

# The Risen Christ

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Amen. Let's turn in our Bibles to the passage of Scripture which we read, the Gospel of John chapter 20.
- And as God would help me, I'd like to concentrate on verse 9, but we'll read verses 8 and 9.
- John 28 verse 8. Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first, that's John by the way. John doesn't name himself, he usually calls himself the disciple which Jesus loved.
- So, then the other disciple, John, who had reached the tomb first, also went in and he saw and believed. Now verse 9.
- For as yet they did not understand the Scripture that he must rise from the dead.
- [ 1 : 0 6 ]     For as yet they did not understand the Scripture that he must rise from the dead.
- On a particular Friday, over 2,000 years ago, things did not start out well.
- And as the day progressed, things got far worse. And the strange thing is, on that awful day of sadness and depression, ever since, Christians worldwide have called it Good Friday.
- Tomorrow is Good Friday. Why is it called Good Friday?
- When there were such terrible, terrible things happening. Because that terrible Friday afternoon, sin was paid for.
- [ 2 : 2 0 ]     And there is solid ground for anyone, anywhere, anytime, who believes that Christ rose from the dead is guaranteed a place in heaven.
- That's good. That's good. That's good. That's good. That's good news. But how do we know that's true? How do we know Jesus atoned for sin that Friday afternoon?
- I mean, there was three of them. Why was it not the one on the left? The three of them went through crucifixion. Do remember, however, the soul of Christ's sufferings were the sufferings of his soul, not his body.
- Now, crucifixion was one of the most cruel, most painful deaths that any civilization have ever thought of. But there was three crucified that afternoon.
- But all remember, Christ, even with regard to his physical sufferings, suffered more than the other two thieves. Because he was first scourged.
- [ 3 : 3 9 ]     And you remember, do you notice how the Bible calls scourging? It was 39 lashes with a rope with little bits of bone, little bits of steel, nails usually through the rope.
- So it would tear your bones. Very, very painful. But do you notice the Bible, I haven't checked every version, but most of them say 40 minus 1.
- That's significant. Why does he not say 39 lashes? It's 40 minus 1. And I understand the reason is at the 40th lash you could die.

So it's one short of the 40. Christ suffered the pains of that before crucifixion. So his painful sufferings, his physical painful sufferings, was even more than the other two thieves.

But the soul of his sufferings were the sufferings of his soul. He had to go through what he went through without his father.

[ 4 : 51 ] And he had to cry out, as you know, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? We expect our enemies to forsake us.

He predicted and prophesied his friends would forsake him. But his father, why have you forsaken me? And of course, we know the answer.

Cry God the Father, forsook God the Son, so that he would never forsake those of us who believe Christ bore our sin on the tree, on the Calvary's cross.

He atoned, he paid God for it. Now we know that, we say that. But what's the proof? The world comes to us and say, how do you know that?

An excellent, perfectly legitimate question. How do we know it? Answer? The resurrection.

[ 6 : 02 ] That's how we know it. Christ rose from the dead, proving he was God. Proving that he said, the third day I will arise.

It was accurate. Acts chapter 17, verse 31.

We find it written there. Of this he has given assurance to all, by raising him from the dead.

Christ rising from the dead is evidence that Christ paid for the sins of all who believe on him.

Now, as you know, this time, this weekend is called Easter weekend. And as you might know, many Reformed Christians will not call it Easter and will not, and that's fair enough.

[ 7 : 06 ] But why do so many Reformed Christians not like Easter? Easter, well, you can understand it. The word Easter actually comes from the name of a Saxon goddess.

And it is not mentioned, the word Easter is not mentioned in the original texts of Scripture. I repeat, the original texts. The word is Pascha, from which we get the Passover.

However, that being so, it is clear that the early Christians celebrated the resurrection of Jesus Christ around Passover time.

What is absolutely certain is that Christ rose from the dead according to the Scriptures.

And as the Scriptures say elsewhere, Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. That's good, good news.

[ 8 : 15 ] That's good, glorious news. And as often been said, there is more reason to believe. That is, there is more credible verification that Christ rose from the dead than that Napoleon ever lived.

So if someone says to you, I don't believe in the resurrection. Ask them, do they believe in Napoleon? And they ask them, what are your grounds? What's the basis of you believing there was a man called Napoleon?

And whatever reasons they may give, they probably won't give you any. But whatever reasons they can give, there are hundreds. Actually, there's actually thousands of times more reason to believe Christ rose from the dead than that Napoleon ever lived.

Never forget, the Christian religion is built on facts that can be proved as much as anything can be proved.

And I would have to say I was a Christian for many, many years. And I thought the central, the climax of Christianity was the crucifixion. I always thought.

- [ 9 : 35 ] But no, it can't possibly, and it isn't. The resurrection of Christ, not the crucifixion, is the climax of the Christian religion.
- The evidence that when he died that Friday afternoon, he paid God for all the sins of everyone who believes in him for forgiveness.
- But here we are in our text. Apparently, as yet, they, the disciples, did not understand the scripture that he must rise from the dead.
- Up to that point, they didn't grasp he must rise from the dead. Now, something is quite important.
- When I was a student, became a student for the ministry, I was very upset I had to study Greek. Because I had difficulty with English grammar.
- [ 10 : 49 ] Never mind. Greek grammar. But, you know, God knew what he was doing. He knew what he was doing. Put in the Old Testament, in Hebrew, and the New Testament, in Greek.
- Just one little example here. In Greek, the word saw, there's three different words you can use for the word saw. Now, in verse 5, you have Peter, stooping, sorry, John, wasn't it?
- Yes. Yes. A disciple that outran Peter. He reached the tomb. Verse 5. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen clothes lying there.
- Now, that word saw. The word that is used there in Greek, that John, when he arrived at the door of the sepulcher, and saw the linen clothes there, it's a word you'd use for looking at something from a distance.
- From our house, we can see the fairy coming in. And we often say, oh, it's a fairy coming in. Just look at it. A glance. It's a word you'd use for a casual glance. So, from the outside of the tomb, John, a simple glance, saw that he wasn't there.
- [ 12 : 07 ] And he saw the linen clothes lying there. Verse 6. Then Simon Peter came, following him.
- He went into the tomb, and he saw the same thing. He saw the linen clothes lying there. Now, that's a different word that's used in the original Greek.
- It's a word you'd use there for viewing attentively, studying, and considering. Move to verse 8.
- Then the other disciple, that's John, of course, who had reached the tomb first. He now goes into the tomb. He doesn't look from outside. He also went in, and he saw and believed.
- That word saw is the word for perceiving, detecting, discerning. In fact, the next verse, our text, has it right.
- [ 13 : 15 ] They grasped. They understood. They knew by experiencing it. Being in the tomb, not where they placed him, not where he was laid, risen.
- And they saw the linen clothes and the face cloth lined separately, folded neatly. The whole thing excludes calmness and order.
- They then understood the significance of, and the implications of Christ not being there, but having risen from the dead.
- So, what is the significance of the resurrection? Why must, as our text says, why must Jesus rise from the dead?
- Well, as God would help me, I'd mention three or four things to answer that. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, it would mean the Bible is not true.
- [ 14 : 47 ] That's frightening. That's frightening. If he didn't rise from the dead, we have no infallible information to guide us spiritually.

The whole gospel story is nothing but romance if he didn't rise from the dead. No basis for believing what we believe if he did not rise from the dead.

We need a reliable basis for truth, and it's in the scriptures. The scriptures cannot be broken. Ten, fifteen years ago, there was quite a debate in the Reformed Theological Colleges over the Westminster Confession of Faith.

As you know, it starts with the scriptures. And the second subject is God.

And they were saying, look, the Christian religion is about God. The first chapter should be about God, not about the scriptures. Why did the divines start with scripture and not with God?

[ 16 : 04 ] It's a good question. Well, listen, it's all very well to say, I believe in God. But tell me, where do you get your information about God?

Is it something you dream up? Is it something you decide yourself? Where do you get accurate, reliable information about God from? The Bible.

We need something solid that we can rest our souls on and depend on. So, if Christ did not rise from the dead, we have no, the Bible is not true.

Secondly, if Jesus did not rise from the dead, he is not God. And he is a liar.

It is almost blasphemy to think of it. Jesus claimed to be God. And that's how, by his own power, he could rise from the dead.

[ 17 : 15 ] It's essential. You see, the sects, most of the sects, if not all of them, how they differ from Christianity is they think, they deny the deity, the Godhead of Christ, that he wasn't God.

He was just an excellent human being. But it's vital to believe he was God. Otherwise, his atonement for sin is of no avail.

I suppose I've moved on to the third reason. Really, if Christ didn't rise from the dead, sin hasn't been paid for.

We don't have a saviour if he didn't rise from the dead. There's no gospel. Sin has not been paid for. On what basis can God...

You see, God is a just God and a saviour. It's vital to grasp the gospel. The gospel is not God saying, we'll just look over, we'll just forget about your sin.

[ 18 : 31 ] We'll overlook your sin. We'll forget about it. We'll not count it. That's not the gospel. The gospel is our sin has been paid for.

I used to use the illustration. Supposing a business is going through hard times. Suppose a businessman decides he's got a customer and he can't pay and he says, Oh, look, just forget.

I'll write it off. I'll write off that day. We'll forget about it. That's great. But suppose a year later, that business is taken over.

And the new management are going over the books and saying, Oh, hey, hey, hey, listen, this account has not been paid for. Oh, we're going to charge it. It's due. It's due. It hasn't been paid for.

You see? That's a debt written off. When Christ died on the cross, he didn't achieve debts written off.

[ 19 : 37 ] He paid for these debts. And God has no right to ask for more payment. God cannot because he's just.

He wouldn't be just. If he took payment from Christ at the cross and then expects you to pay for your own sin. That's the glorious thing about the gospel.

Your debts are paid for. God hasn't just overlooked them and say, well, forget about it. Your sin's been paid for at the cross. That's the glorious gospel.

And you see, if Jesus was just a mere man, his death could only atone for one person's sins.

But when Christ is an infinite being, when he is the second person of the Godhead, his death, his death, then, being an infinite person, his death can atone for an innumerable number of sins of an innumerable number of people.

[ 20 : 54 ] That's the gospel. And infinite atonements required to pay for the innumerable sins of an innumerable number of souls.

But if Christ didn't rise from the dead, he's only a human being. He's not God. His atonement wasn't enough for others. But do you know what I think is the most important thing we would lose if Christ did not rise from the dead?

It would mean sin and Satan are the strongest powers out.

That's frightening. That's frightening. Satan, the most powerful person. No, no, no. Christ is the most powerful person.

Never, ever think that at the place called Calvary, Satan had the victory. Never think Satan conquered Christ when he crucified him or got him crucified.

[ 22 : 05 ] No, no, no. All that Christ went out to meet his folks. For this purpose have I come into the world, that I might die and pay for my people.

Just think, if Christ didn't rise from the dead, if he didn't atone for sin, Satan then could thwart all God's plans.

What a terrible scenario. Satan can't. God allows Satan to do what the damage he does because God has a plan eventually to overrule it.

It's like a fisherman. I'm told, I haven't a clue about fishing, but I've been told, good fishermen, when they catch a fish on their hook, they let it play around to tie it out. Let it tie it out first and then pull it down.

Think of that, Satan. He's hooked. And God just allows him to play around, to wear himself out. He's got a purpose of overruling even our sin.

[ 23 : 17 ] Even our sin. He overrules it for good. Never, ever forget. Grace is greater.

Grace is stronger than any amount of sin. Or else we're all sunk. Grace, mercy, is greater and stronger than any sin.

Never lose sight of that. I'm sure I'm right. Wasn't that John Bunyan? Wasn't he converted with this, with James 2.13, I think it is?

Mercy triumphs over judgment. The justice of God is terrifyingly accurate.

Terrifyingly accurate. Nothing escapes. But Christ covered it all. Christ's death covered it all.

[ 24 : 30 ] How do we know? How do we know? Christ rose from the dead. That's the evidence. That's the proof. And never, ever forget.

Because Christ has risen, every believer, every believer, every believer in Christ, stands on a penalty-free zone.

A penalty-free zone. Every Christian is immune from prosecution. If you're a Christian.

Christ paid for your sins according to the scriptures. You're in a penalty-free zone. You're immune from prosecution.

If you're a Christian, it's wonderful. And the mark, the mark, you truly are a believer, is you do not abuse that. You do not say, Oh, come on, let's just sit away.

[ 25 : 40 ] It's all going to be forgiven. That's a sign. You've never really seen what Christ has done. The gospel is wonderful.

We stand, we Christians stand, on a penalty-free zone. We have immunity from prosecution. That should humble us.

That should make us three H's. That should make us humble. That should make us holy. That should make us happy.

Happy art thou, Israel, a people saved by the Lord. So, the resurrection may be hard to believe.

But by believing it, Christians have the security of salvation, immunity from prosecution, and a guarantee of eternal life.

[ 26 : 41 ] And there will be seconds in heaven. And you'll say, What on earth were we worried about?

What a glorious future there is for Christians, who humbly believe Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures.

May God, the Holy Spirit, make his word effectual to every one of us. Let's bow our heads. Let's bow our heads. Our gracious Father in heaven, we bow our heads in this good place.

Lord, we thank you, Heavenly Father, for Christ, who purchased redemption on behalf of us.

Lord, we thank you for Christ, who purchased the release of the Holy Spirit. Because can we not all put our hands on our breasts and say for years, we heard this gospel and were not interested until your Spirit convicted us, until your Spirit took us by the hand and led us to the place called Calvary.

[ 28 : 11 ] Our gracious Father in heaven, thank you, Christ purchased the release of the Holy Spirit with his death so it could work amongst dead souls like every one of us here tonight.

Dead until you work your Spirit within us. We thank you that we can pray for that Holy Spirit to work in our unsaved friends.

O Lord, we thank you for your Son, saying, If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask?

O Lord, we thank you for the gospel.

Thank you for giving us the Bible in our own language. Thank you for giving us servants. Thank you for placing a servant over your people here.

[ 29 : 27 ] And we thank you today that you have provided a wife for them. Bless them. Bless them both, we pray thee. Bless your church in these days of general spiritual drought.

O we pray for an outpouring of your Holy Spirit that you might hear the petitions and the prayers already offered up since we met here together.

Hear every petition. Heavenly Father, we pray thee. O we thank you, gracious God, that for the Christian, the best is yet to come.

O Lord, we pray that you would multiply this congregation, that you send your Spirit down in great, mighty power.

Save souls, sanctify saints, subdue sinners. Gracious God, we pray for those who need particular encouragement and support at this time.

[ 31 : 06 ] We pray for any who may be bereaved. We pray for any who may be seriously ill. And ask that you bless medication and treatment, therapies, surgery, where these things are available and where they are not available.

may it please thee, gracious God, to heal apart from any human means. And as we pray and worship you in the comfort of this church here, we do pray for our brothers and sisters in the suffering church, the persecuted church worldwide.

Lord, we thank you for the grace you've given them. That determination they have of that persistence in worshipping you despite what it may cost them, knowing it may just cost them their lives.

Thank you for such a people. Our gracious God, as we pray for your church, we pray for our land, our nation.

What can we pray? We pray for our UK government. We pray for our Scottish government, perhaps even more.

[ 32 : 33 ] O Lord, look down from heaven. You converted Nebuchadnezzar. You used King Cyrus. You saved King Manasseh. And you can do the same with our new king and our new prime ministers and first ministers.

You can do it. Lord, we draw near to you and ask that it might please you. We have nothing to plead why you should.

We're ashamed of ourselves. But Lord, we appeal to your mercy, to your grace, to your love for the world.

O Lord, for your own glory, for your own glory, heavenly Father, we pray. Come down. Come down.

[ 33 : 29 ] And now, Lord, remember what we've forgotten to pray for. Keep us in your love. Keep us in your fear. wash all our sins away in that fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins.

For sinners plunged beneath that blood lose all their guilty stains. Hear us in mercy. Answer us in peace. As we pray only and all in Christ's name and for Christ's sake.

Amen. Well, we'll conclude by singing from Psalm 24, the last four stanzas.

Psalm 24 at verse 7, page 230 in the Blue Praise Book. Ye gates, lift up your heads on high.

Ye doors that last foray, be lifted up, that so the King of glory enter me. But who of glory is the King? The mighty Lord is this, even that same Lord, that great in might and strong in battle is.

[ 34 : 50 ] Ye gates, lift up your heads. Ye doors, doors that do last foray, be lifted up, that so the King of glory enter me.

But who is he that is the King of glory? Who is this? The Lord of hosts, and none but he the King of glory is.

Psalm 24 from verse 7 to the end. Psalm 24 at verse 8, the King of glory He gates, lift up your heads on high.

Ye doors, thou hast foray, be lifted up, thou hast for the King of glory enter me.

that King of glory is the King, the mighty Lord is this.

[ 35 : 56 ] In that sin, Lord, thou great in might and strong in battle is.

Ye gates, lift up your heads, ye doors, doors, that do last foray, ye doors, give up, thou hast foray, the King of glory enter me.

And who is he that is the King of glory? Who is this?

The Lord of hosts, and none but he the King of glory is.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forevermore.

[ 37:11 ] Amen.