

**Acts 4: 1-12; “In Jesus – The Resurrection”, Sermon # 18 in the series –
“Laying the Foundations”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on November 13th, 2011, In the Morning Worship Service.**

Peter has just finished preaching about Jesus to a very great crowd from Solomon’s porch in the temple. It was a very marvelous Spirit-anointed sermon to well over 5,000 people. We know that, because we are told in verse 4, that 5,000 men believed. How good and great a thing it is when a person’s hearing is coupled with faith in the Word preached. There were no doubt many others there as well, who were still thinking about the things that they had heard. But not everyone received the Word of salvation that day to the salvation of their soul. They had all just heard one of the greatest sermons ever preached, and 5,000 men did believe; yet all did not believe. Some did not act in the right way upon what they heard. It is possible to hear the Word of God, preached in the power of the Holy Spirit, and to see others come to faith in Christ; and yet you, yourself, not receive the truths about Jesus that are set forth. Oh, all you who hear me this morning; I pray that you will have spiritual ears to hear this: Jesus Christ was raised from the dead on the third day after He was crucified. He is alive from the dead and He is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty this morning! If you do not know Christ, pray this morning that the Lord will work in your heart by His mighty power. What a glorious truth this is; that Christ is here this morning to save and to heal your soul. Come to Him in the faith that He can, and He will save you and change your heart. “Without faith, it is impossible to please God, and he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (Hebrews 11: 6)

Let us observe, as we begin to consider this subject together, that not everyone that day was filled with joy in hearing the news that these 5,000 people were saved from their sins. The priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, and it says that they were “greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.” This is the truth that I would like to open up for you, and expand upon, so that you might believe. In Jesus is the resurrection of the dead. I would like, 1st of all, to bring to your attention that many people are disturbed when they hear that there is going to be a resurrection of the dead. (Verse 2a, and 3-11) Then 2^{ndly} – I want to assert to you the truth that in Jesus is the resurrection from the dead. (Verse 2b) And then 3^{rdly} – I want you to understand that it is essential to your salvation from sin, and having eternal life, that you believe in Jesus. (Verse 12) I hope that you will see this morning, that salvation from sin comes through Jesus Christ, and your resurrection will also come through Jesus Christ.

1st of all, Let me bring to your attention the fact that many people are disturbed when they hear that there is going to be a resurrection from the dead.

(Verse 2a, and 3-11)

“The priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.” This statement refers to their having been disturbed by something Peter had said in his message in Chapter 3, verse 13, to the men there gathered, “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.” “But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of Life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.” This was a very disturbing thing for these proud men to hear. They didn’t like it personally, and they didn’t like the fact that the Apostles had been teaching the people in this way. You see these men had a false religion and they did not know it. The reason that their religion was false was not because they were Jews. It was to the Jews, in the Old Testament times before Christ came, that God revealed Himself. In those times salvation was “of the Jews”. God revealed Himself to Abraham in those times, so long ago, and he was the first Hebrew. He was the first of the Hebrew race. He was the first Jew. To Abraham were given great and precious promises of how it would come to pass, that through his “seed”; through one of his descendants, “all the nations of the earth would be blessed”. But what these men; the priests, and the Sadducees did not want to believe was that Jesus was the Promised Seed; their Messiah. They should have believed it, for they had the Scriptures. But they did not understand the Scriptures or the power of God. Jesus had said this to those Sadducees who had come to Him in Mark Chapter 12, verses 18-27. The Sadducees were men who not only did not believe in the resurrection from the dead; they did not believe in a future state of existence after death, where spirits of people go to await the resurrection from the dead. But they did not understand the Scriptures or the power of God. They were disturbed at the idea. And the reason that they were disturbed was because if it was true, they would be judged for their sins, and there would be an accountability to God which they would have to deal with.

This leads me to say, that people who do not know God do not like to hear that they are accountable to the holy God. Even religious people who have the Scriptures can have these objections in their heart and mind. God made them and He keeps them in life day by day, and yet they would prefer to believe in a God who loves them and accepts them as they are – in their sin. But God says plainly in His Word, that He will not. They prefer to take the parts of the Word of God which speak of His love and kindness, and ignore the parts of it which speak of His perfect holiness and the judgment. But God has plainly declared that He will judge all men and hold them accountable for their sins. People make up their own theories about what God is like. They think that they might believe that God has made all things; but if He has, He lets people believe whatever they want to about

Him. One person's opinion is just as good as another. Truth is all relative, and not absolute. And if they read the Scriptures, they impose their own ideas of God and Christ upon them. There are other people who reject the idea that God has spoken in His Word the Bible, and they make up their theory of evolution. The theory of evolution is very convenient to those who hold it. They think that they will not have to think about God; the One Who is living and Who is holy and righteous; faithful and true to all that He has said in His Word. They do not have to think about the fact that God has declared in the Bible that all men are sinners by nature and practice. These people of our text believed in the God of the Bible, but He was a God of their own making and design. They superimposed ideas upon Him, and created Him in their own image and likeness. They believed in being moral; they believed in God's law; but it was only so that they could have personal peace and a stable government and establish their own authority in society. But the idea of being judged by God and of eternal rewards being given to some, and eternal punishments being given to others, was totally unacceptable to them. They were the humanists of their day. They were the rationalists of their day. They had reasons for all the things that they did and believed, but they were not God's reasons or right reasons. They were people who ultimately lived for this life, and to please themselves. They thought more of their own reasonings than God's, as found in the Scriptures.

Ask yourself this morning if some of these things that I have just mentioned, might be true of you? Do you believe your own reasonings of the meaning of life and what God is like and what He expects of you? Is your life governed by the Holy Scriptures? Can you affirm, as the Scriptures teach, that God is the judge of the living and the dead? Do you believe that every sin and transgression that you have committed is remembered by Him, to punish it in the judgment of the last Day, unless you repent? Do you believe that this is why the Lord Jesus was sent by the Father into the World; to bear the sins of all those who will believe in Him to eternal life? Did Jesus Christ die for you, or are you disturbed that I am preaching this way? You can see how disturbed these men were. In verse 3 it says that they laid hands on the Apostles, and put them in jail until the next day. And the next day they were summoned by Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest; they set them in the midst of them, and they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?" Did these men really have the right and the authority to teach these things? Verse 8 says, "Then Peter". This is the same Peter who had insisted that he would follow Christ to death, but denied Him when the officers of the temple came to arrest his Master. You remember how fearful he was then. But now he says, "If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole." It is a great indication

of a sinful, fallen human nature, when men will question the good deeds done by Christians which have helped certain people, and which show them and other people through the preaching of the Scriptures, the way to have peace with God; to have their sinful nature changed and their sins all forgiven, through Jesus Christ our Lord. If you are disturbed by the thought that Jesus has risen from the dead; if you are disturbed by the preaching of the Word and the good works of Christians; you need a new heart. You need to come to God through Jesus Christ for it. If you will believe in your heart that God has raised Jesus from the dead, he will give you a new heart and a new life so that you are no longer disturbed by Christians and their talk; you will love it, and them. All these things come through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now 2ndly - I want to assert to you the truth that in Jesus is the resurrection from the dead. (Verse 2b)

The Apostles “taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead”. Now you will notice that it says that they preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead, not of the dead. Some men who are Dispensationalists and Premillennial in their Eschatology think that this means that the resurrection of the righteous is going to take place at one time and the resurrection of the wicked at another time a thousand years later after the Millennium. They do not believe in one general resurrection of the dead as the Bible clearly teaches. Instead they look at a verse like the one that we are studying this morning and they make a point which cannot and should not be drawn from this text. Let me give you an example of this. William MacDonald who wrote The Believer’s Bible Commentary says, “In verse 2, the expression resurrection from the dead is important because it disproves the popular idea of a general resurrection at the end of the world.” “This passage and others speak of resurrection out from among dead ones.” “In other words, some will be raised while others (unbelievers) will remain in the grave until a later time.” I would say in response - But this statement and its conclusion is simply not true, and it is reading into the text something which it does not say. What it is saying is that the Apostles were teaching that in Jesus was the resurrection from the dead. It is in Him that the resurrection from the dead first took place. It is true that in the original that it can read, “out from among the dead”. John Gill says that “they preached through, or in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.” This is exactly what Jesus’ resurrection was; He came back from the dead, and was raised out from among the dead. And we can further say that it is in Him that all the resurrections of all the people who have ever lived, or ever will live will take place; because He is the Lord of the living and the dead. But this does not mean that those resurrections from the dead will take place at separate times separated by a thousand years.

I want you to turn with me over to John Chapter 5, verse 24. Jesus is speaking here and He says, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into

judgment, but has passed out of death into life.” “Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.” “For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.” “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” These verses prove to us that in Jesus is the resurrection from the dead. His words show us first that when you believe His Word, and you believe in God the Father who sent Him to die on the cross for you the sinner; then you pass from death into life. There is a spiritual resurrection which takes place in your heart; God causes you to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1: 3) Let me ask you if you understand that you are spiritually dead to the spiritual things of God and Christ and His Word and how to live your life to bring glory to God, until you believe in Jesus? You are dead in your trespasses and sins until you hear the voice of the Son of God speaking to your heart in connection with the Word preached. But if you hear spiritually and believe in Christ you will live. It is a resurrection from a life of sin and selfishness, to a life of living according to truth and righteousness. That is what Jesus is saying there in verse 25. And that is what happens when you are saved and converted to Christ. He is speaking of His ability to raise you from the dead spiritually in your heart, and to give you the gift of eternal life. If you believe in this testimony from the Father concerning His Son, you have passed from death into life. But verses 28-30 are talking about something else. They are speaking of the physical resurrection from the dead. Follow me in this. “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”

Now at first glance you would think that Jesus is speaking of two different resurrections which happen at two different times, but the first part of the verse will not let us draw that conclusion. For it says that an hour is coming; that is, a certain and particular time is coming in the future; when all who are in the graves will hear Christ’s voice and come forth from their graves. And then our Lord goes on to describe that there will be two different kinds of resurrection within this one general resurrection of all the dead. There will be a resurrection of life for those who have done good, and there will be a resurrection of condemnation or damnation, as it says in the King James Version. Two different resurrections at the same hour, and yet what vastly different resurrections they are in terms of the people raised from the dead. In the resurrection unto life, all of God’s dear people; all those who love Christ and His appearing will be raised from the dead; in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye they shall be changed and given their

glorious resurrection body; they shall then be “caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus they shall ever be with the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 15: 50-52 and 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-17) Then on the heels of this momentous event shall follow the resurrection of the damned; in which they also will be raised in a moment of time, but not be transformed in any glorious sense; but rather they will receive their body back to them; the guilt and the shame of their sins still clinging to them; they shall be judged and sentenced and led away to eternal punishment. I believe that they will see what has happened in the glorious resurrection of the righteous, and they will gnash their teeth and weep and wail for what they now know is coming upon them.

This is the great importance of your coming not only to be saved, but also your coming to know the reality of a changed life which manifests good works and righteous and holy living. In the resurrection you will be judged by your works, as to whether you are a true Christian or not. A mere profession of faith will not be enough to establish you as a true Christian. If you are a true Christian you will become a good person and your will do good works as the general and regular course of your life. The righteous person is not saved by his good works. He is saved only by the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ which merits eternal life and all the blessings of salvation being given to him, both in this life and in the next. He, or she, is saved by faith. The righteous person will not be perfect in any sense of the word until they die. And when they die they become, for a time, until the resurrection, the spirit of a just man or woman, made perfect. (Hebrews 12: 23) But faith without works (good works; righteous works leading to holiness of life); that kind of faith is dead. “Without holiness, no person shall see the Lord” it says in Hebrews Chapter 12, verse 14. Ask yourself this morning, my friends whether you have a true and saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Has your heart changed since you believed in Jesus? Has your life changed from sin and selfishness to righteousness and a love for Christ and His people? Do you now love coming to Church to hear Christ’s word preached? Are you repenting and turning away from pride, worldliness, sensuality, selfishness and sinful attitudes of anger and unkindness to people around you? Does your speech and conduct show forth the grace of Christ, or do you justify using vulgar language and taking the Lord’s name in vain? Are you trying to spend time with other Christians; seeking to have Christians as your best friends; or do you still run with unbelievers, getting dragged into their sinful activities continually? All of these are pertinent questions, both to God and to yourself and other Christians around you. Are you ready for the resurrection from the dead? For when you die, it will be too late to change anything. Everything that you have lived your life for will be revealed to you in an instant when you die. You will lose your body for a time, but immediately your spirit will either go to God and Christ to be with Him forever, or you will be placed in the outer darkness to await the judgment of the last Day.

Remember, it is in Jesus that you will come to know the resurrection from the dead. But each of us must ask ourselves; what kind of a resurrection will mine be? **And then lastly - I want you to understand how essential it is to your salvation from sin, and having eternal life, that you believe in Jesus.** (Verses 11 and 12)

The men who were greatly disturbed at Peter's preaching in Jesus the resurrection were the same men who had rejected Jesus as their Savior, their Lord, and their promised Messiah. As verse 11 says, "The stone which was rejected by you builders, it has become the chief cornerstone." Jesus was and is that stone. He is the foundation of the salvation of every person who will live forever. Ask yourself today if you are building your life on this foundation of His finished work? Ask yourself if you have taken Him to be your Savior and Lord and whether you are trusting in His righteousness to save you from God's wrath; His anger against sin which will be manifested in a coming day, and which now rests upon all those who have not trusted in Jesus? Jesus, and Jesus alone, has laid the foundation of salvation so that you can have eternal life for the asking. May you lay hold of life eternal; that which is life indeed! The builders of Israel; these priests and leaders; they rejected Him, and because of this they perished in their sins. You need not perish in your sins, no matter how great they are. If you will come to Christ and tell him of your great need; how great have been your sins against God and great have been the lacks in your obedience to His holy Word, He will forgive you and take you into His loving care, to change your life for the good, and to change it forever; so that you will be accepted by God and pleasing to Him. There is salvation in no other name but Jesus. God the Father has made this simple. There is no other name under heaven given among men by which you must be saved. It does not say that anything else is required to be saved, but you must indeed be saved, or you will perish eternally. Let not your heart be hardened to this Word; let your heart be tender before Him. Call upon His name; believing in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, and you shall be saved. Do not wait and say that you might do this later, for you may not have another day; another time, another chance. Put your trust in Christ, and He will prove everything to you, related to God's truth. If any man is willing to do God's will, he shall know of the truth, Jesus says, whether I speak from myself, or whether I speak from God.