

# God's Answer to Every Challenge

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*Resurrection is God's answer to death in all its forms and aspects, and it is the birthright of every born-again child of God.*

**Scripture:** John 11:25-26, Romans 6:4, 2 Corinthians 1:9, 2 Corinthians 4:10-11, Ephesians 1:19, Philippians 3:10, Colossians 3:1, 1 Peter 1:3, Revelation 1:18

**Topics:** "New Life in Christ", "Resurrection"

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## Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes that resurrection is the ultimate answer to every challenge faced by humanity, highlighting its transcendent power over death, which is the greatest adversary to God's purpose. He illustrates that resurrection is not just a future promise but a present reality for believers, enabling them to experience new life and transformation in Christ. The sermon underscores that resurrection is a growing experience, manifesting in the lives of individuals and the Church, as they bear witness to the power of Christ's resurrection. Sparks warns against viewing resurrection merely as a future event, urging believers to recognize its immediate significance in their spiritual journey. Ultimately, he concludes that in Christ, all things are defined and transformed by the reality of resurrection.

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## Transcript

As a matter of both interest and further instruction, we could follow our recent course and bring under consideration other typical characters to show what resurrection means in the totality of human categories. But we did not set out to study human life comprehensively. Our purpose was to try to show that, in Christ, a new humanity has been introduced in resurrection, and that Christ as such challenges our humanity and demands - and makes possible - adjustment to Himself; that is, conformity to His image.

Having illustrated this by such cases and categories as Mary Magdalene, the two disciples on the Emmaus Road; Simon Peter; James the Lord's brother: we proceed now to gather this whole matter into a final emphasis.

The first thing that the New Testament makes perfectly clear is

The Transcendent Power of Resurrection

Resurrection is the paramount miracle.

Death is the greatest power against God's work, God's likeness, God's purpose. Death is the greatest power in this universe against man; his labours, his hopes, his wellbeing. Death is the last word in the creation as it is. Outside of God there is no power in this universe as great as death. When it has intervened and done its work there is nothing that can reverse or destroy it. In the realm of evil there is no power that exceeds the power of death. This is why, in referring to the resurrection of Christ from the dead, the words are used: "the exceeding greatness of his power" (Eph. 1:19). When death has exceeded every other evil power - sin, suffering, sorrow, and destruction, then God's unique and exclusive answer is the only hope, and the one answer.

More importance and glory is placed upon resurrection in the New Testament than upon any other matter. Indeed, everything else is declared to be in vain and worthless until resurrection is established. Resurrection is stated to give the value to every testimony and every work. Death, spiritual death (not cessation of being) - of which the physical is only one small aspect - is Satan's horizon. Resurrection is God's horizon in Christ.

Resurrection, we repeat, is the answer to death in all its forms and aspects: God's answer in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Having said that, let us proceed to note that the next thing revealed in the New Testament is that this supreme truth in Jesus Christ is the birthright of every one born into God's spiritual family; the heritage of every truly born-again child of God.

But the point for special realisation is that we must not make the mistake that Martha of Bethany made, when she received such a revealing correction. She said, concerning her brother: "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection." It is not something in the future for believers, but for the moment when they believe on the Lord Jesus and receive Him. The order now is first the resurrection of the human spirit and at last the resurrection body. This, for any born-again Christian needs no stating, although the meaning may take years to learn. It will come up again in our next series on 'Horizons'.

What immediately arises out of this fact is that, while resurrection is a spiritual crisis and experience,

Resurrection is a Growing Experience.

The history and experience both of the Church and individuals as in the New Testament is a revelation and manifestation of what Paul calls "the power of his resurrection". Again and again, and in ever-deeper and fuller ways situations arose in which the issues were nothing less than an end or a new beginning; death or new life. This is a fact, but there are one or two things to note in this connection.

The reason is found in a repeated word - 'That': "Always bearing about in the body the dying [the putting to death] of the Lord Jesus, THAT the life also of Jesus might be manifested in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. 4:10); "We had the sentence of death within ourselves, THAT we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead" (2 Cor. 1:9); "For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, THAT the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. 4:11).

The great fact is that the Church and individual believers are intended to be the vessels of "the testimony of Jesus", and "the testimony of Jesus" is that God raised Christ from the dead and He lives by an indestructible life. Whatever and whoever has Christ within it or them cannot die. There may be allowed many assaults of death; many deep and dark experiences; but resurrection is God's answer to faith every

time.

There is another factor to be recognized. Death is an agent in God's hands. When Jesus died He bore away a whole condemned order. Death nullified what could not stand with God. Although He died atoningly and vicariously, and we do not extend that, yet, the principle remains that every fresh experience and working of "the dying of Jesus" is intended to remove something in order to make still more room for Christ risen. The outcome should be both a new knowing of the power of His resurrection, and a clearer and fuller place for Himself. Thus, the experience on both its sides is necessary. In the final issue all corruption will have been removed, and Christ will be all in all.

The first picture in the Bible is of resurrection as to the creation. The last picture is that of resurrection consummated.

So we are right in saying that

**IN CHRIST ALL THINGS ARE HORIZONED BY RESURRECTION.**

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