

The Risen King

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Preacher: Rodger Crooks

[0 : 00] Now let's read again from the Bible, from the New Testament section of it! It's Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome.

It's the first chapter and the first seven verses, page 939. Now let's pray before we turn to God's word.

Lord Jesus, we recall how on that first Easter Sunday evening as you walked with those two disciples from Jerusalem to Emmaus, that you spoke about yourself and your resurrection and death from the Scriptures, and that their hearts were warmed within them.

We pray now as we turn to your word, that by your spirit you would open our eyes to see wonderful things from your law, that you would warm our hearts, that we would grasp the truth of your word, and we would go from here to live out the truth of your word in our day-to-day lives.

So Lord, hear us and bless us. For your name's sake we pray. Amen. Romans 1 verse 1.

[1 : 32] Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning his son who was descended from David according to the flesh, and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his saints, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Amen. On the 22nd of August, 1485, and none of us were definitely alive then, the final significant battle of the English War of the Roses took place at a place called Bosworth Field, about 15 miles west of Leicester.

And not only did Richard of York give battle in vain, but according to Shakespeare, because he couldn't find a horse, he was killed. The body of Richard III, the last of the Plantagenet kings, was buried in Leicester's Greyfriars Church.

For centuries, his grave was unknown, because no one knew the location of Greyfriars Church. However, in 2012, after years of painstaking research and thorough investigation and using the latest cutting-edge technology, a team of archaeologists from the University of Leicester discovered Richard III's remains buried in a council car park near the Leicester Ring Road.

[3 : 47] Three years later, on March 2015, Richard III's remains were reinterred in Leicester Cathedral.

And if you're ever in Leicester... Does anybody go to Leicester? If you're ever in Leicester, you really should go to the cathedral. There's an exhibition about it, and it's very worthwhile going to it. But I tell you that because on Good Friday, after engaging his enemies in battle, and unlike Richard III, defeating them, another king died and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

However, no matter how much painstaking research is carried out, no matter how many thorough investigations are made, no matter what latest cutting-edge technology is used, no team of archaeologists will ever dig up Jesus' remains.

You see, the truth that we, along with Christians throughout the world today, affirm is that although he really died and actually was buried, Jesus is physically and bodily alive.

[5 : 12] He's still not dead. His bones aren't rotting in some unknown location in and around Jerusalem. The historical fact of Jesus' resurrection, along with the historical fact of his death, are the truths upon which the gospel and our faith rests upon.

But what was happening? What was going on in Jesus' resurrection? To answer that question, I want us to think about something Paul wrote in the reading that we had there a few moments ago in

Romans chapter 1 verse 4 where he states that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead.

That's the NIV translation. If you were to slice and dice that statement, we would discover what is happening in the resurrection.

But I have to tell you that slicing and dicing that statement is not as straightforward as it seems. Commentators and translators debate about where the word power should be placed in that statement.

Should it be linked with the word declared? Should it be joined with the title of Son of God? Or should it be connected with the Holy Spirit, the spirit of holiness?

[6 : 40] And if you read two commentaries, you'll get two opinions. And if you're a glutton for punishment and read a third one, you'll get a third opinion. So, where do we attach?

What do we make of all these options? Well, I wonder if guided by the Holy Spirit, might not Paul have deliberately placed that word power so that it could be attached to all three?

Don't say to me, Roger, you're chickening out and coming to an opinion. I think it could be attached to all three. Why can't we have our cake and eat it? And I think if we do attach it to all three, we come up with a very comprehensive statement about what was happening in the resurrection.

If we follow the NIV and place the word power next to the verb declared, here's the first matter that Romans 1 verse 4 highlights for us.

It tells us that the resurrection is the Father's powerful declaration. The Father's powerful declaration. Jesus was declared with power by the Father to be the Son of God.

[7 : 57] Now, because I realise that there's going to be an election in roughly a month's time, and probably by the time it comes around, like me, you'll be fair scunnered with election talk.

I want to apologise for using an election illustration. But that's the Greek word Paul uses to describe what the Father did on the first Easter Sunday.

It's an election word. It means to declare the result of a poll. So all the votes will have been counted, and a declaration is made.

It's not the declaration that elects the MSPs to Holyrood. It's a number of votes cast. The declaration is simply a public announcement of the result of something, the result of the ballot.

And in the resurrection, God the Father is making a powerful declaration about who Jesus is. It's a strong public announcement that Jesus is the Son of God.

[9 : 12] It's for our benefit that he does so, so that we might be clear in our minds exactly who Jesus is. Now, in Romans 1, verse 4, the verb to declare stands in contrast to the verb descended from, literally to be made from, that Paul uses in verse 3.

In what's known as the incarnation, Jesus takes on a real flesh and becomes a genuine human being. Jesus becomes something that he was not.

Eternally he was and is the Son of God. But in his birth, he became something that he had not been up to that point in time. The incarnation is an addition for Jesus, adding a real human nature to his already real divine nature.

But there's no addition when it comes to the resurrection. He's not made the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead. He's declared to be the Son of God.

He already was divine. And the resurrection is the Father's powerful declaration of who Jesus is. Now that means a number of things.

[10 : 39] It means that nobody can ever say, honestly, I didn't know that Jesus was the Son of God. If we don't know that Jesus is the Son of God, it's not because God hasn't clearly made that fact known.

It's because we have deliberately refused to listen to what God is saying in the resurrection. We've deliberately refused to follow where the evidence takes us. It's our fault, not God's, and only our fault.

Because in the resurrection, God, the Father, is making this powerful declaration to us that Jesus is the Son of God. Everyone has their opinion on Jesus.

Most of them are quite patronizing. You know, he's an exceptionally good person. He's a very insightful teacher.

He's a great religious leader, just like the Buddha or Confucius or Muhammad. But folks, the only opinion about Jesus that really matters is the Father's.

[11:52] And in the resurrection, he's powerfully declared that Jesus is the Son of God. He's not simply a good person or just an insightful teacher or on a par with the Buddha or Confucius or Muhammad or the latest social media influencer.

He's not on a par with them. The Father's public announcement says to us that Jesus is in a class of his own. Now, I know that that sounds extremely intolerant and angular in our cuddly world of equality and inclusivity.

But that's what the Father powerfully declared in Jesus' resurrection. Only Jesus has been resurrected from the dead. That's why he is the unique, the only begotten, the only Son of God. So here's the first matter that this Romans 1, 4 statement highlights. The resurrection is the Father's powerful declaration that Jesus is the Son of God.

He alone is supreme in the universe and so he alone is worthy of worship and trust and obedience. That was following the NIV.

[13:11] If we follow the ESV, the English Standard Version, and connect the phrase or the word power with the title Son of God, then the next matter that this Romans 1, 4 statement highlights is this, that it highlights the Son's powerful vindication.

The Son's powerful vindication. Jesus was declared by the Father to be the Son of God in power. However, this title Son of God, it definitely means that Jesus is divine, truly God in human flesh. However, that doesn't exhaust the meaning of that phrase. It plugs into the idea of Jesus being God's ultimate king.

We're actually back in Psalm 2 here where we find God installing his king on his throne after the king had defeated all his enemies.

And here's what God says about him. Psalm 2, verse 7, You are my son. So in the resurrection, when the Father powerfully declares that Jesus is the Son of God, he's saying that Jesus is his ultimate king who has defeated all his enemies.

[14:34] And this is reinforced by what Paul says in verse 3. He's a descendant of David or literally of the seed of David. We're back in 2 Samuel 7 where God promises King David that one of his descendants, one of his seed, will rule over God's people forever as God's king.

It's right to see Romans 1, 3, and 4 setting out Jesus' humanity and then his divinity, but it's also important to see that both spell out that Jesus is God's ultimate king, the seed of David, the Son of God.

And we know from what Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John record about the events from Palm Sunday through to Good Friday, that Jesus was not backwards in coming forward to set out a stall to be the long anticipated king.

That's why he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey on Palm Sunday to set in motion this chain of events in which he declared himself to be God's long anticipated king.

But we know that Jesus claimed to be God's king, God's Messiah, God's savior, was comprehensively rejected by everyone, by the Roman soldiers, by the mob in the street, by Pilate, by the Jewish religious authorities.

[16:05] And it even seemed that God himself had rejected Jesus' claim when God cursed him on the cross. As he died, it seemed that Jesus claimed to be God's ultimate king, God's ultimate savior, God's Messiah.

It seemed as if that claim had crashed and burned. But by raising him from the dead, the father publicly declared that Jesus' claim is absolutely genuine, absolutely true.

The resurrection is a powerful vindication of Jesus' claims and Jesus' achievements. If his bones were still rotting in some unknown tomb, then everything Jesus said about himself and everything he said he would do would be totally bogus.

We would be complete idiots if we put our faith in him. Our faith would be in vain, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15. Useless.

He would be, if Jesus is still dead, he would be worse than the low life who scam people out of their life savings and life insurance policies.

[17:29] But Jesus' bones are not rotting in some unknown grave. God raised him from the dead and in doing so powerfully vindicated all his claims.

And because Jesus claims to be God's king and saviour and messiah have been powerfully vindicated by his resurrection from the dead, that we can be absolutely certain, no doubt about it, that all the blessings he promises to us if we submit to his rule will become ours.

As God's king, Jesus has promised to forgive our sins. How can we be sure of that, Paul says, by his resurrection from the dead?

As God's king, Jesus has promised that when he judges us, he'll declare us not guilty. How can we be sure of that?

By his resurrection from the dead. As God's king, Jesus has defeated death and has promised that we too will share in his victory over death and go to be him in the new heavens and the new earth when we die.

[18 : 43] And how can we be sure of that? By his resurrection from the dead. As God's king, Jesus has promised to send his Holy Spirit to help us so that we can live for him and serve him and suffer for him.

And how can we be sure of that? By his resurrection from the dead. As God's king, Jesus has promised that nothing or no one can stop him from bringing us safely to heaven.

And how can we be sure of that? Because of his resurrection from the dead. We know for certain that all these blessings will become ours.

Not because we feel they'll become ours. Not because everything's going well in our lives. We know they'll become ours because of the resurrection from the dead.

That historical fact that our feelings and circumstances cannot ever change. So here's the second matter that Romans 1-4 highlights.

[19 : 52] The resurrection is the son's powerful vindication of his claims and his achievements. He is who he is and able to do all that he said he will do for us because he has been raised from the dead.

Now we can translate Romans 1-4 in a different way and some have done so by joining the word power with the Holy Spirit the spirit of holiness and if we do that it moves on to a third matter that this Romans 1-4 statement highlights it's this and it's this the Holy Spirit's new beginning Holy Spirit's new beginning this translation speaks about how Jesus was declared by the father to be the son of God by the power of the spirit of holiness who raised him to life again from the dead.

Now let me ask you a question I'm asking lots of questions tonight and you're doing well so far which person of the Trinity was responsible for the resurrection?

Excuse me I'll let you think was it the father? yes it was because again and again the apostolic witness to the resurrection states that God raised Jesus from the dead that's the most common phrase used from the resurrection God raised Jesus from the dead was Jesus himself responsible for it?

Again the answer is yes because on several occasions Jesus says that he will rise from the dead by his own authority and power I've authority to lay down my life and I've authority he said to take it up again but what about Romans 1 verse 4 which seems to throw someone else's hat into the ring was it the Holy Spirit?

[21 : 46] And yes it was because it was through the spirit of holiness that Jesus was raised from the dead so which person of the Trinity was responsible for the resurrection was it the father or the son or the Holy Spirit?

And the answer is all three. There's a Latin phrase there's a Latin phrase that you should write out and stick to your fridge door and each time you go to get some milk or your non-dairy alternative from the fridge to put it in your tea or coffee you should see it and repeat it three times.

Okay? Here it is. I hope I get it right. *Omnia opera trinitatis ad extra indivisibiles sunt.* Sounds very impressive.

All the external works of the Trinity are indivisible. It means that when God works at something the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit all work together in tandem.

You can't divide it up. They're indivisible, indivisible. So the answer to the question of which person of the Trinity is responsible for the resurrection is that all three are because *omnia opera trinitatis ad extra indivisibiles sunt.*

[23 : 22] My Latin teacher would be shocked at me doing that there but the resurrection is telling us that it's the activity of all three persons of the Trinity working together seamlessly and in harmony.

And the same thing Paul is saying here actually was happening in the work of creation. We tend to think of creation as being the Father's exclusive domain with if you like the Son and the Spirit on the sidelines cheering on.

But it's not. The Son and the Spirit are also involved. Creation is carried out by the Father through the Son's word in the Spirit's power. Now Paul wants us to think about the creation as he writes about the resurrection here in Romans 1 verse 4.

That phrase through the Spirit of holiness is meant to mirror Genesis 1 verse 1 statement about the Spirit of God hovering over the waters.

The Spirit was right there at the creation in the beginning and by mentioning that he's involved here in the resurrection Paul wants us to see the resurrection as a new beginning just as the creation was a new beginning.

[24 : 43] Paul's highlighting of the Spirit's role in the resurrection is telling us that in the resurrection the Spirit was inaugurating a new beginning.

The new beginning of what? The new beginning of the age to come. When does the age to come begin?

Well it's already begun it began at the resurrection and it'll go on through eternity it'll never end but it started at the resurrection that was the beginning but the age to come hasn't fully arrived.

that'll only happen when Jesus returns and takes us to be with him in the new heavens and the new earth but it will happen. That's why Peter informs us that on the basis of Jesus' resurrection the Holy Spirit generates within us hope.

1 Peter 1 verse 3 Now when we have hope we don't yet have what we want but we know we will have it one day in the future.

[25 : 57] Recently I spoke to someone who told me that he was going to retire from his job at the end of this year. That's not exactly what he said to me.

He said to me his words were I hope to retire at the end of this year. At this moment he doesn't have what he wants but he knows that in a few months time he will have it.

That's hope. And in the resurrection the spirit inaugurates the beginning of the age to come which culminates in heaven. The resurrection is only the beginning of the age to come.

It hasn't reached its final destination because Jesus has not come back. We haven't arrived yet. We enjoy now the benefits of salvation.

But we don't enjoy the complete package if you like. We don't enjoy the fullness. That's why the Christian life now is a life of tension.

[27 : 03] It's really strange isn't it the Christian life. You know we've been forgiven but daily we need to be forgiven because we sin. Death has been defeated but one day we're going to die and people that we know die.

we've been released from the power of the evil one from his control but we still give in to temptation.

We the new age is beginning but it hasn't reached its climax its fulfillment its completion. salvation. What we have in the benefits of salvation is only a foretaste of it.

It's to whet our appetites. You know it's when you go to the supermarket maybe they don't do that anymore if you deliver online you don't get this but you can go to the supermarket and they have one of those frying nice Italian sausages and the smell gets you and they give you a wee sample and you taste it and you say oh that's nice.

She wants you to go and buy it. We get a foretaste of what we do when we buy the sausages and take them home. What we have now is a small foretaste.

[28 : 23] The benefits are real but they're not complete. That's why we're people of hope and it's the resurrection that stimulates this hope that one day our salvation will be completed.

And that's the third matter that this Romans 1 statement highlights. In the resurrection the spirit inaugurates the beginning of the age to come. That we're part of by faith in Jesus.

But the dynamic of this age to come is hope because we haven't yet achieved it but we have the assurance that the best is yet to come for us because heaven the new heavens and the new earth will definitely be ours in the future.

Sometimes you know when we think about the resurrection I think our focus is a bit lopsided. We want to know what the resurrection has to say to me at this moment because I'm feeling guilty, anxious, uncertain about my salvation, hopeless, sad, you fill in the blank.

But do you see what we're doing when we think that way? We're putting our emphasis on us and the benefits which come our way as a result of the resurrection.

[30 : 02] Now while the benefits the resurrection brings to us are substantial and not to be sniffed at, Paul's Romans 1 4 statement has a completely different emphasis.

He's really saying to us here folks it's not our party. the resurrection is not primarily about us. Above everything else he says it's about God and what he has done as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

And that means that the question that we should be asking when we deal with the resurrection is not how does the resurrection align with my story?

but the question we should be asking is how should my life align with the story of the resurrection? See the difference?

So how does our story, your story, my story, align with the story of the resurrection? well if in the resurrection the father has made a powerful declaration about Jesus then you align your story with the story of the resurrection by embracing the father's powerful declaration about Jesus for yourself.

[31 : 27] I wonder have you done that? You see you can't be a Christian unless you do that. To become a Christian Paul tells us Romans 10 verse 9 that you must confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord God's son God's king and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead.

That's how you become a Christian. But many of you are Christians let me ask you do your words your actions your attitudes your desires your thinking show that you have embraced the father's powerful declaration about Jesus that he is king and you submit to his lordship day by day as king. we align ourselves to the story of the resurrection in this way another way that in the resurrection the son received a powerful vindication of all his claims that Jesus is who he claims he is he's the only saviour the only way to God Jesus has achieved what he set out to achieve forgiveness by God to replace guilt and condemnation before God freedom to love God to replace oppression by sin and Satan acceptance by God into his family to replace alienation from God friendship with God to replace hostility towards God God and he says that your life aligns with the story of the resurrection by trusting in Jesus alone again let me ask you have you done that do you trust in Jesus alone there's no other saviour but again many of you have and are

Christians but I'm sure you've discovered that it's so easy even as a Christian to place our trust for acceptance and security and joy and peace in this life to place it in something or someone rather than Jesus than in Jesus or something or someone else alongside of Jesus and when you place something or someone alongside of Jesus I'm sure you've discovered like I've discovered that very soon the something or someone usurps Jesus place as a Christian are you still trusting in Jesus alone to bring you acceptance with God and security and joy and peace and forgiveness and hope and it is your trust in

Jesus deepening stronger today than it was last year last Easter that's how your story aligns with the story of the resurrection and another way it aligns is this because in the resurrection Jesus the spirit inaugurates a new beginning and one of the dynamics of the age to come is not simply hope but as Peter calls it he has an adjective before it he calls it living hope I've often scratched my head why does he call it living hope and not just hope and I think the reason for this is that resurrection hope should empower us to live as people of the age to come in the here and now so our story aligns with the story of the resurrection if we live as people of the age to come in this present age so for example when we struggle with physical pain and the deterioration of our physical and mental abilities we have this living hope of new resurrection bodies like

[36 : 06] Jesus resurrection body all diggy tickers dodgy knees wobbly hips they're all gone in the new resurrection body free from sin we've got hope I know someone who faces pain on a daily basis because of a condition that she has and she says to me what keeps me going is the hope of a new resurrection body so when we face death and we're one day closer to death than we were yesterday when we face death we have the living hope that the Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead to new life will raise us up to new life in the new heavens and the new earth we have this living hope when we get stressed by all the injustices and falsehood and oppression in society and in the world we have this living hope that one day when

Jesus returns to judge the living and the dead all wrongs will be righted as justice will be seen to be done that all lies will be exposed as truth triumphs and all wickedness and those who carry it out will be shamed and punished we align ourselves with the story of the resurrection when we struggle daily with indwelling sins evil desires and thoughts when we're often floored by Satan's temptations and when we're constantly seduced by our culture's warped ideas that we have this living hope that one day sin and Satan and the world will be destroyed we won't have to fight against them when we receive the liberty of the children of God and the new heavens and the earth that's our hope!

beginning through the resurrection when we weep and mourn over our low level of love for Jesus or losing someone we love that we have this living hope that one day God will wipe away every tear from our eyes because every cause of sadness and grief will be gone forever won't that be a wonderful day that's the living hope that we have that the spirit generates through the resurrection when we're anxious afraid and distressed we have this living hope that one day we'll enjoy total well-being and security in heaven as Jesus permanently removes everything that might threaten us that's the living hope that we have that's how we align our lives with the story of the resurrection two quick review questions don't say to yourself ministers never do anything quickly in a sermon two quick review questions then

I'm finished first of all what's happening in the Jesus resurrection well Paul informs us that in the resurrection we bump into the father's powerful declaration the son's powerful vindication and the spirit's new beginning in the light of that my second question is this how aligned is your story to the story of the resurrection you have to answer that question for yourself I can't do it for you let's pray for a moment God of glory who by raising your son from the dead through the power of the spirit powerfully declared him to be your king may the new beginning you signaled by Jesus resurrection be something we experience in our lives today raise us up from the death of sin to new life in him renew our love for Jesus our savior our joy and enthusiasm in the service of Jesus our master and our submission to

Jesus as our king fill us with this biblical living hope as we look forward with increasing excitement to that day when faith will give way to sight and we will enjoy all the rich blessings of the age to come in its fullness joy in your presence and eternal pleasures at your right hand so hear us for we pray as we always do in the name of Jesus our lord and god amen now let's finish off by singing a hymn of Thomas Kelly's the lord is risen indeed we're going to sing it to the tune the old 134th i managed to sneak it in to the service the lord is risen indeed can this good news be true yes those who saw the savior bleed have seen him raised too if you're able stand as we praise god the lord is in thee a place to do be true as those who stole the savior we have seen him raised and do the lord is in thee how is his work performed now is the mighty thou!

[42 : 51] the is his thee angels haste no more mercy and truth are now are free thanks to the holy Lord the Lord is listened in thee the great has lost his strength make him his lives around some sea to reign in endless day the Lord is listened in thee he lives to thine no more he lives as sinners falls to me whose

Christ that shame he bore Now to your songs with love and strife a joyful heart die on the radiant love to praise our risen Lord May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope Amen