

# The Resurrection

by F.J. Huegel

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*The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a central fact of the Christian faith, and its significance is rooted in the love and sacrifice of Jesus for humanity.*

**Duration:** 48:24

**Scripture:** Psalm 16:10, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 28:5-7, Mark 16:9, Luke 24:4-6, John 20:1-2, Romans 5:6-8

**Topics:** "Easter Resurrection", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on previous sermon series and announces his current focus on the resurrection. He expresses his desire for the Holy Spirit to reveal the significance of the resurrection in a new and practical way for the Christian life. The speaker also highlights the issue of some Christians having a 'dead Christ' in their beliefs and practices. He mentions the variation in the resurrection accounts as factors that enhance the validity of the evidence.

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## Transcript

Those of you who have been with us, with me, on former occasions of this nature, will recall that I like to take a series, it seems to build up like a mighty stream, enhances as the river flows. I was thinking this morning how that the first series was on prayer, some of you may remember. Then there was a series on Israel coming out of Egypt and entering the Promised Land, taken as the great type of the Christian life, the Christian entering the Promised Land of a life of union and victory with Christ.

Then there was a series on victorious Christian living. Some of you may remember. We said it was the normal thing, the biblical standard.

I do not recall all the series, but last year it was a series on Romans, Romans 5, 6, 7, and 8. Now this year the resurrection is upon my heart. I'm hoping to enter in with you into the contemplation. Oh, may the Holy Spirit draw aside the veil and make it very real.

It is his mission to take of the things of Christ and reveal them to hearts. These seem very familiar to you all, but I'm hoping that they may live before us in a new way and that there may be practical applications to the Christian life as we go along. These indescribably beautiful scenes from the resurrection.

One thing that's upon my heart is this fact that so many good evangelical Christians, in actual practice, if not in theory, really have a dead Christ. A young man down in Mexico who does Christian work among

students in the university was telling us of how he visited a museum there in Mexico City, and he saw the sacred art scenes from the life of the Savior and of saints. And as he looked about, he saw hundreds of works of art, and finally, greatly dismayed, he turned to the keeper and said, but isn't there one work here on the resurrection? No, he said, there is not.

Romanism has, as you all know, a dead Christ. But oh, may it be that in our own Christian experience, we who believe in the resurrection may come through these studies into a fuller realization of the presence of the risen Christ by his Spirit in our hearts and in the life of the Church. We're going to begin with the women at the grave.

Yes, there are variations. As you read from the closing chapters, St. Matthew on the resurrection, Mark, Luke, John, there are variations. I think it's Luke who says, they, the women, having spoken of the women who afar beheld what took place when Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took the body from the cross, wrapping the body in linen sheets, taking the body to that freshly hewn grave.

They. And then there's one. I may make some mistakes about this.

I've been studying it, but I'm not going to take time to leaf my Bible too much. It may extend unduly the study. It may be Mark who speaks of two of the women, Mary, Magdalene, then Mary, is it? Perhaps we'd better turn here to Mark and make sure of this.

Chapter 16. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James. No, three.

And Salome, when the Sabbath was passed, they had bought sweet spices that they might come and anoint him. It seems they weren't satisfied with what the men had done. You know, this duty, this lovely ceremony, this duty was something for this wealthy senator.

These wealthy senators, something altogether outside their can. It may not have been done just properly. And so the women come with spices to anoint the body.

Now, John singles out one. He only speaks of Mary Magdalene coming to the grave. There are those who feel that we have in this fact, and others of a similar nature in the scenes of the resurrection, these variations a reason for doubt.

They speak of them as discrepancies. We, on the other hand, realize that these, I shall not call them discrepancies, variations, are rather factors that enhance the validity of the evidence for the reason that we are told. I was speaking with some students up in California, Southern California University the other day, and they were telling me about that great legal mind.

They said the greatest legal mind of America. Sealeaf, I think was the name, who wrote a book on evidences, the four laws of evidence. What is really evidence valid? And the students told me that there were some young man, Christian, who challenged their professor very well.

These are the laws of evidence. Have you ever applied them to sacred history as we have it in the New Testament to the Lord Jesus? Why, no, he said, I haven't. Will you do that? And they said the result was he came to these two conclusions.

He endured Jesus was the greatest fraud of history, the greatest imposter, or he was God. And then he said, but he couldn't have been the greatest imposter because out of his person and his teaching have

come the greatest things of our culture, of our life. Ah, I have only one other alternative.

He must be God. And then they forced him still beyond, and the end was his conversion. The laws of evidence.

Now, according to these laws, if those who come bearing witness to a fact are in perfect agreement in all the details, you can be sure there's something wrong. They've gotten together and agreed on every detail in order to deceive the public. Now, if they are agreed as to the central fact to which they bear witness, their being on the fringe, variations, then you have something that is truly valid.

That's what we have here. I was reading only yesterday that the leaders of the great battle of Waterloo, Wellington, Lord Wellington, Ney, that German general, Blücher, they couldn't agree. One said the battle began at, oh, I've forgotten, ten.

Another said eleven-thirty. Another said, Napoleon said, no, one o'clock. Ah, but the battle of Waterloo was fought.

No, these variations do not disturb us in the least. We have here added strength, added glory in the evidence. They have all agreed as to the central fact, namely that Jesus Christ the Lord arose on the first day of the week from the grave.

I say we're going to think first about these women who, and here again there is a slight variation. We read, it was yet dark, and then we read that it was toward dawn. It was dawning.

Some years ago, I was at a sunrise prayer gathering out in the village in Mexico, and as we left the homes for the chapel, it was dark. And then a few moments later, I looked out. Why, the sun was rising.

The beams were on the horizon. Well, both were true. You will recall how on the way, these women, anxious, were discussing the great rock, the great stone that was at the mouth of the tomb.

Morrison tells us, you know, there's a great book out on the resurrection by an American lawyer, Morrison, who was a doubter. And one day, he said to himself, you're a pretty picture. You say you don't believe the story of the resurrection.

You've never made a study of it. So he decided as a lawyer, cold-blooded fashion, to enter upon a thoroughgoing study of the evidences of the resurrection. And the result was like Thomas of old.

The moment came when Morrison said, My Lord and my God. And then he wrote that lovely book, Who Rolled Away the Stone. Well, this stone was worrying the women.

And when they arrived, the stone had been rolled away. Morrison tells us that those Jewish graves, we know they were just caves, and that the mouth is sort of a trough, and a great stone could be rolled along the trough to the mouth of the grave. That these graves hewn out of the side of hills, the rock, that in these graves there was a sort of unanswered chamber.

And then at one side there being a wall, not too high one could look over it, and a doorway on the other side of the wall, a slab where the body would be laid. Well, when the women arrived, as Matthew tells us, a great angel, there was an earthquake, and his countenance is lightning, that the angel had rolled away the stone and was sitting upon it. A dear friend of mine remarked the other day, Well, the stone wasn't rolled away so that Jesus might go out.

The stone was rolled away that the women might go in. For the Savior's body glorified, I say for the glorified body of the Savior, this stone would have been no obstacle. We know how he came and how he went.

The apostles being behind locked doors, how he came and how he went. No, it was that the women might go in. And here again there's a slight variation that doesn't disturb us in the least.

One of the evangelists speaks of an angel of a young man, shining garments. Well, the angels appeared in human form. It seemed to be a young man.

John says two angels, one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of the Savior had lain. And then as the women appear, the angel speaks, Why seek ye the living among the dead? The two men, as it is here in Luke 24, in shining garments. He is not here, but is risen.

Remember how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee. This is very significant. Turning back to the Savior's word, Westcott points out in a book of his on the resurrection, that the appearances of Jesus our Lord all took place not immediately, but after a period of preparation, little remarks, incidents, that prepared the ground.

Do you not recall his word? Now the disciples should have recalled. The enemy did. Do you remember how they went to Pilate? This imposter said.

The enemy remembered that in three days he would arise. Now we know what's going to happen. His disciples will come at night and steal the body and then give it out that he has arisen, that he has risen.

Soldiers. Yes, the enemy remembered. The disciples forgot.

Do you not recall? Now we are told in the Gospel according to St. John, who singles out Mary Magdalene, that she immediately hastened to the city. These women had no difficulty at the gate because the law was that at the Passover, time of the Passover feast, the gate should be open day and night. Hastened to the city, we read, to tell Peter.

She comes to Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved and says unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him. Now that was a natural thought. Ah, the enemy.

The enemy is not yet satisfied. The body must be desecrated. They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him.

And now we have Peter and John on that resurrection morn, running away. Peter all out of breath. He was older.

You know, these little details in the story of the resurrection are so very significant because it all dovetails perfectly. John arrives first, of course, as we read here, this lad, and he may still have been a lad if, as some historians tell us, he lived until the second century or even if only until the close of the first. He must have been quite a lad.

And he arrives first. And then another detail in keeping it all jibes so beautifully, he looks in. We have just said that these caves were of such a nature that it was possible to step into the antechamber.

He looks in, but he does not go in. That reverence that characterized John, Peter blustering! Of course, he plunges right in. And really he was not worthy.

He hadn't straightened out his accounts with the Lord yet. Simon Peter, following him, John went into the sepulcher and seeth the linen clothes lie and the napkin that was about his head not lying with the linen clothes but wrapped together in a place by itself. You wonder why these details are brought out.

Ah, but they have great significance. I lived with Jewish people in Germany after World War I in the days of the occupation. And that lie, the high priest and the keepers, you will recall the soldiers came to tell them what had taken place.

That angel whose countenance was as lightning that earthquake and the stone rolled away. We read that they gave them money to propagate a lie and that lie is still upon the lips of Jewish people. They told me over there in Germany, yes, his body was stolen by the disciples who carried it out that he had risen.

Now this detail here gives the lie to all that. If there had been that hasty assault at midnight, can't you conceive of those discouraged, disheartened, defeated disciples facing Roman soldiers and fighting it out. Ah, friends, how ridiculous.

Even had it been so, the presence of the body merely, ah, would never have accounted, would never have brought about that immeasurable transformation. In the spirit of the disciples so overwhelmed with discouragement and suddenly on fire the glow of the glad tidings of the Savior's resurrection, the linen clothes wrapped together in a place, the napkin by itself, there was deliberation, there was call. Now we don't know whether the Savior himself or these angels, but in perfect deliberation this that we have just read came to pass.

Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulcher and he saw, now note this, and believed. Believed what? What he saw? No, that the body had been taken. He believed.

John comes at once. Ah, he remembers. He believed.

For as yet they knew not the Scripture. Oh, the prophecy in the Old Testament there in Psalm 16 where the prophet said that the Holy One should not know corruption. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home, but Mary.

Now we're coming to the heart of the study of the morning. You do not wonder that John leaving to one side these other figures focuses the light of history upon Mary. Mary Magdalene, as Mark puts it in his story of the resurrection out of whom the Savior had cast seven, does it say devils or demons? Seven devils.

Seven demons. There seems to be in that remark something of the thought that oh, this one's so unworthy out of whom he had cast seven devils. She is the first.

Behold the risen Christ. Here again, friends, we come upon further evidence. The very nature of the story here is so contrary, so contrary to human reason.

Now, if as enemies of the Christian faith even in our day I want to say that, oh yes, but it's the disciples themselves drawing upon their imaginations and then there are those who speak of hallucinations, you know. I recall a professor, teacher of mine up at the university in philosophy had been a missionary. Can

you conceive of it in China? Teaching philosophy and talking about hallucinations of the book of Acts.

May the Lord keep us. No. These folk were not hysterical, just the opposite pole.

They were overcome with dismay, with discouragement. They were down in the deepest depths of sorrow and discouragement. They were not expecting this.

The truth of the matter is that the Savior had to reprove them for the hardness of their hearts, unwilling the disciples to believe. Now, this fact, the fact that it was Mary, Mary Magdalene, you know, if they had been just telling a story, well, they would have had the Savior appearing to his enemies, overwhelming them with his glory. He didn't appear to one of them.

Oh yes, later, Saul of Tarsus, but that's a different story. I mean in that time, that hour of the resurrection. No.

And even if he had, brethren, appeared to the high priest, appeared to the king, appeared to enemies, it would have had no effect. What was the result of that greatest of his miracles when at the mouth of Lazarus's grave he cried, Lazarus, come forth, and he who already stank stepped out? What was the result? They went around the corner and said, this man must die. Did they believe? It only enhanced their unbelief and their hatred of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It would have had no effect. No. Only to his own.

First to Mary. She stood without a reciprocal weeping. And you know, I can't pass over this fact without remarking that it's to the everlasting glory of womanhood.

Let all the men present bow their heads in shame. Women. You know, when it comes to a great moral crisis, women have more courage than men.

The men, where were they? They were behind closed doors because of the fear of the Jews. And it was these same women who stood by the cross. I say, had these men been drawing on their imaginations, oh, they'd have had the Savior first appearing to the apostolic band gathered in stately fashion, singing a messianic song, the 16th Psalm.

They never would have. Oh, this was infinitely removed from their minds. A woman out of whom he'd cast seven devils.

The first. Why, you know, 20 centuries have gone by and woman hasn't yet been lifted out of the doldrums. You know what I mean.

Why, it's taken centuries. For the Savior, it's Christianity that's given woman her place. And that day, these men, first to a woman, the first missionary a woman.

It always breaks my heart down in Argentina that your pastor said to me, you know, I was on the way to the church when he said, the women can't pray out loud here in my church. Oh, can't they? Hmm. Thank you.

But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping, and as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulcher. Well, we've just remarked on how that could easily have been done. The exit chamber, this wall, the doorway, the slab.

She looked into the sepulcher and see of two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She says unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing and knew not that it was Jesus still the morning mist, no doubt her tears, her sorrow.

It was only natural that she would not be able to clearly distinguish who the figure was. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Back there in the book of Isaiah, the 25th chapter, verses 6 and 7, or is it 9? We are told that the Savior, upon his appearing in his advent, would wipe away 9 and 10. No.

8 and 9 would wipe away tears from off all faces. Hmm? Woman, why weepest thou? There seems to be something vastly, that goes vastly beyond the mere circumstance in this question. Does it not, friends, why weepest thou? You know, our, in large measure, friends, our sorrows, our secret tears, our fears, our doubts, our unbelief, our anxiety over circumstances, it's just not in keeping with a Christian life, with the fact that the risen Christ is ever with his own.

Why weepest thou? Haven't you yet rolled that burden over on your risen Savior? Do you still worry about, well, friends, why go into detail? I was reading this morning, my dear host gave me a book last night, the story of Mike Martin. I knew him over in Japan. The father of King's Gardens.

You know, up there in Seattle, that great work, this layman. And he tells he was a Christian. He was going to Bible school.

He was obeying the Lord. He'd given up his work to go to Bible school, Bible Institute. But he told the director, he said, well, I still smoke cigarettes.

He said he smoked two packages a day. Getting ready for the Lord's work. Giving up his business.

But secretly he was still weeping over this thing. He just couldn't lick it. Until finally he took it to the Lord and he said, I can't, Lord.

Lord, he said, in that moment it was gone. The Lord could. You heard about that engraving on a dear Christian woman's tombstone.

She did what she couldn't. She did what she couldn't. No one else will attend to this sacred body.

The fear that it might have been taken by enemies for desecration. I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary.

She turned herself and said unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not. For I am not yet ascended to my Father.

Now I do not think that we are to interpret this as a forbidding way on the part of the Savior in the days of his humiliation when he walked among men. Well, you will recall the woman who came to wash his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair, kissing his feet. He did not repel her.

He complained to the Pharisees, Thou gavest me no kiss. John rested upon his bosom. No, I think there's something deeper here.

It was that now in this new dispensation which was dawning, now our touch must be different. And it is different. It is different.

Ah, it's deeper, more vital, more real. We've all thought, oh, if only I could have lived in those days and looked upon him. But now we have something greater.

The inborn Holy Spirit who brings the risen Christ before his own and who brings them into a deep oneness of spirit with their Lord. Now that's greater. That's greater.

Touch me not. I am not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father and to my God and your God. We said that it was our hope that certain practical aspects in relation with these scenes from the resurrection might be brought home to our hearts.

Here is the one this morning. I ascend unto my Father and your Father. The Savior just brings his own right into the same position.

Oh, I recall a period in my Christian life I was traveling down in Chile. I had with me William Newell's Romans verse by verse. In those days I was having a good deal of difficulty with the doctrine of pure grace.

I don't have any more. No, I don't have any more. And over and over there is William Newell.

Went through Romans. He brought out the fact, digging around into the roots of these Greek words that the Christian stands where Jesus stands. If the Christian enjoys the same favor, then can it be possible that I in Christ enjoy the same favor, favor of the Father which the Son? Well, has he not given us authority to become sons of God? Are we not co-heirs with Christ of God? And doesn't that Paul tell us that together with Christ we've been raised up? And as it is in the Wymouth translation, enthroned together with Christ.

That's how it appears in the Wymouth version, enthroned together with Christ. I go. I ascend unto my Father and your Father.

Here we have the fulfillment of that longing of Job. You'll recall how in the ninth chapter, finally he cries out, oh, if there was only, well, a daysman as a mediator. Umpires, it is in the margin of one version.

In the Spanish it reads, el jubilar arbitro. If there was only one who could put his hand on God and on man, could perfectly represent God and perfectly represent man. Well, you know, he'd have to be God and he'd have to be man, so there just isn't any hope.

Ah, yes, but hope, Job, is a journey. If there could only be, well, it is. That's the gospel.

He brings into perfect oneness God and man. I ascend unto your God and my God, to my Father and your Father. Oh, gracious Father, how we thank thee.

It's just, in a sense, Father, too much. Like Job of old, we say, if it only could be. If there were only one who could perfectly represent God and perfectly represent man and bring them together.

But, Father, it's true. It's real in how wonderful it is that the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, should leave glory and come into this world of woe and bring about that reconciliation. Father, we're so thankful that these evidences of the Savior's resurrection, they're so real.

Father, it makes us realize that only those who do not want to believe and who are determined not to believe fail to see the truth. And so, Father, bring us more fully, we pray, in these days, as we will be meditating on these scenes of the resurrection. Oh, bring us more fully, Father, into a real participation in the power of the Redeemer's resurrection, that we may come to that rock which is higher than I, as the psalmist wrote, and just take our places with the risen, ascended Lord to reign in life by one, even Jesus.

For we ask it in His holy name. Amen.

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