

# In Light of the Resurrection

by J. Glyn Owen

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*The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the central event in Christianity, demonstrating God's power over death and sin, and offering humanity a full salvation.*

**Duration:** 46:50

**Scripture:** Matthew 11:28, John 12:3, John 19:30, Romans 6:23, Philippians 1:23, Hebrews 9:27, 1 Peter 1:3

**Topics:** "Resurrection"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for sinners to come to Christ for salvation. He highlights that sin is a serious matter and that preaching about forgiveness and love alone is not enough. The New Testament presents a somber note, addressing the need for guidance, the privilege of service, and the plight of the lost. The preacher also encourages believers to have a heavenly mindset and to have a personal relationship with Christ. The sermon contrasts the hope and expectation experienced by New Testament believers with the aimlessness and lack of purpose seen in contemporary society.

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## Transcript

Nothing remained quite the same after the resurrection. I'm sure you have noticed this as you have read the gospel narratives and come forward to the epistles of the New Testament. The early believers were so certain that Jesus had not merely risen from the dead, but that he was alive forevermore, and alive as Lord of life and death, that everything, literally everything, was thereafter different.

The resurrection, for example, left its indelible stamp upon the message they proclaimed. Someone has well said that the sword with which they hacked their way into the Roman Empire, and into Greece, and to the far-flung corners of the ancient world, was a two-edged sword. Christ crucified for our sins, Christ risen for our justification.

The point I want now to make is this. The message of the early Christians was not simply the message that God had come into this world in the person of his Son, nor indeed that the God who came to us in Christ had died on a cross, but that the God who came in Christ and in Christ died for men was alive again. No, is alive again, and is the Prince of life and of death.

And because he is alive, he is a Savior competent to save, to the uttermost, men everywhere who will come to him. Now I'm changing the title of my message this morning, even if I'm not changing the substance. If I were to give a title to what I'm going to try and share with you this morning, I would put it

like this.

In the light of the resurrection, everything changed. In the light of the fact of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the first preachers of the gospel were able to offer to the world what so many of our fathers used to refer to, and indeed many of us still refer to as a full salvation. Now you can understand that statement in many different ways.

I want to refer to something special this morning. You can understand it for example in this way. The salvation that God made possible in Christ, crucified, risen, reigning is a salvation that relates to the whole of man, body as well as spirit, to the whole of time and to the whole of life.

It is a salvation that impinges upon our life in the here and now, and it is a salvation that takes us beyond the stretch of this human mortality into the unseen world, into eternity. But there is something else that I want to say particularly this morning, and it comes within the ambit of this concept. The early preachers of the gospel preached a full salvation in this sense.

They preached a salvation which had been finished, which was complete. Now you may say, what do you mean by that? Or what does the New Testament mean by that? Or what did our fathers who used this terminology mean by that? Well, I want to refer to one or two things. Everything that needed to be done in order to provide salvation for lost men and women was accomplished when the Christ who died on Calvary's cross rose again on the morning of the third day.

And in that sense, when Jesus rose from the dead, God put his seal upon salvation as a finished thing, a finished entity. And the summons of the gospel to you and to me, to us lost condemned sinners is this, not to try to save ourselves, but rather to come to one who has made a total provision for us, who has made such total provision that the only thing required of us is to receive it as the gift of his grace. It's a full salvation.

It is finished. You will remember that that was one of the last words of our Lord on the cross. It is finished.

And therefore the glad tidings preached in the New Testament comes in these terms. Believe what God has done in Christ. Receive what God has done in Christ.

Rest upon it because it is enough. Let me spell that out very briefly. The reasoning that we should see behind that statement is something like this.

Everywhere in the Bible sin is taken as something very serious. Never, never something to play with, to trifle with, to toy with. Always something to be afraid of, because as the Apostle Paul puts it in Romans chapter 6, the wages of sin is death.

Now the Bible never muffles that statement. It's a harsh word to say to men and women because we are all sinners. And by nature we like to think of ourselves as capable of saving ourselves, or rather as being in need of no help beyond ourselves.

There is that streak of pride in us. But the Bible from early Genesis right through to the end of the New Testament in one way or another continues to emphasize this. Sin is a dangerous thing.

Sin brings forth the wrath of God. The wages of sin is death. And death is an omnibus term of which physical death is only a part.

It has an eternal dimension. God sent forth his Son into the world to die that kind of death in the place of the guilty. And that is what happened on Calvary.

He came forth and he offered himself to die the death that we deserve. And this did not simply mean the separation of the spirit and of the body. What we speak of as death, it meant bearing the judgment of God upon himself as he was nailed on the tree.

It meant being separated from God so that he cried out of the anguish of it, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me? Now as we have been seeing here in Knox particularly over these last number of months, the Old Testament teaches us, and so does the New, but we have been looking at it especially from the Old Testament, teaches us that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the servant of God, the servant supreme, came into this world and the prophet was able to say of him that he was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace, the price necessary to be paid for our peace, was borne by him.

And with his stripes we are healed. He did everything that was necessary to clear this wretched thing called sin and its consequences out of the way and to make it possible for us to know God and in the knowledge of him to serve him in this life and in the next to enjoy him forever. A full salvation, a completed salvation.

One other image that is often used in the Old Testament and in the New to refer to it is the image of the payment of a price, a ransom price for the deliverance of slaves. We refer to this when we were studying Isaiah 53. We referred, for example, at an early stage to the way in which our Lord spoke of the same sentiment as we find in Isaiah 53 in these words when he said, even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.

Now you just think of those words. To give his life a ransom for many. Ransom means the payment required for the deliverance of slaves.

But what were men enslaved to? The law of sin and death, the tyranny of sin, the consequences of sin, the wrath of God against sin. You and I were slaves to that. We couldn't get away from it.

We couldn't wriggle out of it. There was no way out. There was no one who could save.

But Jesus, God's only, God's well-beloved Son died our death and he paid the price. And God so accepted the price that he paid that he caused him to be raised back to life and sent him back as the prince assuring us that the price was not only paid but it was accepted. It was adequate.

He raised him from the dead for our justification. When therefore the preacher of the gospel today invites men and women to receive Jesus Christ as Savior, this is basic and this is essential. We invite people and we urge people to trust someone who has done everything that needs to be done for us to be made right with God.

There's one other thing that needs to be added. Not only has our Lord Jesus Christ made salvation objectively complete, but he is alive to impart it and to apply it to all those who come to him. You see, part of the tragedy of our human situation is this.

Even though we know that God sent his Son to be the Savior, even though we know that there's something wrong with ourselves that needs to be put right, even though we know the terms of the gospel

story, we cannot always, indeed we never can in and of ourselves, come to a place of faith and obedience. But the Lord Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, is alive to implement, to apply the gospel of his grace and that which he has procured to apply it to everyone that comes to God through himself. That is the great statement of the epistle to the Hebrews in chapter 7. He is able to serve to the uttermost those that come to God by him for this reason, because he ever lives to make intercession.

He lives to plead for those who come to God by him. You put your case in his hand, you come to him, he lives to make the necessary intercession. He will plead for you and he'll take your case in hand.

It's a full salvation. It's a complete and a completed salvation in that sense. Seneca long ago groaned out of his misery.

All my life, he said, I have been seeking to climb out of the pit of my besetting sin, sins, and I can't do it, and I never will unless, says the pagan, unless a hand is let down to me to draw me up. Men and women, when God raised his son to life again, he came back to be the prince of life and of death, and his hand and his arm is strong enough and long enough to come down to your pit and your need and mine and to lift us up. Nothing can now obstruct the way.

Jesus is alive from the dead. Ours is a full salvation in him. Another thing I wanted to bring out in the light of the resurrection is this.

In the light of the fact of the resurrection, the first heralds of the good news warned the rejecters of their message, of their certain ruin. Now, I'm not apologizing for bringing this note in. I can only apologize for those of us in the ministry who are so loath to recognize the inevitable in the scriptures and unwilling to give its due place to the doctrine of judgment in our preaching and in our teaching.

And it's not a very easy element to strike. A preacher doesn't like to preach about it. The congregation doesn't like to hear about it.

And if there are those here this morning who are not persuaded, Christian men and women, there is something in your hearts that will rebel against it, instinctively. And if you're dependent, as people are, preaching on the radio or on the television on the free will offerings of men to keep them going, it's not a very wise thing to do. Your coffers may run dry.

Preach forgiveness. Preach the love of God. Preach the joys of heaven.

You can draw much, but tell men that it is appointed unto men once to die and that the resurrection is a notice of judgment. You strike another chord in the hearts of men, and you run into danger. Now, you and I cannot read the New Testament honestly without becoming aware of this very somber note that is struck.

And behind it there lies a logical and a moral necessity. The God who loves righteousness hates unrighteousness. The God who did not spare his only Son but gave him for a world undone will not spare men who so trivialize with sin that they scorn the Son he gave.

So that the early preachers of the gospel concluded that in raising his Son from the dead, God had served the world with a summons, assuring the world that those who reject his Christ, that those who deny his Son, that those who think of him in terms of those who put him on the cross, that they simply cannot escape the consequences of their evil. Now, let me just try to spell that out very briefly. In the momentous event of that first Easter day, God reversed the judgment of Satan and sinners against his Son as that had

been expressed in the crucifixion.

What was the crucifixion? Well, the physical aspect of it is very familiar to us. I guess most of us have read the gospel stories through again in this season of the year. But now, what was it? Let me put it to you in this way.

In the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, men were expressing their view of Jesus of Nazareth, their view of his person, their view of his teaching, their view of his claims, their view of the total person, all that he was and all that he did, and they expressed that in terms of nailing him on the cross. Now, in other words, by crucifying Jesus of Nazareth upon the cross, the Jews and the Romans and everyone else that was concerned, representative of the whole human race, were saying no to the claims of Jesus Christ. They were saying, you are not the one you pretend to be.

You are not the one you claim you are. You are not God incarnate. Our life does not depend upon you.

Our salvation is not in your hands. We'll get rid of you and we'll get you out of the way. And so indeed it looked.

It looked as if they got their way and as if they'd silenced him because having nailed him on the cross, they buried him in the tomb. And you remember how the Romans got that massive stone there, sealed it with a Roman seal and put Roman soldiers on watch. It seemed as if Jesus was really dead and dead forever.

But God reversed that verdict. By the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, God said to those in ancient Jerusalem and those in modern contemporary Toronto, who take the same view of Jesus Christ, I disagree with you. You nail him to the cross.

I raise him from the dead. You put him to naught. I make him a prince and a deliverer.

And you and I are at cross purposes and we're going to collide. God says that in raising his son from the dead. I want therefore to sound the message this morning as clear as I can.

If your view of the Lord Jesus Christ is not consistent with God's view, if you want to get rid of him out of your life, if you want to put him on the fringes, if you want to cause his voice to die and his influence to wither and you want to nail him to the tree, if you're on that side, if you reject him, God says, listen, as sure as those early people who rejected him and nailed him on the cross were exposed, so too will you be exposed in the fullness of time. It is impossible for us to get away with the rejection of Jesus Christ. Since he's risen from the dead, God has given us an advance warning that we cannot do it.

At the end of every road we may take, in life or in death, we shall meet him. Now our Lord was aware of this before he died and he announced it. I don't know what the disciples thought he had in mind when he told them something like this.

I'm quoting from John 12 for example. Now is the time of the judgment of this world. Now the prince of this world will be driven out.

Evidently they didn't understand it fully, but they remembered it and they recorded it by the enabling of the Holy Spirit for our prophet. Jesus dying on the cross and resurrection was a time of judgment upon this world, the exposure of sin and satan, and the prince of this world was thereby driven out. I'll take another word like such as this.

Jesus is teaching the disciples about the coming ministry of the Holy Spirit. Do you remember what he said? The first main major comprehensive statement was this. When he comes, he said, he will convict.

Now we're in a court of law. Prove guilty and pass judgment. He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.

In regard to sin because men do not believe in me. In regard to righteousness because I am going to the father. The father thinks otherwise of me where you can see me no longer.

And in regard to judgment because the prince of this world now stands condemned, has been judged. Now this is exactly what Peter had in mind on the day of Pentecost when he said these words to those thronging the streets of ancient Jerusalem. Men of Israel, he says, listen to this.

Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God among you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did among you through him as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge. And you with the help of wicked men put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

But God raised him from the dead. Freeing him from the agony of death because it was impossible for death to keep its hold upon him. Do you see the picture? You did this but God did the exact antithesis.

God reversed your processes. God collided with you and he turned your whole thinking upside down and thereby give you notice of warning. You either change your mind or you collide with me.

There is a very serious element to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. He's no longer the babe in the mother's arms. He's the Lord of glory.

He's the king of kings. And it is impossible, it is impossible to reject him with impunity without having to face the consequences. The clear implication of Peter's statement here in the book of Acts is that since Jesus Christ is God's son, the denial of his claims will one day involve us in tragedy and in ruin.

But scripture is even still more specific. Scripture goes on so far as to say that God has clearly pre-intimated that fact of future judgment and assured men that the judge is already appointed. Paul says that but I'm not going after that this morning.

I want to say, I want to dwell with one other thought in the concluding moments of our morning worship. It's a more positive one. It's a very blessed one.

I trust every Christian will know something about it in experience this morning. Here it is. In view of the clearly established fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, the early preachers announced to the believing and faithful an unprecedented hope for all the future.

And I deliberately put it like that. An unprecedented hope for all the future that covers not only time but eternity. The apostle Peter in writing his first letter speaks of Christians as having been born a second time unto or into.

It's a beautiful picture. Born again into a lively hope. A Christian is living in hope you see.

This is his fear. This is his native air. He lives in hope.

How has he got there? He's been begotten again unto or into this lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And he tells us more about it. He spells it out.

I have no time to do that this morning. Unto an inheritance incorruptible, etc., etc. There it is.

Read it for yourselves. The resurrection transforms the whole of life including, including death and the grave. And this was something that took the ancient world by storm.

Christians all acknowledging that Jesus had first died for their sins and was therefore risen from the dead for their redemption, did not simply tolerate suffering and persecution. They embraced it with gladness and with joy. Now this is something that we simply cannot understand.

This is something which is so, so out of alignment with contemporary thinking and contemporary attitudes that we simply cannot understand the person who will willingly go forward knowing that he's going to suffer shame in the eyes of the world. And yet he goes forward preaching Christ, teaching Christ, living Christ as these early Christians did. These early believers believed that in the light of the cross and the resurrection even suffering and death were now their allies, not their foes.

A living vital hope had emerged in their hearts. They were not content to sit idly with folded arms enjoying the peace of God and the knowledge that their Savior was alive. They didn't just simply sit down and do nothing.

They didn't just simply sing about it, but they went out into a hostile world. Now just imagine it if this has never come home to you before. Imagine these few going out into the streets of Jerusalem, the headquarters of the very Jews responsible for the death of our Lord.

Fifty days after the event they're going out into the streets of Jerusalem and preaching into the very faces of those very men that the Lord whom they crucified, God had raised from the dead, declaring war upon them unless they repent, but promising eternal life. How could they do it? They could only do it, you see, because they believed that if the authorities put them in prison, God could make even that a means of grace to them. Even if they had lashes and stripes on their backs, God could even use that to bless them.

Even if they were slain, even if they died, everything works together for good to them that love God. Why? Because our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and is alive again, makes all things so work. Now this transforms life.

Because of the resurrection of Christ, the Christians believed that in their union with Him, all their, dare I quote, quote, words that I don't like myself, but perhaps I dare do so this morning. Christians dare to believe that due to their union with Christ, their lesser calvaries were meaningful also and could only lead to glory as they received their buffetings and their persecutions in the name and for the sake of Jesus. Now there are examples of this that always thrill me.

And around Easter time, I like to take down one or two history books and just go over again the record of some of the saints and the way they looked at death and suffering in the light of the resurrection. Let me give you one or two illustrations. Take that of the saintly John Chrysostom of Constantinople.

He was threatened with banishment by the emperor if he insisted on his Christian profession and upon his preaching there. The old saint replied to the emperor who charged him in these words, no, no, says he, thou canst not. When the emperor said he was going to banish him, no, no, he says, thou canst not.

For the world, the world is my father's house. Thou canst not banish me. Nay, says the emperor, but I will slay thee.

Nay, nay, replies Chrysostom, but that thou canst not do either. For my life is hid with Christ in God. Thou canst not slay me.

I will take from thee thy treasures, said the angered emperor impatiently. Nay, nay, nay, says John Chrysostom. Thou canst not, thou canst not, and he repeats it, for in the first place I have none that thou knowest of.

My treasure is in heaven and my heart is there. Thou canst not touch him there, but I will drive thee away from man and thou shalt have no friend left anywhere. Nay, nay, nay, says Chrysostom, that thou canst not do either.

For I have a friend in heaven from whom thou canst never separate me. I defy thee. There is nothing thou canst do to hurt me.

What makes people talk like that? What makes people invincible? I'll tell you. It's not the fact that they got their names on the book of a church, not only that. It's this, the fact that they know that the Christ who died is alive again to save to the uttermost, and he makes everything work together for good to them that love him and obey him.

He's Lord, you see. He's Lord of life and death. Or take the experience of Henry Francis Light, the author of the hymn, Abide With Me.

At the very zenith of his great career, he was told bluntly that he had only a few weeks to live. He was in the grip of a very, well, really a fatal consumption. Going home, he looked death in the face, then fell upon his knees and spent some hours in communion with his Lord.

And out of that communion, there came forth the hymn of which the following lines are a stanza. I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless. Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.

Where is death's sting? Where grave thy victory? I triumph still, says the dying man, with consumption in his body, I triumph still. If thou abide with me, but permit me to put it to close, more positively still, and with this I conclude. The resurrection of Jesus Christ gave the Christian a keen anticipation of glory.

Now, people often say about Christians that their minds are too much in heaven to be of any very much use upon earth, too heavenly minded to be of any earthly use. Now, we generally counter that and say, oh no, no, the Christians have been very practical people, and they do a lot of things, and they have. But let's not throw away the baby with the bath water.

There is a sense, my friends, in which it is of the very essence of the Christian experience to be heavenly minded, to be heavenly minded. If you are risen with Christ, we shall be coming to that next Sunday morning or Sunday morning afternoon in our studies on Colossians. If you then are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father.

We have the mind of Christ, and we must seek the things that are above if we are risen with Him. Think of the Apostle Paul saying, or rather writing to the Philippians these words, I, he says, am in a tug of war. There is something pulling me this way and something pulling me that way.

I am torn between the two. I desire to depart, to be with Christ, which is far better. Now, what were these two things? What were the alternatives? Well, first of all, the need of the Philippians.

They were in danger. They needed more teaching. They needed this, that, and the other.

The need of the saints and the privilege of service and the plight of the lost. But then there was this. He felt the call that way.

But then there was this upper call, to be with Christ, which is far better. Do you know anything about that evaluation of the Lord Jesus Christ? Is your heart with Him? When last did you and He talk together in quietness? When last did you break your alabaster box of precious ointment at His feet when there was no one looking and no one hearing and no one watching, but just because you loved Him and you were heavenly minded? John Bunyan would have one of his characters in Pilgrim's Progress say something that is difficult to understand until we get the whole context. These are the words.

This I am resolved on, to run when I can, to go, that is, to walk when I cannot run, and to creep when I cannot walk. Now, the picture is that of the persevering Christian. Running, when he cannot run, he still goes, but when he cannot properly walk, he will creep.

And then he completes it in this way, my mind is beyond the river that has no bridge. Now, what is he saying? What he is saying is this, that Jesus Christ has captured his heart, and his mind is where his heart is, and there is no bridge that can bring his heart and his mind back from heaven. He has become heavenly centered, and he looks at the things of earth from the vantage point of the heavens and of eternity.

C.S. Lewis puts it very succinctly and rightly when he says, it is only since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in, he says. Aim at earth and you will get neither.

This glorious expectation of hope experienced by New Testament believers needs to be put alongside the views of our Christless contemporaries in order for us to appreciate the significant contrast between them. This must be my last word. We have heard quite a lot about some of the Beatles over the last year, tried to destruct the circle.

Some of you will remember these words coming from John Lennon and Paul McCartney. This is how they describe things. He is a real nowhere man.

Did you get that? Those of you who do not speak this lingo, I will repeat it for your sake. It is as strange to you as to me. He is a real nowhere man, sitting in his nowhere land, making all his nowhere plans for nobody.

Doesn't have a point of view. Knows not where he is going to. Isn't he a bit like me and you? Paul McCartney asks that.

My friend, where do you belong? Which camp are you in? Do you know something of the vibrant, saving, sanctifying, persevering hope of men who know the risen Christ and trust him? Or are you living in a nowhere land, and going you know not where? I beseech you in my Savior's name on this glad Easter day, if there are any doubts in your heart, come and come just as you are, and recognize that if Calvary says that he has done everything that needs to be done to procure salvation objectively, he is alive to

receive you into his arms and will do in you and for you all that needs to be done to serve to the uttermost those that come to God by him. Come today. May be someone here in our Easter day service this morning, you've never really left and turned your back upon right and upon wrong in order to trust and follow the Savior who is Lord.

Do it today. Let us pray. Our God and our Father, you know our thoughts as we ponder these things from your word.

You know our reactions to your truth, not only now but always. You know the defenses that we have set up. You know too how many truths that once we knew have become blunted because we have allowed the philosophies or the unbelief of our contemporary age to creep into our habit of thinking and our standard of living.

Bring us, we pray today, out of the dismal darkness of ignorance of the fact that our Lord is risen. Bring us out of that in-between twilight experience of half believing it in the head but knowing nothing about it in the heart and in the life. All living Lord Jesus Christ be known among us today.

Make yourself known to us. But this whole congregation may be a congregation that will at last, if not before, meet again as we've met today around the throne of God in heaven, the throne of God and of the Lamb.

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