

Risen Savior

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Date: 16 April 2017

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[0:00] Turn your Bibles this morning to 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

! I think that means there's children's church.! John was whispering in my ear, and I had someone actually ask me, is there children's church today?

and they were asking the wrong individual. Linda, you're guilty of putting me on the spot and saying, is there children's church? and having been my secretary for what, 10, 12 years, 15?

it's like, don't ask me. I'm thinking about preaching, and there's like zero bandwidth beyond that. Yes, children are dismissed now, please.

And I love saying to you, turn in your Bibles. Go to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. It's one thing to be preaching through a book such as John, and know that, Lord willing, next week when I come back from vacation, I will be in John 16, and it is a passage and a portion of Scripture that I've never preached before.

[1:23] And there's a part of study and prayer in dialing into that that is just a wonderful blessing. It is also a blessing, however, to come to a passage that you have used over and over again, mindful of this fact, that while the information has been viewed and studied and prayed about before, the ministry of the Spirit of God in that text and in my life and in your life is different each time.

It's renewed, refreshed. It is valuable, and it is significant. And so one of the things that I would challenge you, this is probably not your first Easter, right?

There are some of you that were probably carried to your first Easter service without your dad or mom ever asking you if you wanted to go. And you probably have been part of that routine, and there's a certain thing that you do on Easter.

You dress a certain way, flowers. By the way, how many of you like these flowers? I had absolutely nothing to do with it, and I'd like to thank all the ladies who did a wonderful, beautiful job. I think Mary Ellen kind of encouraged it.

Where are you, Mary Ellen? Somewhere out here? Whoa! It's like... We like things like that. It's just a... Yeah. It's like whipped cream on things, you know?

[2:49] It's like, good. We celebrate Easter, and we get into the blessing of what this day is, and I think sometimes we caught up in the flow of it and don't think carefully about why the day really is significant.

And so I want you to think very carefully this morning about the significance of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we are using this passage in 1 Corinthians 15, which is a text that kind of dives into the Apostle Paul's preaching in relationship to the question of the resurrection.

And I want you to walk away from this morning's lesson with several things in mind. Number one, listen carefully, what the Holy Spirit does in response to your prayers in your life is dependent in part on you praying at all.

What I mean by that is it is fairly easy when you are looking at a passage, and you've looked at it before, and you've looked at it a number of times, that you can kind of, well, I got this one, and kind of settle back and not say, I need the Holy Spirit's help, that we get into this, and we understand it, and we're affected by it in a fashion that honors the Lord Jesus Christ.

So I trust one of the things that happens is you walk away from here saying, wow, the Spirit of God used the Word of God to affect the believer's life, and you are changed and growing as a result of that.

[4 : 18] Secondly, I would pray that if you are here today and do not know the Lord Jesus Christ, that today would be the day that He in His kindness and His grace brings you to the point of recognizing the bankruptcy and the darkness and the misery of your heart, and you are drawn to call out on Jesus as your only hope and Savior.

Because really what this day celebrates is the reason that I can say without any hesitation that there is salvation in no other name but the Lord Jesus Christ. And as I lift them up this morning, and as you lift them up, that was good singing this morning, wasn't it?

I'm sitting here on the front pew. It's one of the best seats in the house, and I am just listening to you guys blowing it out, and I'm thinking, man, what a day. What a day. We worship Him because of the resurrection.

Now, as we look at the passage there, I want you to mark what it says in verse 3. Actually, again, go into the details in verse 1. It says, I remind you, my brothers, of the gospel I preached to you which you received and in which you stand.

Paul is recognizing here at the very beginning of the importance of what he is going to be talking about, and he says, listen, I'm reminding you of something that has been a central thread throughout all of my preaching.

[5 : 33] It is not only a central thread of all of my preaching, but he says, it's what you rest on. It's what you are established in. And then later on, he also says, it is that which you are being saved by.

The reality of the fact is that our salvation is dependent upon the resurrection. And this morning, as we get into this passage and what Paul has to say, I want you to walk out of here being very, very thankful.

I am so thankful that Lord Jesus Christ died for my sins according to the Scripture and that He rose again according to the Scriptures. Now, what we find here in this passage, and we're going to look at verse 4 in particular, it says, He was buried, then He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

We find kind of pressed together a perfect picture of apostolic preaching. Apostolic preaching is important to us because the apostles were appointed by Christ to be His formal representatives and His mouthpiece, His speaker.

They were given legal, in a sense, legal authority to represent Christ and the apostolic preaching is very significant. So this morning, we want to think very carefully, what is the centrality of the resurrection in the preaching of the apostles?

[6 : 54] And as we look at this, I want you to begin by recognizing that context is important. One of the things that is so profoundly important in our own Bible study, and I remind you of this, part of the purpose of preaching is to inform and encourage your own Bible study at home.

This is not the only place that you ought to find spiritual encouragement and refreshment. It ought to be taking place every morning, every night, in your own heart, that you are refreshed and encouraged by the truth of who God is and what He has done, by the significance of the Word.

So woven into preaching that is biblical is the intention of helping you learn to think how you go about finding things in the Scripture. And I tell you that context is important.

An illustration of that would be if you were standing in front of a firing squad and you heard someone say, fire, fire, or if you heard someone yell fire in here, or if you having been very, very cold and a camping situation, I know, Doug, you're going to be camping in June, am I right?

The campfires that you guys are going to have is just for marshmallows and hot dogs and entertainment. But I can tell you, if you were in a situation where you were nearly freezing to death and you were trying to get the tinder going and nothing was happening and you're wondering whether you're going to make it or not, and finally there's a little flicker and a little bit of smoke and fire.

[8 : 27] Every context makes a difference. And here is the apostle bringing this issue of the centrality of the resurrection into focus for believers and he says, listen, I'm telling you something that is supremely important and you need to pay attention to.

It is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. I want you to understand that the issue that we are dealing with this morning is that there's no salvation apart from the resurrection.

I remember talking with an individual not too long ago and the comment was made that really, you know, Jesus was a pretty good person and he really gave us a great model but it's not that important that he existed.

There are others that say, well, maybe Jesus did exist as a historical figure but the fact of the matter is is that he just died and that was it. I'll tell you something, apart from the resurrection, we have no hope of salvation and we have no confidence at all not only in eternity but in victory in this life and we're going to get into that a little bit more and understand it this morning.

As we look at the passage and we think about apostolic preaching, what I want you to understand is that apostolic preaching, the preaching of the apostles was something that held together and was consistent throughout.

[9 : 45] When you ask three different people what happened in a particular incident, one of the things that we usually find out is that everybody had a different perspective.

Isn't that right? You saw the accident, I saw the accident, somebody else saw the accident, two people were involved in the accident and most of the time they have two different stories, particularly if they're trying to determine who was right and who was wrong for the sake of insurance, right?

Oh no, I waited for the light, it was green and you were the one who drove through and broadsided me or whatever, you know, there's always an issue and we come at this issue of determining what is right by paying attention to how it fits together and marvelously, the preaching of the apostles have this unity that comes about because God is the one who gave the scriptures to us and over 2,000 plus years, thousands of years, he gave the scriptures through about 40 different authors, he gave it in three different languages, he gave it in all different kinds of settings and yet it all fits together and we can track the reality of what Christ Jesus came to do and what he did.

And so this morning as we think about the importance of apostolic preaching on the resurrection, let me kind of remind you of the importance of apostolic preaching by having you turn to a passage just for a second in Acts chapter 2 verse 42.

The early church, when they gathered together, one of the things that was at the heart of their gathering was the preaching and teaching of the apostles.

[11 : 23] And so when we are here this morning, in essence, what I am doing and what Pastor Shearer has been doing and what Pastor Andrew continues to do is draw attention to the preaching or the truth of the apostles.

Acts chapter 2 verse 42. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching. When people got together, the thing was at the heart of their gathering was apostolic teaching.

There's no doubt of the importance of apostolic teaching and one of the illustrations of it is that most of you this morning have a copy of the Bible either in your hand or on your phone.

I was kind of intrigued this morning when Megan read the scriptures. Where are you, Megan? You're somewhere out here. Megan, Megan, Megan. Ah, there you are. Did you notice that instead of pulling out the sacred text, she used the sacred phone?

I grew up in a time where Bible quizzing and sword drills were really important. How many of you did sword drills? I mean, it's an age-specific issue. You know, all of you who are, yeah, sword drills?

[12:32] What are sword drills? Probably all depends on whether I have 3G or 4G or whatever else it is. You know, it's like, bang. We used to have to know where John was without just hitting a little icon that pulled up John.

You know, it's like, John is about, here's the thing I want you to focus on. The apostolic preaching put a great deal of emphasis on the fact that this book is God's Word and we are gathered around it because it is God's Word.

We're dependent, and thankfully so, on the clear revelation of God of what truth actually is. And so when the apostles taught that the resurrection happened and it is essential, we recognize that to be entirely true and we hang on to it and we hold on and believe that it is valuable and our hearts are thus blessed by what we find in the Scriptures.

So let me mark with you just kind of a broad swing of the apostolic preaching on the cross and the resurrection. Peter, in every sermon recorded in the book of Acts, we don't know how many he preached, but in every sermon recorded in the book of Acts, and Peter was one of the predominant preachers in the book of Acts, every sermon has a central theme that includes the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The very first sermon on the day of Pentecost, how did Jesus start out? Does anybody remember? He let people know that they had crucified Jesus and that this same Jesus who they had crucified was risen again and he was waiting to be the judge of the whole earth and they realizing what had happened, what they'd done, they cried out, what must we do?

[14:18] In every place that Peter preached, the resurrection was central. It's interesting, if you were to go to 1 Peter, one of two of his last letters to the church before his execution, we find there that the resurrection was part of the thematic flow of what he dealt with in his last letter.

Paul, in addition to our text today, in which he gives an extended lesson on the importance of the resurrection, he dealt with the fact of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ over and over again.

It was part of, and we're going to see some of the illustrations of that later, but you couldn't dive into the apostles' teaching and not bump right into the fact that the resurrection for Paul was very, very important.

If you were to ask me what are the very essentials of our faith, I would tell you that it's the resurrection. It's the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ died for my sins, that's important, but if the resurrection hadn't happened, I really wouldn't have any reason for faith.

I remember a number of years ago, Pastor Saul and I were at the Basics Conference, and we heard Phil Johnson. Phil Johnson was a, he has two PhDs, one from Oxford and whatever else in mathematics, way beyond me, and he was actually, he was actually given the opportunity of debating Richard Dawkins.

[15:43] Richard Dawkins. How many of you heard the name Richard Dawkins? A phenomenally intelligent guy, and they were having this back and forth and really going at it, and Phil Johnson was actually doing quite well in that debate, and so Richard Dawkins kind of descended to sarcasm.

How many of you know that when you're not winning an argument, sarcasm is a great tool? You're acting just like your mother. That really works well if you want to go home. So, at the end of the argument, Richard decided it was time to pull his trump out, and here's what he said.

You just believe in the resurrection of Jesus, and that's all that your faith rests on. Yes? Yeah, it's okay. I'm not bothered by that. And we have Paul saying, man, the resurrection is critical.

We find not only Peter and Paul, but we also find John speaking about Christ's victory over death, and a number of times it appears at various places in both the Gospel of John and 1 John, but also in the book of Revelation, and I want you to turn just for a moment to the way in which we find Jesus introduced in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 1, verse 18. As you're turning there this morning, I wonder whether you were kind of cross-referencing the words of our last song with a passage in the book of Revelation where the songwriter kind of attaches some of the wording that we were singing with the fact that Jesus is the one who died and rose again.

[17:20] Look at verse 18. Revelation 1, verse 18. Fear not, actually in verse 17, fear not, I am the first and the last, the living, I died, and behold, I'm alive, and forevermore I have the keys of death and Hades.

Here is Jesus explaining He is indeed the one who died for our sins and rose again. I want you to think with me now, not only the fact that the resurrection was woven into the fabric of apostolic preaching.

You talk to the apostle, he's going to come to the resurrection. Go talk about it often. I want you to think why it would be that way. Why is the resurrection so important, particularly in our faith and our understanding of what Christ has done for us?

For one thing, the resurrection affirms the deity and the judgment of Christ. It affirms the deity and the judgment of Christ. How do we know that Christ is indeed God and that He is going to be the judge of the whole earth?

Turn in your Bibles to Acts chapter 17, verse 31. We find in Acts chapter 17 that Paul is having a debate with Athenians.

[18:36] In the ancient world without electronic devices and without TV and a radio, the thing that you wanted to do in terms of entertaining yourself was go down and listen to the wandering philosopher who would show up at the market and He would try to foist off on you His current idea and you had very active debates and it was what they did.

And here is Paul shows up in the Agora and he takes advantage of all these statues and various idols. He says, hey listen, let me talk to you about the unknown God that you've got a statue to. And at the end of his sermon, look there at verse 31, here's what he says.

He says, because He has fixed the day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed. The day is coming that sin is going to be judged.

Do you believe that? Let me say it again slowly. The day is coming when sin is going to be judged. Tim Bauer and I were under the bridge, was that 70?

I think that's 70, yeah. And we were bringing oatmeal and different things to a man who's under the bridge. He's been there for as long as I've been going.

[19:58] And I can remember the first time Tim and I went and said, hey, can we pray for you? That's one of the things we normally do. Nah, I'm good. He said, I'm good for about two, three months. I'm good, I'm good.

Every time we'd go, we brought him food and started bringing him AAA batteries for his light. Today, or last yesterday when we said, hey, how can we pray for you?

He says, yeah, I'd like God to smite those thieves that stole my stuff. He said, is God in the smiting business still? Where are you, Tim?

You're out here somewhere. Thank you. Remember that? Is God in the smiting business still? And Tim and I usually take turns. You know, we go back and forth. Tim has a shot at him. I have a shot at him.

We kind of, you know, good cop, bad cop, that kind of thing. So, it was my turn this time. I said, well, I got to tell you, you know, I hope God is as patient with them as he's been with me.

[20 : 56] And we got to talking about the fact God does judge sin. I'm really glad that he's very patient about that, aren't you? And, and here is Paul preaching and he says, let me tell you something.

The day is coming when God is going to judge sin and he will judge the world in righteousness, verse 31, by a man whom he has appointed and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

How do you know it's going to happen? Because Jesus came back from the dead. Oh, that's frightening to stop and think about that. The one who died to pay the penalty for sin is going to be the one who judges all who reject the offer of salvation that is freely given through the blood of Christ who has made sacrifice and satisfied the judgment of God.

Some of you sitting here this morning thinking to yourself, I don't have any time for Jesus. I'm quite good myself. Thank you. You're wrong. You're wrong.

Every now and then your conscience bears witness with you that there is a darkness and a blackness in your heart that you can't solve. And beloved, the day is coming that that heart will be judged and the one who judges it will be the one who died to make payment for sin.

[22 : 25] And he will judge your hard and bitter rebellion and rejection. And the fact that he rose from the dead is going to be a significant part of that judgment.

Well, I want you to recognize that not only does the resurrection affirm the deity of Christ in his judgment, but our faith rests. It is solidly based on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Look at 1 Corinthians. You're there in Acts for a moment, but go to 1 Corinthians chapter 14 or 15, beginning there in verse 14. Here's Paul arguing extensively for the effect of the resurrection on gospel living.

Everybody look up so you know I'm kind of talking at you here a little bit. Hey. There is a disconnect today between gospel profession and gospel living.

Do you know what I mean by that? I mean, people, I think we're seeing kind of a decline of people who have anything to do with Christianity, but we still bump into a lot of people who say, well, I'm a Christian, but when it comes to it, their behavior, their lifestyle, the things that they engage in, the things they care about have nothing to do with eternity and the glory of Christ.

[23 : 42] They're profoundly self-focused and as carnal as the unbelieving world. Paul, in this passage, he says, if Christ is not raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.

We are even found to be misrepresenting God because we testified about God that He raised Christ. whom He, if He did not raise, if it is not, if it is, sorry, that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if it is true that the dead are not raised.

For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

Now I want you to stop and think about that just for a moment. What Paul says is that Christ has not risen from the dead, I am still in my sins.

You know what that means? I still stand condemned before a holy God and the wrath of God still is over me and ready to fall upon me at the appointed time of His judgment.

[24 : 45] That's a pretty sobering thought. Look there, if you will, as Paul works his way through the passage. He says this, then he's talking about the resurrection.

He says, verse 20, but in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. So when we think about Christian living, I want you to recognize that when you think about the resurrection, this is the day, this is the Sunday, we kind of put an extra emphasis and say, the resurrection is profoundly important to me.

Well, if it is, practically speaking, are you living like a saint that shows the power of the resurrection in your holy living? Listen to the argument that Paul makes.

Okay? He says this, verse 19, if in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

In essence, what he is saying is this, is if our hope in Christ is only now, then the restraint that godliness brings is worthless and irrelevant.

[25 : 57] Why do you not do some of the things you do? I'll give you an illustration. Many of you may not know this, but Wilson Road is a contributor to revenue of state police and the, you know how it works?

There are actually parts of, of Wilson Road that are marked off as 35. I do not understand the city fathers because once you cross broad, there's a sign right there that says 55.

And there has been a state police band that's been sitting there by the oil tanks for the last week. I saw him pull somebody over and I thought to myself, no to self.

34. 34. 34. 34. Okay. We do things because we know what the outcome, remember right?

We do things because we anticipate an outcome. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, godly living has less motive and less blessing.

[27 : 08] Now, is there benefit to living a godly life? Yes. But the supreme blessing is this, is the fact of Christ's resurrection and the fact I'm going to see him again and I want to hear him say what?

Well done, thou good and faithful servant. See, our faith rests in the reality of Christ. I'll tell you another thing. The resurrection encourages us to believe that we can change.

Turn in your Bible to Ephesians chapter 1. One of the things I love about gospel preaching and when I say that, just gospel ministry, is being able to say to people, you don't have to stay the way you are.

How many of you heard me say that before? You don't have to stay the way you are. You don't have to stay the way you are. The truth of the matter is that probably if we got past the makeup and the hairstyle or whatever else, most of us here are not overly impressed with who we are.

There are things about us we know we don't like. Am I right? Even now. I remember when my dad and mom moved in next door and I'd been pastoring here for probably 25 years or so and I don't want to say that I was going around thinking I was pretty spiritual but I really didn't realize how much stubbornness was still in my heart at about 63 or 64 and having my dad live next to me and serve him 24-7 I began learning things about humility and servanthood that I needed to learn and I am very thankful that Christ's resurrection assures me I can change.

[28 : 48] Ephesians chapter 1 verse 19 here is Paul praying for the believers there in Ephesus and he says in what he wants them to know the immeasurable greatness of his power towards us who believe according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places.

You see, Paul is praying here that these believers in Ephesus would understand the sweetness of the gospel and that it would have an effect on their life. I've got to tell you something.

If you're sitting here this morning and you profess to know Christ but you cannot look in the rearview mirror and see the evidence of the power of God changing you from glory to glory which it says in 2 Corinthians chapter 3 you have a good reason to kind of ask yourself well am I really saved?

And I think that's an appropriate question. Here's the fact. Christ Jesus who raised from the dead serves as an illustration of the power of God in the life of the believer which is available to help us stop being who we used to be.

Do we have to stay bitter and unforgiving? And the answer is no. Do we have to stay a person who is consumed by covetousness and greed? No. Do we have to stay a person who is absolutely under the affliction of immorality and the burden of sin?

[30 : 20] No. Why? Because we have been saved by the power of Christ and His power is at work changing us. I want you to understand one more thing.

His resurrection guarantees our resurrection. last week I was out to the graveside of my mom and dad and there are a lot of friends that are momentarily resting out in Alton Cemetery.

Judah and I got a plot out there but it's only a temporary parking place. I got to tell you something. Why is that? Listen to what it says in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 20.

1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 20. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

I like that. I like that. You know what it's saying? Christ is just kind of a token reminder of the fact that there are others who are going to be raised again.

[31 : 36] And in the book of Daniel it says this. There will be a resurrection to judgment and eternal condemnation and there will be a resurrection to life and joy and peace forever in the presence of Christ.

So bring it down in practical terms. You are going to die unless Jesus comes back. And if you die you will either be resurrected to eternal judgment and consequences for your sin and rejection of the offer of the gospel or you are going to be resurrected to a joyful life in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I'm wondering this morning whether or not that matter is settled in your heart. Does that make sense? I mean at the end of the day one of the things that should mark apostolic preaching which pastors are generally should be involved in doing.

Wouldn't you agree with that? One of the things that marked apostolic preaching is helping people come to grips with where they were going to spend eternity and whether or not they had come to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So listen to me. One of the good things about Easter is a lot of people show up at a service. I like that. It's good. But there are some that I don't know.

[32 : 55] And there are some who come that I don't know to the point of if you are here and you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ. I would plead with you this morning be reconciled to God.

Do not sit here thinking I am almost to the point of pastor's going to wrap this up and I've got another Easter under my belt. You got that? I want you to think to yourself I need to know where I will spend eternity.

Eternity. And I need to settle it in my heart. I believe in Jesus Christ who died for my sins and rose again and I am trusting in him alone for salvation.

Or I'm sitting there with my arms crossed saying well yeah six minutes and we're done. If you refuse the offer of salvation you will face Christ as judge not as savior.

And I would plead with you and Christ said. in Christ's dead. Be reconciled to God. Let's pray. Precious Father we are thankful for the blessing of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

[34:12] And for all that that means to us as believers. I pray that this morning we who are believers would have our hearts lifted up to glory in the cross. To delight in the fact that we serve a risen savior.

I pray Lord that the lives that we live the conversations that we have the attitudes of our hearts would reflect his victory. And I do pray for those that are here today that do not know Christ.

That they would walk out of here either yielding to him or profoundly uncomfortable at the reality of the stubborn darkness of their heart. Bring them to conviction by whatever means you see fit.

Spirit. And we pray this in Jesus name. Amen. John Lee Disson singing. Thank you. Let me tell you something.

There's no better time to come to Jesus than now. Do you understand that? You can ask him to save you where you sit. You can pray while you are singing. If you are here today and you need Christ as your savior I got to tell you there's no better day than this.

[35:17] One of the ladies in our church came up to me and said do you know that this is ten years from now that I ten years in the past I was saved on Easter Sunday. Not a bad idea. Okay. Don't let it pass.