

God has raised this Jesus

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Date: 21 April 2019

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[0 : 0 0] I'd like us to turn to the book of Acts and chapter 2, the chapter, or at least part of that chapter which we read a few minutes ago.

And I'd like us to focus on words spoken by Peter in his sermon to the people in his own hearing at the time.

Perhaps we can read from verse 29 of Acts chapter 2. This is Peter under the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried and his tomb is with us to this day. Being there for a prophet and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to Hades or the realm of the dead, nor did his flesh see corruption.

This Jesus, God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. God has raised this Jesus.

[1 : 4 8] Jesus to life. The message of the gospel, amongst other things, is about resurrection or raising from death to life, particularly with respect to Jesus.

Now, that's not all the gospel is about, of course. It's amongst other things. But the resurrection is one of those pillars of the message of the gospel, the resurrection from the dead of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The gospel can be summarized with various other very important fundamental truths. And we can go back to the beginning of the Bible, where the Lord Jesus Christ is prophesied in Genesis and referred to as the seed of the woman.

So we have various prophetic references in the Old Testament scriptures to the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm not going into all of that detail.

But there are many places in the Old Testament where the coming of the Messiah is foretold. And we're also spoken of, as I mentioned in the book of Genesis, the seed of the woman.

[3 : 1 2] And there is also this, we find more light shed on these truths as we come into the New Testament, the pillars of the gospel. God being made flesh, being conceived, his conception, the Lord Jesus Christ being conceived in our humanity in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

That is a truly miraculous thing that took place there. And also the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, a natural birth.

And yet here we have bone about bone, flesh about flesh, without sin, being born of a woman, made under the law, as the apostle says.

And the birth, though it was normal, yet it was in a very low state. It wasn't in a maternity unit. It wasn't with all the trappings of the medical care that mothers have at times of birth.

But it was in a stable, all forlorn. That was the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, the humble aspect of his birth.

[4 : 24] And of course that is a tenet, a very important part of the gospel story. And then we have his life lived out at the age of about 30.

He was anointed with the Spirit of God to conduct the ministry as our Savior, to conduct his ministry until the time it came.

All these times were appointed by God. And God's plan was being unfolded little by little until the time came for him to yield himself as a ransom for our sins.

And Peter, of course, makes reference to that. He makes reference to the fact that Jesus had died and that he had risen again.

And this is the important thing. There is a great focus, of course, and there has to be, on the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. But as Paul himself, and we'll see this later on, we'll make reference to it.

[5 : 32] If Christ is not risen, as Paul says to the Corinthians, our faith is in vain. He had to die to pay for our sins.

But he had to rise again to show that he had won the victory over death and over the grave. That death could not hold him. He arose again from the grave.

And here we have the miraculous, and it is nothing short of that, the miraculous resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, what we have to bear in mind with all these occurrences that were taking place in the scene of time, at the early days of the New Testament, is that God had foreordained all these things to happen.

This was an outworking of God's plan. And the wonder of it all is that all of this is for you and for me, for sinners such as you and me.

[6 : 33] He didn't die in vain. It was part of God's plan that he should die in order to be an atonement for the sins of his people.

And he rose again that they who believe in him should not perish in the grave and should not taste eternal death, but that they should rise with the victory that he had won for them.

When people come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, their conversion is referred to as a resurrection. They are risen from the dead in a spiritual way.

We can't say that we have risen from the dead bodily, but that awaits us, those who are truly the Lord's. After death, when their bodies decay in the grave, then there is a promise that the Lord will raise them up from the grave, even though already a spiritual resurrection has taken place.

And this is referred to in various parts of the New Testament scriptures. For example, in Ephesians chapter 2, where Paul is speaking of those who were dead in trespasses and in sins, that they have been brought to life.

[7 : 55] And also, when he was writing to the Colossian believers, he refers to them as those who are risen. If you are risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, things that belong, as we were referring to last week, the kingdom of God, the values of the kingdom.

So, people who come to faith, they haven't been physically lifeless before, but they have been lifeless in terms of a saving relationship with God, dead in trespasses and in sins.

And when God comes with the mighty power of the risen Christ, he raises us again, and our affections are changed. It's as though our closed eyes are open, and our closed hearts are opened, our closed mouths are opened, to say, he put a new song in my mouth, our God to magnify.

So, there was no life without the life of the Holy Spirit before conversion. And that is, indeed, a very real resurrection.

So, in a real sense, and this is a psalm thought for us all, in a real sense, each of us is either alive or dead today.

[9 : 22] That's hard to take that in, isn't it? But that's what the word of God speaks of. When he speaks of those who are without Christ in their lives, they are still dead.

There is no spiritual life in them. They are blind. And we have to ask ourselves, If that is true, which one of these am I?

There's no middle way. We are either enlightened or still in darkness. The sad thing is that those who are really enlightened sometimes lose sight of the fact that they are because they are moving away from the way of Christ.

But let's get back to the theme. The theme here is resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is where our focus has to be. Easter Sunday. It's not that we, as a church, as a denomination, make a big thing of Easter Sunday because, as I said already, every Lord's Day is a reminder to us of the risen Lord and the empty tomb.

But there's no harm in making it known what the exact real of Easter is. Easter is, like everything else to do with the Christian church, particularly Christmas and other times of celebration in the church.

[10 : 45] It's so much commercialized that the real meaning, the real significance of the occasion is totally lost to us.

Jesus rose again from the dead. The time of year when Jesus, it's the time of year when he was crucified. Three days ago, if you want to put it that way. And he rose on the third day.

And he rose again and ascended to the right hand of the majesty on high. I'd like us just to look briefly at three aspects of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's no surprise that Peter's first sermon engages with this subject. It's the victory of the gospel. It's triumph over death and sin through the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are no more comforting words spoken to those who went to the empty tomb than they were told, He is not here.

[11 : 56] He is risen. And that is the testimony of the church and has been right down through the ages. First of all, I want to look at the prophetic message of Jesus' resurrection.

Just in a very few words, referring to what the psalmist, the psalmist is quoted, what Peter says here, quoting the psalmist from verse 25.

David says concerning him, I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken. And then he goes on to say at verse 27, for you will not abandon my soul to Hades.

Now this is the prophetic speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ. The psalmist, as Peter makes it clear, wasn't speaking about himself, but he was speaking about the Lord Jesus Christ.

He goes back to Old Testament scripture and cites these verses from Psalm 16, with which perhaps we are fairly familiar as we use them in our praise of God.

[13 : 07] Now in Old Testament times, resurrection from the dead was not as prominent as a belief as it became in the New Testament.

Scriptural references are there in the Old Testament with regard to resurrection. You'll remember how Job, that man who had suffered so much from God, being deprived of everything, and who said, the Lord has given, the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.

And he makes a beautiful reference to, in his own record, of what God had said, that he believed, that in spite of all his own sufferings, he believed that he would see Jesus face to face.

Oh, that my words were written, oh, that they were inscribed in a book, oh, that with an iron pen and lead they were engraved in the rock forever. For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.

And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

[14 : 33] There was Job's testimony of believing in the risen Christ and believing in his own resurrection. I will see my Redeemer with my own two eyes.

And it's a wonderful testimony for any believer in the Lord Jesus to be able to say that. Can you say that from your heart today, my dear brother and sister in the Lord, I know that my Redeemer lives.

Can you say it? You who are a stranger to the grace of God, I don't think you can. But would you desire to say it in order that you would have the comfort that is derived from these words we have from the book of Acts and in other parts of the New Testament.

You also have Isaiah making reference to resurrection. In chapter 26 of Isaiah's prophecy, we have, But your dead will live, Lord.

Their bodies will rise. Let those who dwell in the dust wake up and shout for joy. Your Jew is like the Jew of the morning. The earth will give birth to her dead.

[15 : 46] Seems to me to be a reference to coming resurrection there in the prophetic words of the prophet Isaiah. And of course, there's the classic illustration we have of spiritual resurrection, if not physical resurrection, when Ezekiel was speaking of the valley of the dry bones.

Now, I'm not going to spend time of that. But coming into the New Testament, there were different views on the resurrection. Some people, like the Greeks, for example, they were very, in their own minds, very spiritual, with a small s.

They held the body, things material, to be a hundredth to them. Once the body died, it was an attitude of, oh, well, good riddance to the body. We don't need that anymore.

Now, that doesn't concur with the doctrine of the gospel, does it? Because body and soul are reunited at the resurrection.

And according to the Greeks, they felt that because the body, once death came, the spirit is freed from its bodily shackles. Well, in a sense, that is true because Paul himself said, who will deliver me from this body of death, oh, wretched man, that I am.

[17 : 09] But the sinful body will die and the soul of the believer will rise again, will go to heaven and will be reunited with our resurrection body when the Lord comes.

The Jews had their own belief in resurrection. They were firmly persuaded that the values of the human body as well as of the spirit, what we might call the psyche, they thought the body would be raised unaltered.

They didn't have a full view of what the body was to be like after resurrection. And of course, there's the famous, the well-known sect in the New Testament scriptures called the Sadducees who were in total denial regarding physical resurrection.

And it's an issue which characterized them. They were identified because of that in the New Testament. But when we come to the Christian view of resurrection, we believe in accordance with scripture that the body will be raised after death.

When the Lord comes, the body will be raised and also transformed at resurrection so as to be a suitable vehicle for the very different life of the age to come.

[18 : 33] Now, there's a very good commentary on this in the scriptures in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Resurrection miracles performed by Jesus were different resurrections to those that are going to be his peoples at his coming when their bodies are raised.

When Jesus brought people back from the dead, they were still subject to death. We don't hear of them departing planet earth and going off to heaven. All the resurrection miracles he did and the raising of Lazarus, the calling of Lazarus from the tomb.

In chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians, Paul writes these words, Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep or those who have died.

The first fruits. Jesus is the very first human being to rise with a resurrection body and because he has written, those who believe in him through faith, those who are saved through faith, will also rise as he did.

This is why he did it in order to bring us back from the brink, so to speak, in order to deliver us from the power of death. And Paul goes on to say, for since death came through a man, that is, through Adam, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

[20 : 13] We can understand that in both a spiritual way, but also at the end, when Jesus comes, there's this resurrection that will take place of body to be reunited to the perfect soul.

For as in Adam, says Paul, all die, so in Christ all will be made alive, but each in turn, Christ, the first fruits.

Again, referring to Jesus as, if you want to name it, the prototype. The body of Jesus rose from the dead and it had properties that we cannot really fully understand as we read from Scripture how he was able to pass in and out of rooms and so on.

Christ, the first fruits, then when he comes, notice, then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

This is what the psalmist had foreseen prophetically then in Psalm 16 with reference to Jesus primarily and as a result for those who are his but having undergone decay.

[21 : 28] Different from Jesus. Jesus' body when it was entombed, it wasn't preserved because of all the spices and all the various potions that have been prepared to embalm him.

He was he didn't see decay or corruption as it is described sometimes in the Scriptures. His body was not subject to decay and that is what the psalmist has prophesied in verse 27.

You will not abandon my soul to the realm of the dead or let your Holy One see corruption. No decay. He arose from the dead victorious over the death and over the grave because corruption, the power of death had nothing to do with him.

It couldn't touch him. But he died and rose again for our justification. And there is this direct reference in Psalm 16 to the non-disintegration of Jesus' body in the tomb in contrast to the bodies of saints.

bodies which do decay but will be miraculously reconstituted and transformed when Jesus comes at the resurrection.

[22 : 51] It's a glorious thought that sometimes we don't think about it often enough. We are so anchored to the things of time and of sense and we don't look forward in faith to those things that God has promised us in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

So the psalmist prophesied in Psalm 16 of the resurrection of Jesus. I want secondly and briefly again to look at the reality of the resurrection of Jesus.

Now we could spend a lot of time on this but time doesn't allow it. But I want to say one or two things. Peter in this passage emphasizes the reality of Jesus' resurrection in verse 32.

At verse 31 he's speaking of the prophet he's speaking of David's prophecy in the psalm speaking about the resurrection of the Christ and his flesh not having seen corruption.

In verse 32 the reality of Jesus' resurrection. This Jesus God raised up. This Jesus who was crucified whom we saw with our own eyes and whom sadly we denied.

[24 : 09] Whom sadly we run away from. But it is this very same Jesus this Jesus he shall be called Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins.

This Jesus and no other Jesus there is no other name given from heaven amongst men whereby we must be saved. This Jesus this Jesus who was unrecognizable as a human being at the time of his crucifixion.

He has already quoted scripture of the fact that Jesus has been raised from the dead. If you go back if you go to verse 32 again God raised up this Jesus God raised up and of that we are all witnesses.

He also speaks of being one of many witnesses to the empty tomb and this apostolic witness was a special witness. They had seen Jesus Jesus had revealed himself to them.

It wasn't that they found him but he found them and he told them he had told the two Marys at the tomb by the angel in Matthew's record that he was going to Galilee and that he would be there waiting for them and that is exactly what happened.

[25 : 41] In Paul's letter to the Corinthians there are beautiful verses that we find recorded for us relating to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and I just like to make reference to these because they are so helpful in opening up for us to some extent as the spirit of God enables us to understand the significance of the resurrection.

This whole chapter in 1 Corinthians is taken up with resurrection and so therefore it must count of great importance in the message of the gospel.

In this chapter Paul says I will remind you brothers of the gospel I preach to you which you receive in which you stand and by which you are being saved if you hold fast to the word I preached to you unless you believe in vain.

And he goes on to speak of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And later on in this chapter he says now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead but if there is no resurrection of the dead then not even Christ has been raised and if Christ has not been raised then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.

1 Corinthians 15 and 14 puts the importance of belief in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ into context for everyone who would be a Christian.

[27 : 27] He says if Christ has not been raised then our preaching is in vain. In other words without the proclamation of the resurrection of Christ as well as the birth and death an atoning sacrifice and so on yet the resurrection is part of the chain of gospel good news which cannot be broken.

He is risen he is not here and it is this to which Peter is testifying this Jesus God raised up and of that we are witnesses assuredly verily verily truly truly God raised this Jesus up from the dead at that time God has used physical means of demonstrating that Jesus had risen the visible things like the empty tomb and so on but for us now what are the signs we have that Jesus is risen from the dead surely it has to be that down through the years down through the centuries since this historic time of Jesus resurrection the church has grown the church has people have been brought from death to life witnessing to the fact that Jesus is death and resurrection and ascension and intercession at the right hand of

God where he is pouring out his spirit down through the decades and centuries and is still doing so we believe until he gathers all his own people to be with him forever we do have God's spirit at work in other ways down through the history of the New Testament church and were it not for the fact that Jesus not only rose from the tomb but also ascended victoriously to heaven Pentecost the outpouring of the Holy Spirit would not have taken place but thanks be to God that he has gone to heaven that he has ascended up on high Paul speaks of this reality to the Corinthians who needed to be convinced not only of Paul's apostleship but also of the factual resurrection of the Lord of the body of Jesus and I think that the Easter part of the gospel is encapsulated in a few verses in verses 3 and 4 of 1

Corinthians 15 I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures and that he was buried and was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures and that he appeared to Cephas that's Peter then to the twelve then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time there we have something of the gospel with particular reference to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and one commentator comments on it in this way the spoken testimony of the apostles and the written prediction of the prophets seems to have converged yes indeed it has or as we would say the old and new testament scriptures coincided in their witness to the resurrection of the

Lord Jesus Christ so the challenge for us is yes it's great it's good for us to think about these things but what about me what about you what is my reaction to all this do I need this Jesus who died and who rose again well the obvious answer is yes and it is through these scriptures that he is offered to you so we've looked briefly at the prophecy of resurrection and the reality of the resurrection of Jesus but what you and I need is a personal resurrection a spiritual resurrection a work of the Holy Spirit in your heart and in mine and later on in this chapter in the book of Acts in Acts chapter 3 Acts chapter 2 rather and at verse 37 we didn't read this earlier on but look at what it says Acts 2 verse 37 now when they heard this they were cut to the heart and said to

[32 : 13] Peter and the rest of the apostles brothers what shall we do is that question on your mind here today on this Easter Sunday 2019 Peter said to them repent and be baptized 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 for the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself ask for God to call you to himself ask for God to work in your heart that mighty transforming power making you come from death to life brothers what shall we do and the answer given was repent be baptized turn around and be cleansed believe the narrative of the gospel but embrace the central person in the gospel in faith that is embrace the

Lord Jesus Christ so we have resurrection prophesied resurrection in reality taking place regardless of what many philosophers may say to lay to lay myself down and bring myself back to life Jesus resurrection was testified to his ascension brought the spirit to the church and those who believe in him are resurrected from spiritual death to spiritual life and are guaranteed the same resurrection as

Jesus won for us we are guaranteed to rise from death as he did to life and to life everlasting we all must repent then and believe and the question is have you done that yet and I plead with you to do it to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ because there is no other hope beyond the grave but to trust in the risen the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ Amen