

Christ, My Only Hope - radio

“Jesus said unto her, I AM the resurrection and the life. he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this” (John 11:25-26)?

Mary and Martha were beside themselves with grief because their beloved brother Lazarus had died. He had been dead four days when Jesus spoke these words. Though Martha and Mary sent word to Jesus when Lazarus had fallen sick, yet Jesus delayed to come. He delayed coming until Lazarus died so that He might make known the glory of God by raising Lazarus from the dead. When Jesus came to Bethany where Mary and Martha lived, Martha met Him. She poured out her heart. She said, *“Lord, if you had been here, my brother had not died”* (John 11:21). Jesus said to her, *“Thy brother shall live again”* (John 11:23). Martha said, *“I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day”* (John 11:24). Martha knew from scripture that God raised the dead. She knew that He would raise up all of His people on the last day. Job said, *“I know that my Redeemer liveth and He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth”* (Job 19:25). But like Martha, we think of the resurrection as an event, as a time, a great thing that God will do sometime in the future. Martha only understood the physical aspects of the resurrection. Therefore, her understanding provided her little or no comfort in light of her brother’s death. When we do not know Christ as the resurrection and the life, we are tempted by our curiosity to spend huge amounts of time and effort studying the end times. So many books have been written about the end times! Yet for all of the hype, we must ask a burning question. “What is the resurrection?” Is it a time? Is it an event? Jesus, by His answer, sets us straight. I therefore want to bring a message on the resurrection. I’ve entitled this sermon, **“Christ, My Only Hope.”** When we believe that Christ is the resurrection and the life, we look to Him and we look for Him, not for an event. Are you looking for the end of the world, or are you looking for Christ? Are you looking for a date or are you looking for Christ?

- We must first understand that **Resurrection is life from death**. If resurrection is life from death, if Christ is the resurrection and the life, if the one who is raised contributes nothing by his will or by his work, then I who am a great sinner have great hope in Christ alone!! As a sinner under the guilt and dominion of sin, and the sentence of death for my sin, I have great hope in Christ!
 - Resurrection is life from death. Death is the result of sin. “*By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin*” (Rom. 5:12). Only the righteous live. “*In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death*” (Prov. 12:28; Gal. 3:21; Rom. 8:10). Therefore, to be raised from death to life, my sin must be removed. My righteousness must be established. But since I, as a dead sinner, can do neither, therefore, only Christ, who is the “resurrection and the life,” can put away my sin, can establish my righteousness and can raise me from the deadness of my sins in my very nature and in my body!
- Secondly, to understand that Jesus is the **Resurrection and life we must understand that resurrection and life are in the Lord Jesus Christ who lived and died and rose again**.
 - Jesus said that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. It is because God made Himself God to His people that they live. God is only God to His people in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 20:28; Php. 2:11).
 - Resurrection and life are only ours if we are in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Lord Jesus Christ is in us. The apostle John said, “*This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life” (1 John 5:11-12). Jesus said, “*He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him” (John 6:56). Therefore, if we believe Christ as all of our salvation, all of our sin payment, all of our righteousness, even all of our life, and our Lord and our God (John 20:28), then He dwells in us and we dwell in Him. We have eternal life because eternal life is in Him.**

- Because resurrection and life are only ours if we are in Christ, we are therefore only raised from the dead and live to God by virtue of our union with Christ. Jesus told His disciples, “*Because I live, you shall live also*” (John 14:19).
- **Christ is the resurrection and the life in at least four ways to His people**
 - (1) Because of who He is as God the Son
 - (2) Because of His relation to His people, which God made in eternity
 - (3) By what He did for His people in time
 - (4) By His Spirit which He gives to them
 - First, Christ is the resurrection and the life to His people because of **Who He is**. It is God who raises the dead (Rom. 4:17; 1 Cor. 6:14). Therefore, if the Lord Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life, He must be God. He is God the Son, the one God with the Father and the Holy Spirit: it is God who raises the dead.
 - Second, the Lord Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life to His people because of **His relation to them, which God made in eternity**.
 - He has life in Himself as the Son of God and as our Mediator “*As the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself*” (John 5:26).
 - He gives life to whom He will (John 5:21). Because God the Father gave Him, as our Mediator, power over all flesh to give eternal life to all those God gave to Him in eternal election (John 6:39-40; 17:2).
 - There are at least four ways in which Christ is related to His people from eternity. **First**, God made Him the Husband of His people from eternity. As a husband and wife are one flesh and one body, and as the head and body are one man, even so, all of God’s people were joined to the Lord Jesus Christ from eternity. We live because Christ, our Husband and Head lives. Scripture says that God joined His people to Christ in eternal election. “*He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world*” (Eph. 1:4). This is an eternal union. It had no

beginning. It has no end. We know this is an eternal union because Christ is “*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*” (Rev. 13:8). But He was slain because “*He loved the Church and gave Himself for it*” (Eph. 5:25). Therefore, He loved and gave Himself for His people from eternity in the counsels of God. “*The Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood*” (Acts 20:28). God eternally ordained that He would purchase the Church by Christ’s redeeming blood (1 Pet. 1:20). Therefore, in the will and covenant of God, Christ espoused the church to Himself from eternity with His own blood (Heb. 13:20)¹. Scripture says that whatever God thinks and says, is already done. “*God calleth those things which be not as though they were*” (Rom. 4:17). “*The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand*” (Isa. 14:24). Therefore, **Christ and His people have been joined as one from eternity, as Husband and Wife**. By this union, because He lives, all of His people live in Him. When He died, they died with Him (Rom. 6:11). When He rose, they rose with Him. “*You, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses*” (Col. 2:13). We are raised with Christ because Christ put away our sins. Therefore, **Christ is the resurrection and the life by who He is as God, by who He is as Mediator between God and His people, and by what He is to His people**. He is their Husband. They are His wife. He lives and He lives for them. They are one with Him (Eph. 5:30). They therefore live in Him.

- Christ’s relation to His people is not only as their Husband, But God made Him the last Adam as their federal Head. Now that term, “federal Head” may seem confusing and daunting at first. But in the U.S., the federal government makes treaties on behalf

¹ This sentence was added after recording the radio sermon.

of all of the people in the nation. Those treaties are binding on all the people. Now, Adam stood as a federal head to God for all who would be born to him. By his sin, all of his unborn children became guilty. In their own conception in their mother's womb, Adam's sin nature becomes theirs (Ps. 51:5). God set up Adam to figure of Christ. All of the elect were chosen in Christ as their federal Head. God chose Christ and appointed Him to be the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45). He, the Lord Jesus Christ, assumed their nature. He was made under the law as their representative Head. In the eyes of God's law Christ and His people are one (Rom. 7:4). He fulfilled that law. His obedience was counted as theirs. As all of Adam's unborn children were made sinners by his disobedience, so all of Christ's elect, all of His unborn children, were made righteous by His obedience unto death (Rom. 5:19). Again, as Christ was slain in the counsels of God before the foundation of the world, and as God made an everlasting covenant with Him which was put into force when He shed His blood (Heb. 13:20; Matt. 26:28), therefore, all of God's elect were made one with Christ as their representative, federal head from eternity in the everlasting covenant of grace. God raised Christ from the dead because His obedience unto death was a perfect and everlasting righteousness (Rom. 4:25). **Therefore**, by our union with Christ as our representative federal Head, all of God's elect are made righteous by His obedience (Rom. 5:19). They are therefore raised with Him. Romans 5:21 sets forth this truth. "*As sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord*" (Rom. 5:21). This verse teaches several things. Sin brings death. Adam sinned and the entire human race became guilty. They came under the sentence of death. In their Adam-nature, they became dead in sins. But through Christ's obedience, all in Him, by God's election, all who would be born to Him, by the Spirit of

God, are made righteous in Him. And all who are in Him, are given the gift of eternal life because of His righteousness.

- In addition to Husband and in addition to representative Head, **God made His people one with Christ as their Surety.**

Before God, the Lord Jesus bore our sin debt as His own debt and satisfied God for it. In Hebrews 7:22 God says Christ is “*the Surety of the New Testament.*” Now, a surety is someone who, in the eyes of the law, is one with a debtor. Whatever debt the debtor owes is considered the debt of the surety. A beautiful and instructive example of this is given in Gen. 43:9; 44:18-34. Judah became surety to his father Jacob for Benjamin his brother. Judah promised to take full responsibility for Benjamin to bring him to Jacob again, even if it cost him his own life! When Joseph, the ruler and judge over Egypt, accused Benjamin of stealing his cup, and sentenced Benjamin for that crime, Judah interposed himself for Benjamin and answered Joseph, who was the judge, for all accusations against Benjamin. Judah did not plead Benjamin’s innocence. But he pleaded his father’s love for Benjamin. And he pleaded his own suretyship engagements that he made his father long beforehand. Judah answered Joseph the judge for Benjamin with himself. He said, “*Take me instead of the lad*” (Gen. 44:33-34). Now, Christ became Surety for God’s elect before the foundation of the world. How do we know this? Whatever the Lord Jesus Christ is declared to be in time for His people, He must have been made from eternity (Acts 15:18; Heb. 7:17, 21). All of the sins of all of His people became His sins in the eyes of God’s law because He is their eternal Surety (1 Pet. 1:18-20; Rev. 13:8). Jesus therefore told the soldiers, “*If you seek me, then let these go their way*” (John 18:8). Christ answered God’s justice as our Advocate (1 John 2:1-2). He did not plead our innocence. He pleaded His Father’s eternal love for His people. And He interposed Himself with His own blood

between God's justice and our lives. Christ answered God the Judge for His people with Himself. "Take me. Let these go their way," was the answer of our Surety at the cross. For His sufferings and death, God forgave the sins of His people. God justified them. And having been forgiven, having been justified, He raised them from the dead with Christ (Rom. 4:25; 5:9; Col. 2:13).

- Moreover, **God made Christ our Redeemer**. Not only is Christ one with His people as a Husband is with his wife, one as a Head is with the Body, one as Adam is, as federal head is to his children, and one as Surety, but the Lord Jesus Christ is one with His people as their Redeemer. He came to "*give His life a ransom for many*" (Matt. 20:28). We are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 5:9; Eph. 1:7). His blood is the ransom price for our liberty. We paid nothing! He paid with His life! We are set free! Therefore, as our Redeemer, we are one with Him as His redeemed. The liberty He purchased with His own blood is our freedom from the guilt of sin, freedom from the condemnation of sin, and freedom from the death sin brings, even freedom to eternal life! He was made Redeemer in God's everlasting covenant. He is therefore the resurrection and the life by who He is as God and Mediator, and by who He is to His people in relation to them from eternity. Because we are one with Him who is life, who is the God of the living, therefore we live. Christ has always been the resurrection and the life to His people! This is our comfort and hope at all times and for eternity!
- Now **thirdly**, the Lord Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life by **What He did**. In all that He is as God and man, He did for His people (Heb. 5:1). As our Surety and as the Lamb of God, He removed our sins, the cause of death. As the last Adam, He established our everlasting righteousness, which is the prerequisite for life. As our Husband and Captain, He rose from the dead, conquering our

enemies: sin and death. God accepted Him as our Surety. He looked upon Him as our federal Head. He received the ransom price from Him for our Redeemer eternal redemption, our everlasting liberty from sin, the curses of the law and all enemies. God's people are in Christ by eternal election (Eph. 1:4). Therefore, what He did, we did in Him. What God received from Him, He received from us by Him. All of the blessings of life and all of the rewards that God gave to Him (2 Tim. 1:9), He gave to all of His people with Him according to His eternal purpose (Eph. 1:3-4; 3:11; Rom. 8:17,32). God raised Him from the dead because He pronounced His offering to be a full satisfaction for our sins (Eph. 5:2). And He pronounced His work in all that He did to fulfill His Father's will to be perfect (John 17:4; 19:30). God justified Him. And having been justified, He raised Him from the dead. "*He was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification*" (Rom. 4:25). "*Great is the mystery of godliness, **God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit...***" (1 Tim. 3:16).

- Moreover, the fourth way in which Christ is the resurrection and the life to His people is because He gives to them His own Spirit. The Spirit of Christ in us is life. "*If Christ be in you, the Spirit is life because of righteousness*" (Rom. 8:10). There is no eternal life apart from Christ. When the Spirit of Christ is in us, Christ is in us, and we live because Christ is life and has become our life. "*I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me*" (Gal. 2:20).
- We must therefore ask ourselves this fundamental question. How do I know that I live, that the Spirit of Christ lives in me?! The answer is, Faith in Christ crucified is the evidence of the Spirit of Christ in us (John 3:14-15; Gal. 3:2, 8, 13-14). All in whom Christ dwells by His Spirit, believe Him. It is only by the indwelling Spirit of God that we believe Christ. In Ezek. 37:11-14 God said that His people would know the LORD when He had given them life by His Spirit (Ezek. 37:14). And when Nicodemus in John 3, asked Jesus how a man could be born again, Jesus answered this way: "*As*

Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:14-15). As Moses lifted up the serpent on the pole, God’s law cursed Christ on the cross. The historical event in Numbers 21 has a direct one-to-one correspondence with Christ crucified for His people. All who were bitten by the serpent were dying. In the same way, God passed the sentence of death on all men because of their sins. As all who had been bitten in the wilderness and looked to the serpent on the pole lived, in the same way, all in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells look upon Christ as all of their deliverance from sin and the curse of the law, even as all of their life. We look when we believe Christ as our sin-bearing, curse-bearing Substitute in whom all of our life is. We come to God by His shed blood. Because God accepted all who were in Him, God accepts us for what He received from Christ. We therefore live in Him. He is our God. He is man. He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He established everlasting righteousness for His people by His obedience unto death (Php. 2:6-8; 2 Cor. 5:21). Remember Thomas? Thomas doubted that Jesus rose from the dead. He refused to believe unless he put his finger into the nail prints in His hands and feet, and put his hand into the spear-wound of Jesus’ side. Now the Lord Jesus appeared to Thomas. He said, *“Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing”* (John 20:27). When Thomas saw that Jesus had died and risen again, that He therefore must have made an end of sin and established everlasting righteousness in triumph over sin and death, when He saw that the One who stood before Him had done all of this, he cried, “My Lord, my God,” (literally) “The God of me! The Lord of me!!” In the same way, when we see that the Lord Jesus Christ bore the sins of His people and made full payment for their sins under the curse of God, when we look to Him as all of our righteousness and see that He is God and man who overcame death, and that our life is in Him, when we also bow to Him by the faith God’s Spirit gives to us, then we will cry with Thomas, “My Lord and my God!” Faith in Christ is faith in Him as our Redeemer who obtained our eternal redemption by His sufferings and death on the cross. Faith in Him is

faith in Him as Lord of all, in whom alone is resurrection from the dead, who put away sin, who conquered death by His redeeming death, and gives His own Spirit to us by which we live.

Jesus said, “*Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, **hath** eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day*” (John 6:54). Eating and drinking in this verse correspond to faith. **We eat Christ’s flesh and drink His blood when we look to, and rely on Him, as everything in our salvation.**

Jesus also said, “*He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him*” (John 6:56). If we believe (eat, drink) Christ, if we look to Him as the Son of God, whom God the Father chose and appointed and anointed to save His people from their sins by His obedient life and substitutionary death; if we own our sin before God and abandon all that may be called ours, and look to Christ alone as the one whom God accepts for His people, then we dwell in Him and He dwells in us.

The Psalmist, seeing that Christ is the resurrection and the life, said, “*He that is our God is the God of salvation. And unto God the Lord belong the issues from death*” (Ps. 68:20)! Christ is the resurrection and the life, because resurrection is the salvation from sin. He is JESUS because He shall save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). He is the God of the living. He is the resurrection and the life. All who live, live in Him and He lives in them, and they live by Him (John 6:56; Gal. 2:20).

The apostle Paul said, “*If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His*” (Rom. 8:9). Faith in Christ crucified, risen and reigning, is the grace of the Spirit of Christ that enables us to find in Christ all of our salvation from all of our sin, and to find Him to be all of our righteousness before God, all of our holiness, our resurrection from the dead and all of our life! It is the Spirit of Christ in us that enables us to lay hold of Christ by faith as our life from our death in sins, and as our certain hope that we **have been** delivered from sin’s guilt and punishment, that **are being** delivered from sin’s dominion and that we will be raised in our body,

though now our body is dead because of sin (2 Cor. 1:10; Rom. 8:10). When we eat and drink of Christ's body and blood by faith, that is, when we depend on what He did to put away our sin and bring us to God by His death on the cross, then we have **fellowship** with Christ. This is the only way we can have communion and fellowship with Christ and with God (Matt. 26:26-30). This faith is the gift of His Spirit in us. Christ stood for us. He answered for us. He rose for us. He lives for us. He is our life. We live in Him. He sends His Spirit to us. His Spirit is life. And His Spirit in us is our life. His Spirit gives us grace to believe in looking to Christ. In so looking, we find Him to be our all as God Himself finds Him to be our all. And thus, we fellowship with Christ, living upon Him, by His work of redemption for us. "*I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me*" (Gal. 2:20). By this grace of faith, given to Paul by the Spirit of Christ, he had fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Spirit of Christ in me is life. His life in me produces faith in Christ. It is only believing Christ and Him crucified as my Lord and my God, my sin-bearer, my righteousness, my holiness, my redemption, my life, my all, that I now live and know that I live to God. This is how we know we have the Spirit of God. This is how we know we have eternal life. "*He that has the Son has life*" (1 John 5:12).

The resurrection of Christ is the only hope that a real sinner has. My only hope that God will accept me in the Day of Judgment is that Christ lived and died for me, and that God raised Him from the dead. "*Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us*" (Rom. 8:34). My only hope before God and in my conscience while I now live, and my only answer in the Day of Judgment is this. IT IS CHRIST THAT DIED. IT IS CHRIST THAT IS RISEN. God must look upon Him for me. God must accept Him for me, and accept me in Him. I must be found in Him (Php. 3:9). According to the word of God, this persuasion in me is the work of the Spirit of Christ. Christ is all my salvation from all my sin. He is all my righteousness, all my holiness before God. He is therefore all of my life and all of my hope for eternity. I live by Him because He lived and died and rose for me, and now lives in me. Christ in me is my only hope of eternal

glory. *“Christ in you the hope of glory”* (Col. 1:27). *“We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith”* (Gal. 5:5).

Jesus asked Martha, *“Believest thou this?”* May God so give to you and me to believe Christ, the resurrection and the life (John 20:31)!