

The Triumph of the Resurrection

by A.W. Tozer

The resurrection of Christ is the ultimate proof and confirmation of his saving grace, and our response to it is to believe in him and identify ourselves with him.

Duration: 17:52

Scripture: Acts 2:22-24, Acts 2:33-34, Acts 2:36-39

Topics: "Resurrection"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of Jesus' death, resurrection, and the role of the Holy Spirit in convicting the conscience of believers. He highlights that believers cannot escape the fact that they must respond to Jesus once they understand that He is alive. The preacher also addresses the misconception that it was solely Jesus' life or death that saved humanity, emphasizing that all three aspects (life, death, and resurrection) are necessary for salvation. He concludes by stating that the presence of Jesus Christ coming out of the grave should catch the conscience of believers and lead them to trust in Him.

Transcript

In the book of Acts, 2nd chapter, Peter's testimony to the resurrection of Christ, beginning with verse 22. Ye men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, the miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.

Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain, whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should beholden of it. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool.

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are for all, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Now Peter here in his sermon preaches truth that concerns Christ altogether, Christ. Other people are mentioned only casually, but it all centers around our Lord Jesus Christ himself, Christ crucified and risen. It was never in the mind of Peter to teach the noble doctrines of Christ or to refer to them.

It never was in the mind of Peter to talk about the heroic example of our Lord. His teachings were noble and are noble, and his example is heroic. But the New Testament centers its emphasis around Christ crucified and risen, and the New Testament presents Christ as the last and ultimate object of faith.

The whole question now is, What think ye of Christ? The question, What do you think of the Bible, is out of date and has no meaning since Christ and the Bible were confirmed by the resurrection of the dead, and Christ endorsed the Bible in toto. And the question, What do you think of the church, has no meaning now either. Nobody can ask that and be truly sincere, because Christ said, On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Now we have this question before us, What are we going to do with Christ, and What do we think of Christ? And we have it whether we like it or not. We have it all year round. We have it all the time.

We have it Easter, and we have it the next day after Easter. And we have it the third of July, and we have it the ninth of November, and we have it the first of December, and we have it the third of January. We have it every day of the year.

What are we going to do about this man whom God has raised from the dead? Christ is the last word to man, in God Almighty's last word to man. It's written that God at Sunday times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets. But now in the last end of the world, he hath spoken unto us by his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And it's written again that the word became flesh. When the word became flesh, God spoke. He spoke his word in flesh.

He spoke his incarnated and fleshed word. And Jesus Christ is that word. And that sums up all that God would say to men.

Now our religious question then is about Christ himself, and all religious questions are reduced to this one major one. What do I think of Christ, and what am I going to do about Christ? Now there are those who pretend to have doubts and problems concerning this, but they that do are in love with themselves. They are blinded by egotism and self-love, and I respectfully claim the right to doubt the sincerity of those who now are saying, I have problems about the Bible, I have problems about the church, I have problems about morality.

All problems are reduced to one. God spake his eternal word in Christ Jesus the Lord, and so Christ is a settled question and a question settler. The sincere question of the honest seeker is not what proof has Christianity, because when God raised his Son from the dead, he gave the only proof there was, and the only proof there is, but he gave a proof infinitely capable of settling the mind of anyone who is concerned and who is sincere.

So the question is not what proof does Christianity give, because we are not dealing with Christianity, we are dealing with Christ. We're dealing with the man who became flesh, we're dealing with God who walked among men, we're dealing with the God who gave his life for men, and so the question is not what do I think of Christianity, but the question is what do I think of Christ, and what am I going to do about Christ?

And the question of the sincere man is not, is Christ what he claimed to be? Some claim they have doubts and wonders about whether Christ is what he claimed to be, but there should be no question here at all, because the scripture says that Jesus was approved of God among you. He was approved of God with great stacks of books have been written, books that would fill this building from the cellar to the roof, and books that would fill all the buildings up and down Avenue Road.

Books have been written trying to show that Jesus is what he claimed to be, but the worshiping heart knows he's what he's claimed to be, because God sent the Holy Spirit to carry the confirmation to the conscience of men. It does not lie with evidence. History can offer no higher evidence than that God raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand.

And the question of the sincere man is not how do Jesus' teaching compare with the teachings of the moral philosophers or the teachings of Buddha or of the Hindus. The question is settled for us forever, because the moral teachings of Jesus stand or fall with him. I heard on the radio the other night a debate put on in the city here between a number of men of some intelligence I would gather from their questions and answers, and they were willing to question the teachings of Christ and to take issue with Christ on certain issues.

Let any man take issue with Christ and his done as far as being a Christian is concerned. No one can take issue with the Lord. No one can question the truth of the truthful one.

No one dares bring up the matter of whether or not Jesus is the Lord and whether his teachings are sound. He is approved of God, and his moral teachings stand or fall with him. Jesus Christ, our Lord, himself, is the object of our attention, not the teachings of Jesus.

Though the teachings of Jesus are dear to us, and though the teachings of Jesus are there that we might keep his commandments and prove that we love him, it's the person of Jesus that gives his teachings valid as aid. God put the proof down upon a spiritual level. It rests not upon reason, but upon conscience, you see.

If the resurrection of Christ were to rest upon reason, then only the highly reasonable people could be converted. If the resurrection of Christ were to rest upon man's ability to gather and weigh evidence, then the trained man, trained in the gathering and evaluating of evidence, might believe that the simple-hearted man who guides the plow, or who labors with his hands and doesn't do much thinking, he would remain unconverted. But it was just the opposite.

The appeal of Christ was always to the simple-hearted man whose conscience gave him trouble. He brought a troubled, lacerated conscience to Christ, and when the conscience knew that Christ had risen and that he had appeared unto Peter and unto 500 brethren at once, and that God had approved him and confirmed him and validated him and marked him and sealed him and proved him to be his Christ, sent to save mankind, then the human conscience immediately responded. And that's how people are converted.

The simple people are converted. All kinds of people are converted, not because they have the ability to weigh evidence. If salvation depended on my ability to know when a thing was true and not true, or if it depended upon my ability to know, as in a court of law, whether a witness is telling the truth or not, then of course only lawyers and persons trained in this would have any possibility of salvation.

But this truth of Christ rising from the dead leaps past all human reason, leaps over it, arises above it, and goes straight to the conscience of the man, so that as soon as the message is preached, everybody can know immediately. They don't have to ask. They don't need to ask.

In fact, it's an affront to ask. Jesus Christ is risen and has appeared to his disciples, and God, to confirm his resurrection, sent down the Holy Ghost. And now the verdict has already been rendered by the Most High God Himself, Maker of heaven and earth, the verdict on the resurrection of Christ.

And He has sent His Spirit to carry the verdict to the conscience. So the result is they were pricked in their hearts. You might be interested to know that that word pricked here, now in our present English the word pricked simply means pricked lightly.

But there the word was so deep that it had a qualifying and intensifying prefix on it. Listen, when it said that they pierced the side of Jesus with a spear, when they found that he was already dead, they pierced the side with a spear, and the word pierced there is one word. But the word that they use here about they were pricked in their hearts, showing that the words of Peter went further into the hearts of the hearers than the spear of the soldier went into the breast of Jesus.

So that the Holy Ghost carried the spear point of truth into the hearts of the people, and they cried, Men and brethren, what shall we do? And Peter had the answer for them immediately. He said, You are to believe on Jesus Christ, and you then are to prove that you believe by identifying yourself with him in baptism. You are to identify yourself with him in baptism and prove and show to the world that you believe in this one that's been raised from the dead.

So that facts and reasons cannot have such an effect. I can argue with the man, I can reason with him, I can preach to him if I were capable of so doing. I could preach to him with the oratory of Cicero or Demosthenes, and when it was all over I could only convince his mind.

But the Spirit of the living God convinces the conscience, and so every last one of us listening now are conscience caught. If we have any conscience left, we must be conscience caught by the presence of Jesus Christ as having come out of the grave. Let us not be fooled into believing that it was the life of Jesus that saved us, and oh no, he had to die, nor that it was the death of Jesus that saved us, no no, he had to rise from the dead.

All three had to be present before we can say truly that we have a Savior that we can trust. He had to live among men, holy and harmless and spotless and undefiled. He had to die for men, and then he had to rise a third day according to Scripture, and he did all three of those things.

And when the Spirit of God carries that fact home to the heart, then we're caught on our conscience, I say. We're impaled there by the spear of the Holy Ghost, and we can't escape until we've done something about Jesus. What then shall we do? Peter wasn't afraid of the word do.

In some of our evangelical circles they're afraid of the word do. They say that's a legal word, that's a Jewish word, that's not a word for Christians. I tell you, Peter wasn't afraid of it at all, because it's not the do of merit, it's the do of condition.

What shall I do that I may receive the benefits of this Lord Jesus Christ into my own life? Well, Peter said, Believe on Jesus Christ and identify yourself with him by baptism. Now that's what we're to do. We're to do this.

That's what Easter means, that's what this means. And you can't escape it. You can't go home and not return for a year, but you can't escape it.

It'll haunt you all year, and if in the providence of God you should die this year, it will haunt you to the grave and haunt you to eternity. For God has given his Son, Jesus Christ, to the world, and he said, Believe on my Son, and whosoever believeth on him shall not perish, and whosoever believeth not is condemned already, because he is not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. So this is the do, I say, of condition.

That you can add no merit, I can add no merit. No, no, you have none and I have none. We're not good men, we're not good women, we are sinners.

And the sinless one came and took our sins on himself, and went to an ugly cross and died there amid blood and swarming flies and sweat and tears and grief. And then God raised him the third day, for it was not possible for death to hold him. God had declared concerning him, I saw the Lord always before me, because he is before my face I shall not be condemned.

God raised him from the dead, and the Holy Spirit seals it. And while I've given you this brief message this morning, the Spirit of the living God has carried it to you. Of that I'm positively sure.

He's carried it to the heart of my hearers this morning, and he has impaled you on that fine, sharp point of the truth of the risen Christ. If he's alive, then you've got to do something about him. If he is alive, then he's on my conscience until I've done something about him.

And that he is alive is proved by the downcoming of the Holy Ghost, to carry the evidence straight to the consciences of men. Thank God he lives. Thank God that the fight is over, the battle won, the victory of life is won.

Thank God. But until I have done something about it, he is on my conscience, and he will remain there until the edges have rolled away. He is on the consciences of millions this hour who are doing nothing about it, trying to live it out, trying to brazen it out, trying to face it out.

Let them do it, but I can't. I can't. He died for me, took my sins, God raised him from the dead, sent the Holy Ghost to say, This is my Son, hear ye him.

So I must hear, I must listen, I must identify, I must commit, I must follow, I must devote, I must dedicate, I must follow the Lamb with us wherever he goes. I must. He's on my conscience till I do.

I'm impaled with the fact that he rose again, and in triumph of the resurrection, brought confirmation of his saving grace to the whole human race. May God grant today, this day, that we do something about Jesus while we can. Amen.

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