

The Resurrection

by John McGregor

The resurrection of Jesus shows the total success of Calvary, the punishment for sin has been fully paid, and Jesus' power over death and the grave.

Duration: 30:45

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:1

Topics: "Resurrection"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of finding what we truly need at the foot of the old rugged cross, by coming to Jesus and trusting in Him. He shares a story from the American Civil War to illustrate the need for rest and connection to the head. The resurrection of Jesus is highlighted as it reveals the future of believers, emphasizing that just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, we shall bear the likeness of the man from heaven. The preacher also discusses the success of Calvary, explaining that Jesus was delivered over to death for our sins and raised to life for our justification, offering us a fresh start and cleansing from our wrongdoings.

Transcript

Our scripture reading this morning is from 1 Corinthians chapter 15. And for just a few moments, while the girls are getting dried off and they'll be back here at the back to greet you in a little while, let me just share a reflection from the word of the living God. 1 Corinthians 15 and verses 1 through 23 say, My brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.

By this gospel you are saved if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you, otherwise you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter and then to the twelve, and after that he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James and then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also as to one abnormally born.

For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

Whether then it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believe. But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless, and so is your faith.

More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead, but he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile.

You're still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

But each in his own turn, Christ the firstfruits, then when he comes, those who belong to him. Heavenly Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for this Resurrection Sunday.

Thank you for the glorious truth that we have tremendous hope today because of Jesus. And Lord, would you just remind us this morning of that hope and build it up in our hearts and lives, we pray in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In a world where there's war, famine, disease, depression, addiction, confusion, grief, trouble for families, marriages, and many more terrifying things, what hope can Easter bring? JFK, John Kennedy asked Billy Graham when Billy Graham was a young man, is there any hope? And you know, if you just listen to the news on television, you'll come quickly to the conclusion there's not much hope. Everything seems to be struggling and striving, and there's trouble and pain, and it reminds us of that old saying, Hubble bubble toil and trouble, doesn't it? But as we think about the fact of Jesus dying for our sins 2,000 years ago, what does it mean today? What application does this have for us? I loved how the girls all spoke about the fact that in Christ they're realizing they're not just a cosmic accident, but they have a purpose and a reason for living. That's because the Bible teaches us that God created us in his image, and that's where we find our worth.

You know, if you just stop today, you might say, boy, that guy's old and kind of fat and white-haired, and I can see occasional wart here and there, but that's just your opinion. I can be happy today because Jesus says, John, I made you in my image, and that changes everything, doesn't it? He created us, but the Bible tells us that there was not only creation, but a separation. In that first garden, the Garden of Eden, there was disobedience, and in the disobedience there came the consequences of human beings being separated from God without him.

Imagine what it must have been like in the original creation to look on the face of God in that garden, and the intensity of pain and struggle and awfulness of having to leave that circumstance and be separated. It's hard for us to be separated from the ones that we love, isn't it? But the thing that we're searching for most often is to be reconciled with the one who loves us. And over the while, people have tried to do all that they can do to rebuild that connection between people and God, to be religious and do good things and try to look after one another and all of those kinds of things, and yet there's still an empty ache in the human heart because the truth of the gospel is not that we can reach up and touch God and be reconciled

to him, but that Jesus came down, and he came down to touch us and to give us life if we will trust in him.

So we know there was creation, we know because the Bible teaches us there was that separation, and oh I thank God every Easter time, although on Good Friday I sit and cry like a baby as I think about substitution. That's when God's law says, John, you're guilty. You gotta pay the price for your own wrongdoings, but on Good Friday I'm reminded that Jesus says, I'll be your substitute.

And the wonderful thing about being a Christian is there'll be nobody in heaven by accident. Everyone who ever ends up in heaven will be there because they made a choice. They made the choice to say, I accept that substitution.

I know I can't pay the price for my wrongdoings. So Lord Jesus, I'm so thankful that you went to Calvary for me. And you know, that's where that joy-filled moment that the girls all talked about, every one of the four of them had that sort of joy-filled moment.

And we were tempted, weren't we, to kind of get Irish and go, there's nothing more exciting than to know God, to actually know him personally and to know that he touched us and cleansed us and gave us new life. And we read in Scripture, when we come to trust in Christ, old things pass away and all things become new. So we know there was creation.

We know there was separation. We know there was substitution. But perhaps you're here today and you don't know forgiven.

There's still that sense in your heart. I'm not sure where I stand with God. Oh, my friend, you can be sure today on this glorious Easter Sunday.

You can be sure. This whole passage of 1 Corinthians 15 talks about the resurrection of Jesus. And I just want to show us some things that it enables us to understand about the resurrection of Jesus.

Not only did he die for our sins, but it says he was raised according to the Scriptures. He was raised. And in that resurrection, we see several things.

The first is we see the success of Calvary. How can it be that a man who took the nails for you and for me, the Son of God, would rise again on the third day, just exactly as it had been said in the Scriptures would happen? So the resurrection shows us the total success that in Christ, sin is paid for. God raised God, the Father raised God, the Son, to show the success of Calvary.

If he had not risen, the world would never be certain that there's enough power in this to find the forgiveness of sins and to have that new life. But because he is risen, we see it, and we experience it, and every generation experiences it. I love to see our youth, and I love to see them in church, and I love to see them following Jesus.

Because it reminds me, as I'm becoming an old man, that the gospel is just as effective as when the Lord reached into my life in 1969 in Belfast and said, I see the gun in your hand. I see the murder in your heart. I see the violence that you've become, but if you lay it down and come to me, I'll wash the slate clean.

Man, that is the success of Calvary, isn't it? The punishment for sin has been fully paid. Jesus in John chapter 19, it says in our English Bible on the cross, he said, it is finished. One Greek word in the Greek New Testament, the language in which it was originally written, tetelestai, it just is the kind of thing you

would put on a bill, paid in full.

So when the day comes and I have to stand before God, and someone might say, his life's not perfect, the Savior will say, paid in full. Wonderful. Absolutely wonderful.

We see the success of Calvary. I'm just going to turn over to the book of Romans just before 1 Corinthians there, the fourth chapter and the 25th verse, the last verse in the chapter. We read this, he, Jesus, was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

That word justification just means just as if I'd never died. Sin. Wow.

You ever do anything wrong, Pastor Brad? How do you ever get it straight? You can't get it straight. But what happens when you bring it to Jesus? He takes it and what does he do? Say, thank you very much, Brad. See, you've done that wrong.

He washes you clean. You mean he's not gonna zap you? Nope. Are you sure? Yep.

I like this guy. He's certain about things. He understands that when Jesus does the work, he does it all.

It is clear and cleansed. Am I speaking to somebody this morning and you would say, oh man, I wish I could start over again. I wish I could find a new beginning.

I wish I hadn't done and said the things I have. My friend, the Christ of Easter is for you. He'll give you that new beginning, that fresh start all over again.

When we come to him in repentance and just acknowledging, I'm not perfect, Lord. I've made mistakes. I need your forgiveness.

And I love to say as you've heard me say many times over the last three years, heaven is not a place for perfect people. Heaven is a place for forgiven people. Little Irish whoo-hoo could be in there.

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is a historical fact. You see, the scripture here speaks about so many witnesses, even as many as 500 in one place at one time. So there is a way for a person to begin again.

There is a place where a person can know that fresh touch of God. There is an opportunity here this morning just to come to him and to say, Lord, touch me. Save me.

Lord, touch me again. Cleanse me again. Fill me again.

Secondly, as we examine the scriptures here in 1 Corinthians 15, we see the Lord's power over death. In John 2, 19, Jesus said to those who were skeptical around him, he said, destroy this temple and I'll rebuild it in three days. And they thought he was talking about the temple on the mountain there in Jerusalem, but actually he was talking about the temple of his body.

And in those three days, he lay in the grave, but he came right back out. I said to one of you, our prayer group this morning at 10 o'clock, you know, when you stop and think about the account of the resurrection, can't you hear the two Roman guards when they come back sort of to their senses after the resurrection has taken place? And the one guy says to the other one, you realize this makes the only thing certain is taxes. Death could not hold him.

The grave could not contain him. Love in John's gospel and chapter 10. I promise I'll go quicker and we'll wrap things up.

In John chapter 10, verses 17 and 18, Jesus is speaking and he says this, the reason my father loves me is that I lay down my life only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again.

This command I received from my father. No wonder he said, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me shall never die.

He can also take you and I through all of the journey of life into life eternal because he's been there. Now, there's no nice way to say this, so I'm just going to be Irish and say it. A lot of people in our world today are searching for all kinds of things, success and riches and peace and happiness and joy and all of those things.

But the place that we find what we're really looking for is at the foot of that old rugged cross when we come to Jesus and say, Lord, you walked this way, you walked through death, you walked on into life. Lord, I'll put my hand in yours and I'll follow you because I know you understand where you're going and I can trust you. There's a great little illustration from the American Civil War about soldiers who were marched all day and when they came late in the evening, they just lay down on the ground and put their capes over them to try to catch a few hours sleep before going on into a battle.

And over the nighttime it snowed and the next morning there were just all these little lumps where they were lying. But when the bugle sounded it, the snow dispersed and every soldier as it was came out of that little snow grave to stand to attention and to be ready to follow the leader. And the resurrection that is coming for those who are asleep in Christ, I believe, is just like that.

When the trumpet sounds, we will indeed be ready. We see thirdly that the resurrection reveals that Jesus is the head of the church. He has displayed his resurrection so that we might know the church is not a man's organization or a people's organization.

It has a head and Jesus is the head of it. And he has never abandoned it. Oh, there are times when we try to take over and run it for him and we make a great mess.

But when we allow him to be the head of his church and the head of our lives, oh my friends, what peace and what joy and what sense of strength there is. I love the church. I love this church family because, oh, I don't know, nine or ten years ago when Pastor Tom was our pastor and we came and we wanted to be an encouragement, Roberta and I, and instead of us being an encouragement to you, you became an encouragement to us.

That's just so like the family of God, isn't it? We need each other, but we need that connection to the head. Fourthly, as we look at the resurrection, we see it reveals the future of believers. Back in 1 Corinthians 15 and verses 47 through 52, we find these words.

The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth. And as is the man from heaven, so are those who are from heaven.

Just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so we shall bear the likeness of the man from heaven. I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the

perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery.

We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed. In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will all be changed. After the resurrection, it's obvious to the disciples that Jesus' body is changed physically.

Previously, his body was subject to weariness, to pain, to hunger, all of those things, cold, and so on. But after the resurrection, his body has new qualities and capabilities. When they are locked in the upper room, Jesus stands in the midst of them.

And I love how he comes, because they must have been so afraid. And Jesus stands in the middle of that room and says, peace to you. What is it that you need from Jesus this morning? For he stands in the midst of this room, and he is so able by his spirit's power to touch us, to strengthen us, to forgive us.

These help us to know that those in Christ will wear glorified bodies, adopted for eternity, still visibly recognizable, touchable, but incapable of decay. Oh, I like that. I used to be able to run 100 yards in 10.8 seconds.

How many of you think I could do that today? Oh, I love you guys. If I tried it, you'd need the wheelbarrow, or the ambulance, or both. Because in those days, I wasn't carrying this, or this, or these, or my beautiful teeth are like stars.

Some of them come out at night. That is the progress of that which is perishable. But I rejoice in what the Scripture says.

There is in Jesus an imperishable blessing, life, and body. I need to wrap things up, and so let me just do that quickly. Lastly, the resurrection reveals his victory over all things.

Jesus is seen to be the victor over the evil one. He is seen to be the victor over all the things of the world, and he is the one to whom we sing victory in Jesus. So in a world where there's war, and famine, disease, struggle, brokenness, heartache, hurt, troubled lives, troubled marriages, troubled homes, what does this Easter Sunday mean? Well, let me make this application.

Mary was grieving, but she had a person to go to. For the risen Lord Jesus stood there, and he even made it so personal as he said, Mary. When you think about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, he can touch the depth of your hurt and grief this morning.

When there was hurt and doubt and fear and struggle, Thomas, who said, unless I can put the finger in the nail print and the spear print, I'm not going to believe that he's risen from the dead. And Jesus said, Thomas, go ahead, touch me, see it, know it. Into our doubts and brokenness there is still a risen Savior who takes away our fear and lifts us in his love.

When a person really blows it, one of the reasons why I like Peter so much is he's the guy who really blew it. I tell you, I don't know him. And if you look at the end of Mark's gospel, you'll see it says this.

To the women, the angel gave this instruction, go to his disciples and Peter. Have you blown it? But Jesus still comes to touch all of our failure and to renew and to strengthen our lives. The resurrection teaches me that when many, many mistakes are made, the difference between a Christian and someone who does not know Jesus is that the Christian has someone to go to, not something, not a philosophy, not an idea, not a

religion, something to do over and over again, but a person, the person of Jesus.

We're going to sing in a moment, but before we do, let me just read to you these words. Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son. Endless is the victory you o'er death have won.

Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away, kept the folded grave clothes where the body lay. Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son. Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb.

Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom. Let the church with gladness, hymns of triumph sing. For her Lord now lives, death has lost its sting.

Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son. No more we doubt you, glorious Prince of Life. Life is nothing without you.

Aid us in our strength. Make us more than conquerors through your deathless love. Bring us safe through Jordan to your home above.

Would you stand with me? On this Easter Sunday morning, forgive me for being blunt, but appreciate that the Lord lays on my heart to preach the gospel. Could I ask you this morning, have you known that life-changing moment that the girls talked about in their testimony? Have you understood your need of a Savior so that you might have the touch of the love and the forgiveness and the peace of God? Have you failed in trying to walk with Jesus because we try so hard in our own strength and it goes nowhere? We need the strength of His Holy Spirit. And so this morning as we sing a closing song, I want to just ask you if God's been speaking to you.

Not sure whether you have that forgiveness or not. You come forward here this morning. The elders will come and be willing to pray with you, show you Christ's way of salvation.

Maybe there are other needs, deeper needs, family needs, life needs. Don't walk out the door carrying them. My friend, there's a cross to come and bring them to.

And there's a person who has lived and died and lives again in strength and power to help us with every issue and part of life. And now, dear Heavenly Father, as we pause in your presence, we pray you'll give us grace. And just as the women discovered the person of Jesus and the disciples and the apostles and the 500 others, Lord, may we this morning discover again in freshness and truth the risen, living, victorious Lord Jesus.

For it is in His name that we pray. Let's sing together. And as God would move you, please feel free just to come and join us at the front.

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