 2,000 years later, would we? Yes, yes, it's on the cross that the price is paid, but it's the resurrection that proves that the price has been paid. 1 Corinthians 15, 17, If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile. You are still in your sins.

See, without the resurrection, you are still in your sins. If Jesus is not raised to life, you bear the penalty for your sins. So praise God that He rose again, that we could be forgiven, that we could be set free. Professor Richard Gaffin, he puts it this way. He says, As long as Jesus remained in a state of death, as long as He was dead, the righteous character of His work, the effectiveness of His obedience to death, as long as He was dead, all that was in question.

In fact, not just under question, implicitly denied. It's not effective if He stays dead. And so the eradication of death in His resurrection is nothing less than the removal of that verdict of condemnation and an effective affirmation of His righteousness. In other words, if Jesus stayed in the tomb, then it sure would have looked like death and Satan and a corrupt government and jealous religious leaders, it would have looked like they had won, wouldn't it? In fact, if He'd stayed in the tomb, they would have won. Not just it would have looked like it, they would have. That verdict of condemnation from God Himself would still have stood over all humanity. We would have still been dead in Adam rather than made alive in Christ. So Burkhoﬀ calls the resurrection the Father's seal on the completed work of Christ, the stamp of approval, the public declaration that the death has been accepted, that it is worthy, that the price has been paid. My friends, our sins are not

forgiven if Christ is not raised. So praise God that He is. But that's not all. That's not all that we mean when we say He was raised for our justification. We say also that through His resurrection, we're unable to live a new life here and now. Resurrection isn't just a kind of far-off future hope. This isn't, you know, pie in the sky when you die. No, resurrection life begins now. It has already begun. Back in that last verse of chapter 4 of Romans that we read a moment ago, Paul said He was delivered over to death for our sins and raised to life for our justification. And in chapter 6 of the letter to the Romans, he fleshes some of that out. We're going to read the first 14 verses of chapter 6 long enough that I'm going to pause for just a moment in case you do want to flick to it. But it is also on the screen. Romans chapter 6, 1 to 14. Paul asks, what shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?

By no means. We are those who have died to sin. How can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism in death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of God the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with. That we should no longer be slaves to sin because anyone who's died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe we will also live with him. We know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again. 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. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ

Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument for wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life. Offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master because you are not under the law but under grace.

[ 8 : 16 ] There's lots there, isn't there? Lots that we could unpack and tease out, but do you see the sweep of the argument? Paul's arguing from verse 4 that we, you and I, believers in his name, that we follow the same trajectory as Jesus. Buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as he was raised, so too are we. So too may we live a new life. We'll come on to bodily death and resurrection in a while, but here in Romans chapter 6, Paul's talking about spiritual resurrection, isn't he? He's talking about spiritual new life, new life here and now. Jesus said, I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. Fullness of life here, now. Resurrection life today. Not in some far-off future.

Not in some theoretical ethereal hope. Resurrection life now. And so, says Paul, how bizarre, how incongruous, how inconsistent, how silly to continue in sin. You died to sin. You are alive to God in Christ Jesus.

We are no longer slaves to sin. We have been set free. Similarly, most of us familiar perhaps with at least the thought of Ephesians chapter 2 verse 5.

It is by grace you have been saved. We know this, right? We know we are saved by grace and grace alone. How many of us know Ephesians chapter 2 verse 6? 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. Past tense. Done. He raised us up and seated us. Not just salvation from the condemnation that our sins deserved. No, fullness of life. Not a minimal salvation. Not a limit. No, ■■■ITZ. Not a minimum. Not a minimum. Yes. Not a minimum. No, Muhammad.

So, this resurrection, this exaltation that we have already experienced, Paul says. This is the basis of our present blessings from God's hands. In other words we say yes with Christ Jesus with Him we ourselves were tried condemned crucified and buried and yet wonderfully with Him also made alive raised set in heavenly places that is the reality today for you and for me He was raised for our justification then secondly secondly in the resurrected life of Christ we find here confirmation of the death of death hell's destruction sealed in Christ's victory we had a verse from first Corinthians 15 a moment ago but we're going to read along this section of it now first Corinthians 15 the first 26 verses so Paul's writing to Corinthian church and this is his big resurrection passage he says 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 a 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 he appeared to cephias and then to the twelve after that he appeared to more than 500 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 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's 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 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 of god sorry when he hands over the kingdom to god the father after he has destroyed all dominion authority

[ 14 : 42 ] and power for he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet the last enemy to be destroyed is death very quick side point we're not focusing today on making the case for the historical veracity of the resurrection if any of you are uncertain about that do get in touch i'll gladly discuss it with you but note briefly verses five through eight paul says here that actual people alive as he was writing that they could verify the physical bodily resurrection of jesus as straightforward historical fact an actual human being was crucified and rose again this isn't a story this isn't an allegory this is history this is what happened side point when i'm focusing these verses on the death of death again lots we could pull out from first corinthians 15 but here the death of death the last verse that i read there verse 26 the last enemy to be destroyed is death we've thought already haven't we about spiritual death and rebirth and now we're turning to physical death and rebirth see in christ's death and resurrection there's an answer to sin right in his death and resurrection sin is dealt with in his death and resurrection the price is paid god's anger is turned away sin is paid for but you see here that in christ's death and resurrection there's also an answer to sin's worst consequence the wages of sin is death right but those wages no longer have to be paid great theologian gerhardus vos he says the resurrection is the death of death by letting death be exhausted in himself christ destroyed the power of death the father when he brought christ again from the dead derived the declaration that there was nothing more to bear and to die that the passive obedience in all its parts had been perfectly provided in other words death had its opportunity death had its chance to win death had its say death poured out its very worst and death was exhausted fully consumed in the death of christ death did all it could and jesus absorbed it all and therefore in the resurrection the declaration rings out death has been defeated there is no more to bear there is no more death to die in the death of christian soul and body a rent asunder death separates them but that rupture that rent didn't remain there's this new outflow of resurrection life and body and soul restored reunited we're going to start learning a new song in a few minutes a song that declares the rising of the son of heaven and it asks oh trampled death where is your sting we praise the name of the lord our god our god because death has been defeated death has died here first corinthians 15 here paul's examining the case he's kind of asking the question what if what if there is no resurrection what would that be like well if there were no resurrection verse 18 then those who have fallen asleep in christ are lost but the reverse is gloriously true isn't it because christ was indeed raised to life on the third day

then those who sleep in him are not lost he will not lose a single one of those who are given to him he will not fail to bring to completion the good work that he has begun the wages of sin is death but the gift of god is eternal life in christ jesus our lord praise god christ has indeed been raised from the dead the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep this language of the first fruits this is an

agricultural metaphor right uh exodus chapter 23 you bring the first of your harvest to god you recognize that all of it belongs to him and the quality of those first fruits that you bring it's it's representative of the whole you offer the very first of your harvest because you trust god that the rest is going to follow on after it you can give him that first harvest because you know more is coming well jesus is the first fruits the guarantee that more is coming it will follow on after the resurrection of our savior is is the foretaste of our own resurrection the guarantee of what is to come christ had a real physical bodily resurrection so too will we bodies on an evil thing to be left behind for some kind of spiritual holy existence on an ethereal plane no no no no no no christ's bodily resurrection affirms the value of the physical no wonder we feel frustrated with all these partial connections to one another at the moment we're meant to live embodied existences we try and move things into a digital realm and wonder why it's not good enough we're not meant to live this way in our resurrection life we will not see god through a glass darkly we will not be on a zoom call with jesus we will not live a virtual existence we will not be disembodied souls or spirits we will see jesus face face face face face face face face face we will be there with him in his presence how do we know that well because his resurrection was a bodily resurrection and so will ours be death has been defeated now death may still hold some sway today we are you and i likely to still go through the process of physical death. Many of us are perhaps more conscious than we wish of the decaying of our bodies already. We may go through that, but it will not win. Our deaths will be temporary, just as Christ's death was temporary. Death cannot win. Death could not hold him, and it cannot hold you either. As believers in Jesus, you have spiritual life today, as you participate in his resurrection. And you will have physical life in the age to come, because death has been defeated. Hallelujah. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we rejoice in your resurrection this morning. Forgive us when our vision of it has been too small, when we have dismissed it as an afterthought as just kind of something that had to happen a box to be ticked. Lord, thank you for setting forth in your word the implications of this resurrected life, the spiritual life that we have in your presence right now, that we are set free from sin, that we are enabled to live life in all its fullness, and for that resurrection hope for the future as well.

Thank you for that confidence we have that death is defeated, that Satan has no hold upon us. Lord, as we look forward to that day, as we look ahead to your coming in glory, as we think on the new heavens and the new earth, Lord, fill our minds with that hope that we may today live in light of the glorious truth of your resurrection.

Amen.