

'The Reality of Resurrection Hope'

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Preacher: Geoff Hall & Andrew Price

[0:00] Hey there, HDY. I thought I'd get in touch.!

Just because things are feeling a bit crazy at the moment.! This sounds like pretty sad news. What I do know, and what we continue to hear each week at HDY, is that God, our Saviour, is loving and good. Even though I don't know why this is happening and when it will clear up, even how significant the impact will end up being, I know, and I think you know, that our loving God is working for the good of those who love Him.

Hey there, HDY. Hey there, HDY. HDY has started. For those who were there last Sunday at JT's and Word Youth, we were reminded that God reveals His glory through Jesus, even if through things that make us sad or confused, like death or tragedy.

Even if it's not something that I might have decided, and I don't fully understand God's purposes, I do know that God will bring about good for His people.

[1:37] Please may may may may may may may may may may may
may may may may may It's a bit heartbreaking, really, isn't it?

In fact, we didn't really know where to put this video because when it comes to Jeff's passing, I think the word shock is an understatement, isn't it? Even for us who knew that Jeff was unwell, it was still a shock, especially when he was only 44 years old.

I know for some of the younger kids out there, 44 seems so old, but it's really not, is it? And so I have had people ask me, why? Why has God taken Jeff so early when he had so much more life to live, when he had so much more ministry that he himself wanted to give?

And perhaps you have wanted the same. Now, I don't know exactly why, but as I said to HGY last Friday night, I do know that we nearly lost him a couple of years ago, and so these past years have been a bonus gift.

I also know that Jeff was in pain and suffering much more than he let on, but now he is not. And I also know that God sees the bigger picture when we do not.

[3:04] And more than all of that, God is good and loving, as Jeff himself just said. And we know this because God has given us the gospel which saves us and gives us hope.

And so while it's right that we always remember the gospel, it's especially right that we remember it at times like this, that remember that this gospel saves. So it's point one in your outline and verse one and two in your Bibles are on the screen.

Paul begins, 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. I hear Paul wants to remind them of the gospel. And I'll explain why later.

But the word gospel, as many of you know, means good news. And it's particularly the good news about Jesus. And as he says, By this gospel you are saved.

[4:10] That is saved from judgment for life. With God now, in this world, and in the world to come. But notice there is an if here. Halfway through verse two.

If you hold firmly to this gospel word that was preached to you. And that's what Jeff did, didn't he? As Laura prayed on Friday night, quoting the Bible, he fought the good fight.

He finished the race. He kept the faith. And he didn't just keep the faith. He also did what Paul did here. He preached it to others, including us.

One of the video clips that a youth leader shared was this one. I don't know if you could hear him snoring in the background there.

Yes, those are Jeff's feet. And then another youth leader posted this comment. How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.

[5:24] Jeff's feet were beautiful. Ticklish, yes. But beautiful. Because he preached this gospel to us. This good news about Jesus. Just as Paul did to the Corinthians.

The good news about Jesus who saves us from judgment. For life eternal with him. But how does this gospel news save? Well, because it's the news about Jesus' death and resurrection as the king.

Which brings us to point two, which will be our longest point. And verse three. He goes on to say, Now, for what I received, I pass on to you as of first importance. And then he starts to unpack the gospel.

Firstly, that Christ, the king, died for our sins. According to the scriptures. Here Paul says this gospel is of first importance in life. And especially when we suffer loss in life.

Because by saving us, it also gives us hope in life. But firstly, how does it save? Well, because it tells us about the Christ. The word Christ means anointed one or king.

[6:28] And it tells us how this particular king died for our sin. Jesus, the king of the universe, left his throne above and humbly came to earth below.

And then went to the cross. To take our punishment in our place. So that we don't have to suffer it. In other words, so that we could be saved from it.

Jeff used to say that he was the black sheep of his family. The odd one out. Not that he was particularly naughty, I don't think. Though I do remember him saying one time, admitting to getting in trouble at school. I can't remember what for.

Maybe because he was wearing his favorite hat in class. I'm not sure. And so he had to do a lunchtime detention as punishment. Do schools even have those anymore? Is it lunchtime detention? I don't know. Anyway, imagine his friend Lachlan, which is a real friend of his, subbed in for Jeff and took the detention in his place.

That would save Jeff from having to suffer it, wouldn't it? It would also make Lachlan a pretty loving and good friend to have too, wouldn't it? Well, we have that kind of good and loving friend in Jesus, don't we?

[7:32] For in a far, far greater way, Jesus subbed in for us and took not just a detention, but all God's just judgment for all our sin, past, present, future, so that we who believe, as Jeff did, can be saved from it.

And not just saved from judgment, but also for life eternal, which is why we have hope. Because if we are saved from judgment for life eternal, then we can be certain that life continues.

It's eternal, right? So it must continue even after death. It's like once Lachlan took Jeff's detention in his place, Jeff was free to go and enjoy life at lunchtime, to play handball or whatever young Jeff did.

Well, because Jesus has paid for our sin. And we who believe are free to go and enjoy not life at lunchtime, but life eternal, life with God.

That starts the moment we believe in Jesus and continues for, well, eternity. It's life eternal, right? So that even when our bodies die, our souls will live on.

[8:42] And as I said to HGY on Friday night, because Jeff believed in Jesus who paid for his sin, then we can be certain that his soul is safe and at rest in heaven with him.

And Jesus is dying for our sin is so important that Paul confirms it. First, he confirms it with the Old Testament scriptures. He goes on to say, according to the scriptures, that Jesus died as God promised in the Old Testament.

And we heard that from our first reading from Isaiah 53, which thanks to Colin Buchanan, I did hear some people go, ba-ba-do-ba-ba. But the point is, God's Old Testament word confirmed this.

God had said that his servant would die to pay for our iniquity, our sin. And it's also confirmed, secondly, in verse 4, by his burial. Jesus' burial is like the last nail in his coffin to confirm that he really did die to pay for our sin.

This gospel says, because it's the good news about how Jesus the King died to pay for our sin, to save us from suffering it. And then rose again, rest of verse 4 to 5.

[9:54] And that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas and then to the twelve. Jesus rose from the dead. But how does this help save us?

Well, it proves three things. First, that Jesus really is God's promised Christ or King who can save. I mean, what other person would rise from the dead?

People think that miracles disprove Jesus' identity. Actually, they prove it. Because if he was an ordinary person, he shouldn't be able to do miracles. But the very fact that he can, including rising from the dead, proves that he's not ordinary.

He's the Christ. He's the King. It's kind of like this cartoon I saw where Jesus rises from the dead proving he's the King. And the guards say to him, well, well played. You win. Christ's resurrection proves he's the King who can save.

And second, it proves that he's the King whose death really did pay for our sin. It's a bit like leaving prison. You know, people go to prison because they sin.

[11:00] But the way they leave prison is by doing the time for their crime. You know, paying for their sin. And so if someone leaves prison, then it proves they've done all the time for their crime, doesn't it?

That they have really paid for all their sin. Well, death is like prison. And because Jesus left the prison of death by rising from the dead, then it proves he really did do all the time for all our crime. That he really did pay for all our sin. He wouldn't have been able to leave otherwise. In other words, the resurrection proves he really paid for our sins to save us from judgment for life eternal.

And third, it proves that he will raise our bodies too. You see, our bodies are broken because of sin. And so they will all sadly one day die. Jeff was often frustrated by the brokenness of his body.

And he knew his body would one day die too. Perhaps not quite this quickly. It wasn't that long ago that he was talking to me about still hoping to try and make HDY camp this weekend.

[12:09] But he also knew since Jesus had paid for his sin, that not only would his soul be saved from judgment for life eternal, but his body would also be saved from death too.

That one day death would have to release his body. Since Jesus has done all the time for all our crime, then the prison of death cannot keep hold of our bodies any more than it could keep hold of Jesus' body.

So just as Christ rose from the dead with a perfect immortal body, one that death could never take hold of again, so he will raise Jeff and us with perfect immortal bodies.

In other words, Christ's resurrection gives us a certain hope that he will save even our bodies from the hold of death when, verse 23, he returns. Now, of course, all this talk of resurrection seems far-fetched to our world and even to many Christians and perhaps some of you here tonight.

And it was no different in Paul's day. And so like he did before, he confirms the reality of Christ's resurrection, firstly with Old Testament scripture.

[13:17] And so he says in verse 4 that this was, again, according to the scriptures. And again, we saw that in our first reading. I don't know if you noticed. Verse 11, after he has suffered death, he will see the light of life, resurrection.

Therefore, verse 12, I will give him a portion among the great because he poured out his life under death. For him to enjoy the portion of the great, God would have to raise him from the dead, right? You see, even back then, God said his servant would rise from the dead. And it's confirmed, secondly, by witnesses in verse 5, like Cephas, which is another name for Peter, and the 12. And not just them, but he goes on to say, verse 6, Notice how most of these witnesses were still living.

And so they could be questioned by others to show that the apostles are liars and stop the spread of this new religion called Christianity. But Christianity wasn't stopped, was it?

[14:31] It grew. Because these witnesses agreed with the apostles that Christ really had risen. What's more, it describes different appearances to different people at different times, which are backed up by the Gospels and Acts.

And so if you doubted one person, you could always ask another, and another, and another, to see if it's true. And for historians, the fact that there are multiple witnesses from multiple sources means it's highly likely to be true.

But the biggest bit of evidence to back up the reality of Christ's resurrection is how it changed the apostles, like Paul. Verse 9. You see, Paul went from persecutor to preacher, and eventually to martyr.

He and others willingly died for Jesus. What made Paul change his life so drastically? What made Paul and others die for Jesus so willingly?

They say it was seeing Jesus risen from the dead. You see, their eyewitness testimony, along with the fact that their lives changed so drastically, confirms the reality of Christ's resurrection.

[16:00] The point is, the Gospel saves from judgment for life eternal, because it's the good news about Jesus, who really is the King, and who really did die to pay for our sin, and who really did rise to prove it all.

And we even have evidence to confirm it, all of which gives us hope, doesn't it? Certain hope that Jeff's soul lives on eternally with Christ in heaven, and that even Jeff's body will be raised from the ashes, to be a perfect, immortal body.

But it was this last bit that the Corinthians disagreed about. They said there was no resurrection of their own bodies from the dead. And this is why Paul starts with the Gospel, because Christ's own resurrection is part of the Gospel.

It's part of the good news that saves. And so if Christ really rose, then so too will we. Point 3, verse 12. But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead?

That's what they were saying. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ himself has been raised. 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.

[17:15] For we testified about God that he raised Jesus from the dead. But he did not raise him, if, in fact, the dead are not raised. You see, if there's no resurrection of the dead, full stop, then there can't be any resurrection of Jesus either.

You can't have one without the other. And if there's no resurrection of Jesus, then Paul's preaching, along with Jeff's, and Mark's, and mine, and all of ours is useless. Plus, Paul and all the other witnesses of his resurrection are false.

And we are all in big trouble. In verse 16 and 19, he repeats the same thing, but focuses on what we lose if Christ is not raised. He says, Like we saw before, the resurrection proves Jesus paid for our sins, because he was released from the prison of death.

And so it proves he did all the time for all our crime. But if he wasn't raised, if he wasn't released from the prison of death, then it shows he didn't do all the time for all our crime.

It shows that he hasn't paid for all our sins. He's still there paying it off, which means our faith is futile. We can believe in Jesus all we like, but it does nothing for us.

[18:44] For if Jesus didn't really pay for our sins, then we are still in sin no matter what. And that includes the loved ones we have who have died, like Jeff. They too are still in sin, which means they are not with Christ in heaven, but are lost facing judgment.

And if Christ's body has not been raised, then neither will our bodies be raised. In fact, it means all your ministry, whether it's JTs, HTY, Word Youth, serving wherever else, is in vain.

I mean, why get involved in loving people and serving others at church if it's not really going to save them or give them hope? For if Christ is not raised, then we have no hope of life after death at all.

We are no hopers. Or as Paul says in verse 19, if only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are all people most to be pitied. Paul says if we have hope only in Christ for this life and not for life after death, when we thought we did, we are delusional no-hopers, so pathetic that people ought to pity us, which is rather depressing, isn't it?

That's why verse 20 is such a sweet relief. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead. The firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. But verse 23, each in turn, Christ the firstfruits, then when he comes, when he returns, those who belong to him.

[20:15] Christ has risen from the dead. We have evidence to confirm it. And so, he will raise us too. He is like the firstfruit of the harvest. We are like the rest of the harvest that will come in later.

Verse 23, each in turn, Jesus first, then when he comes again, those who belong to him, like Jeff. Then he will raise Jeff's body, including ours.

The point is, Christ's resurrection is real, which gives us real hope in times like this. For it proves he really did die to pay for our sins, so that we really are saved from judgment for life eternal.

Such that Jeff's soul has not perished, but lives on in heaven. And his body, with ours, really will be released from death and raised when Christ returns.

This is not wishful thinking. It's actually rational thinking. For it's based on the reality of Jesus' resurrection. It's part of the gospel given to us and which Jeff preached to us.

[21:20] And it's confirmed by the historical evidence we have before us. We are not no hopers. We are genuine and real hopers. So much so that we, like Jeff, can stand firm to the very end.

We, like Jeff, don't need to let sickness move us from standing firm in the faith. But, like Jeff, who gave himself when he could to loving and serving Jesus and us, we can do the same.

Because he knew it was not in vain. It was not a waste of time. As the last verse of the chapter says, Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord.

Why? Because you know your labor in the Lord is not in vain. There's real hope. Jeff's loving labor was not in vain.

His life and ministry was amazingly worthwhile. All because we have real hope based on the real death and even the real resurrection of Jesus.

[22 : 26] So let's pray in light of that hope. Gracious Father, help us, we pray, that as we grieve, to grieve, but not grieve like the rest of the world who has no hope.

Help us to grieve as those who have real hope based on the real death and even the real resurrection of Jesus Christ. Help us to follow Jeff's example, and to stand firm, to let nothing move us, and as we're able, to give ourselves fully the work of the Lord, both in this place and beyond, because it will never be in vain.

We pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.