

## THE RISEN CHRIST

Acts 2:22-36

Intro: This morning I am digressing from our study of the book of Hebrews to speak on the resurrection of Christ. This is Easter Sunday when professing Christians throughout the world remember the resurrection of Christ. However, the true Christian remembers the resurrection of Christ every Sunday. That is why we meet on Sunday instead of Saturday—because it was on the first day of the week that our Lord was raised from the dead. When our Lord died, the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom, signifying the end of the old dispensation. When He was raised from the dead, His resurrection marked the beginning of a new dispensation. Much of that which was anticipated under the old order was fulfilled through the death and resurrection of Christ. The focal point of all history is the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing that has ever happened can surpass the importance of the death and resurrection of Christ. And nothing ever will until the Lord Jesus returns again.

In the preaching of the apostles, and in the writings of the apostles by which the NT was completed, it is very clear that they believed in a literal, physical resurrection of Christ. Over and over in the book of Acts we see that the apostles believed that they were to testify to all men that Christ had been raised from the dead. They claimed to have seen Him, and thus were eyewitnesses that He had been raised from the dead. So when I speak of the resurrection of Christ, I am speaking as the apostles spoke. They knew that the Lord was put to death by the Roman soldiers at the insistence of the people of Israel, and they were just as certain that He had literally been raised from the dead. When the Lord appeared to them after His resurrection, He showed them the scars in His hands and His feet and His side as evidence that it was really He who stood before them. There is powerful evidence in the Scriptures that the death of Christ was real, and that His resurrection was real. It is equally clear in Scripture that the Lord Jesus not only never will die again, but that He could not die again. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Roman church,

Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead  
dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him  
(Rom. 6:9).

The same Apostle Paul stated in his letter to the Corinthian church how important it was for Christ to be raised from the dead. In the time of Christ many people were skeptical of the whole idea of resurrection. One important group of Jews were well-known for their denial of any resurrection. They

were the Sadducees. Most people today are so disinterested in God and the Scriptures and the Church that they have never expressed their thoughts about resurrection. But it is a true doctrine. If there had been no resurrection, Christ would not have been raised. And if Christ had not been raised, there would have been no Gospel, no Church, no NT. Let me read 1 Cor. 15:12-23 where Paul shows not only how important it is to believe in resurrection, but that it is imperative to believe in the resurrection of Christ! (Read.)

You will note that Paul did not just show what we would have to give up if there were no resurrection, but beginning with verse 20 he declared very positively that Christ had been raised from the dead.

The truth of the resurrection of Christ is not only important by itself, but its importance is increased when we see how it is related to many other teachings in Scripture. Without the resurrection of Christ there would be a general collapse of all of the great doctrines of Scripture. But with the resurrection of Christ, the Bible without any question is the greatest book in the world, and it will never be surpassed in importance. The person who even ignores the teaching of the Word of God does so to his or her eternal peril. Make sure that you are not one who ignores the Bible. And by all means make sure that you are not one who ridicules the Bible. Those who ridicule Scripture will realize some day, when it is too late, that they have made the worst mistake that they could possibly have made because it will guarantee them a place in hell.

There are many ways we could consider the resurrection. In our Tuesday Class, we have been studying the Gospel of John, and have considered the Apostle John's report of the death and resurrection of Christ. That could be done also with Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Another thing we could do would be to go to any of the many references to the resurrection of Christ in the OT. There it is seen in prophecy as well as in types. Still another way would be to consider the teaching of the NT epistles. I have never tried to count the references to the resurrection of Christ in the epistles, but there are many of them! The resurrection of Christ is such an important subject and it is mentioned so many times, that we must limit ourselves for one service in some way. And so today I want to confine myself primarily to the book of Acts, and especially to Acts 2.

We have been studying Acts in our SS lessons, and we will continue in this study until the end of May. One thing that stands out in Acts is important place the apostles gave in

their messages to the resurrection of Christ. They were willing to face death rather than be silenced in their desire to proclaim THE LIVING CHRIST. It was the resurrection of Christ which gave power to their preaching. It was the resurrection of Christ that gave purpose to their preaching. It was the preaching of the resurrection of Christ that brought peace to the hearts of those who heard what they said, and believed it. Let us taste a little of the blessing they experienced and witnessed as we consider just some, not all, of the things which they said.

What are some of the important messages that we should hear when we proclaim a resurrected, living, triumphant Savior?

Let us begin with our Scripture reading for the morning: Acts 2, and verses 22 through 24. Here we see that the resurrection of Christ gives us:

I. A MESSAGE ABOUT GOD (Acts 2:22-24).

There are passages which tell us that Christ raised Himself from the dead, or that the Holy Spirit raised Him from the dead. And they are all true. But Peter here said that God raised Him up. What does this tell us about God?

- A. This is one of the greatest proofs for the existence of God.

And, at the same time,

- B. This is one of the greatest proofs for the power of God.

In Acts 26:8 we have the record of Paul's conversation with King Agrippa. Paul asked the King this question: **"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"**

How can the resurrection of Christ be accounted for except in recognizing that there is a God, and that He is so powerful that He can do things that no mere man is capable to doing--even today? He can raise the dead! Peter probably did not have to argue with any of those Jews in Jerusalem about the existence of God, but it is very possible that their ideas of God were very different in some respects from the God of Scripture. Judaism had been corrupted even in those days, so this was an emphasis that they needed. God is! And God is a God Who is perfectly capable of raising the dead--even His only begotten Son.

So, when we remember the resurrection of Christ, we are

recognizing one of the greatest proofs of the existence of God, and one of the greatest proofs of His mighty power.

When Paul wrote to the Ephesian church, he not only told them that he was praying for them, but he told them the requests that he was presenting to the Father on their behalf. One of them was this:

That ye may know...what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places (Eph. 1:18m, 19, 20).

How amazing it was when God delivered our Lord from the pains of death, and He came alive out of that tomb, never to die again! Don't miss that part of the resurrection message.

Let me give you another.

## II. A MESSAGE ABOUT CHRIST AND THE BIBLE (Acts 2:24b-27).

Notice the last part of verse 24. Peter made a statement about the Lord Jesus Christ. He said that He was raised from the dead because it was not possible that He would not be raised from the dead! Why? Because it had been revealed to David that the Lord would be raised from the dead, and David wrote it down in Psalm 16.

If anybody asks you where in the OT it speaks of the resurrection of Christ, take them to Psalm 16. That is what David was talking about--the resurrection of Christ!

But now what does this tell us about the Bible?

Peter was saying that it was impossible for our Lord to stay in the grave because the Bible said that God's Holy One, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, would not see corruption!

So what does this tell us about the Bible?

It tells us that whatever God has said that He would do, He will do! The Bible is not a book of empty promises or fanciful prophecies which no one takes seriously. If the Bible said that Christ would be raised, then it was absolutely certain that He would be raised. God's Word is true, every bit of it! And the resurrection of Christ is one of the greatest proofs of the trustworthiness of the Bible.

Do you stumble at some of the promises of God? Then stumble

no more. The Bible is true, and you and I are foolish not to believe it! We need to believe all of it. If God has been faithful about raising His Son from the dead, then you and I need have no doubts about anything else that the Word says. Oh, that we would get this message, and then rest upon the infallible, unchanging, eternal Word of the living God.

But now let me go on to another point. In the resurrection of Christ there is:

III. A MESSAGE ABOUT US--THOSE OF US WHO ARE TRUSTING CHRIST FOR OUR SALVATION (Acts 2:25-28).

I think that if you will read these verses carefully, as well as Psalm 16, you will see that David was rejoicing not only in the prospect of the resurrection of Christ, but through Christ, in his own resurrection! David said, "My flesh also shall rest in hope." God had revealed to David that the resurrection of Christ assured his, David's, resurrection. And he was rejoicing in both!

In John 14:19 the Lord Jesus confirmed the hope that David had when He said to His disciples, "Because I live, ye shall live also." His resurrection guarantees our resurrection.

Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit, confirmed this same truth in 1 Thess. 4 where he wrote, "**But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep...**" (Quote verses 13-18.)

Even Job knew this truth because he wrote,  
 And though after my skin worms destroy this body,  
 yet in my flesh shall I see God (Job 19:26).

In the NKJV it reads this way:

And after my skin is destroyed, this I know,  
 That in my flesh I shall see God.

How could such a thing be? If the body is destroyed, how could Job or anyone else expect to see God in his flesh? There is only one answer to that question: Resurrection!

Remember what Paul told the Corinthians:

And if Christ be not raised...  
 Then they which are fallen asleep in Christ  
 are perished...  
 But now is Christ risen from the dead,  
 and become the firstfruits of them that slept  
 (1 Cor. 15:17a, 18, 20).

What is the message about us, those of us who are trusting Christ? It is that the resurrection of Christ guarantees that we, too, will be raised from the dead (if we die before

He comes), and will be glorified.

But there is a fourth message in Peter's sermon.

#### IV. A MESSAGE CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT (Acts 2:32, 33).

The main purpose of Peter's message was to explain the supernatural things that were going on at that time in Jerusalem. And Peter explained here that it had to do with the coming of the Holy Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit would not have come if the Lord Jesus Christ had not been raised from the dead.

Let me remind you of what the Lord had said about the Holy Spirit in John 16:7:

Nevertheless I tell you the truth;  
It is expedient for you that I go away;  
for if I go not away,  
the Comforter will not come unto you;  
but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

What message does the resurrection of Christ give us about the Holy Spirit? It tells us that you and I would not have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us today if Christ had not been raised from the dead. He had to be raised, then exalted to the Father's right hand so that He could send the Holy Spirit to us. How thankful we should be! The Holy Spirit teaches us the Word. The Holy Spirit enables us to live the way God wants us to live. The Holy Spirit empowers us for service. All of these blessings are traceable to the resurrection of Christ.

There is one more message that Peter's sermon gives to us about the resurrection of Christ. It is:

#### V. A MESSAGE ABOUT OUR LORD HIMSELF (Acts 2:36).

This verse gives us the object of Peter's message--to show the place God has given Jesus by virtue of His resurrection. The verb "made" is capable of having many different translations. It is the common Greek verb for make or do. But here it has the idea of an ordination, or a declaration. By the resurrection God has shown His Son Jesus to be "both Lord and Christ." He is Deity, and He is the Anointed One Who came to accomplish everything that was necessary for the salvation of His people. The Jews hated the Lord because He claimed to be the Son of God and the Messiah. The resurrection showed Him to be both--the Sovereign Lord, the Savior, and the One destined to rule as King of kings and Lord of lords. As Paul told the Roman church, our Lord was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom.

1:4).

The death and resurrection of our Lord provide us with the only way of salvation. This is what Peter went on to say in Acts 2:38. His preaching of the resurrection of Christ brought great conviction to the hearers, and that day there were added to the believers 3,000 who trusted in Christ.

Concl: As I close, let me give you one more message contained in the resurrection, not mentioned by Peter in Acts 2, but stated by Paul when he preached in Athens. Paul concluded with these words:

And the times of this ignorance God winked at;  
but now commandeth all men every where to repent:  
Because he hath appointed a day,  
in which he will judge the work in righteousness  
by that man whom he hath ordained;  
whereof he hath given assurance unto all men,  
in that he hath raised him from dead  
(Acts 17:30, 31).

The message of the resurrection of Christ contains great blessing and encouragement for the child of God. I hope we appreciate it more now than ever before. But it has the greatest possible warning for all who will not listen and obey the truth. If you are without Christ, I plead with you to trust Him now, before you leave this place today. The resurrection of Christ either assures our salvation, or it guarantees our final and terrible judgment in that day, unknown to us, when our Lord will judge the world "in righteousness." Either accept the righteousness of God through Christ, or be judged by a standard which will leave you with no hope at all.

Come to Christ today. Repent of your sins, and believe in Him. (Quote Acts 4:12.)