

“Why You Must Believe the Resurrection”  
1 Corinthians 15  
(Preached at Trinity, Easter Sunday, April 21, 2019)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Today is Easter Sunday, the commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For the vast majority of human beings, the resurrection has little significance.
  - A. Many do not believe in the resurrection. It is contrary to reason and nature. People who have died do not come back to life. To them it seems like the superstitious belief of the naïve.
  - B. For others, the resurrection is just simply irrelevant. Christ is irrelevant. They are content to live their lives, oblivious of eternity.  
They see Easter as a day marked by pastel colors, eggs, and bunnies. They focus on Easter egg hunts and jelly beans. The resurrection isn't a matter of serious thought.
  - C. And there are some who identify with Christianity and call themselves Christians who don't place any real importance upon the resurrection. For them, its ok if you believe it, and its ok if you don't. What's the big deal?
2. This morning I want you to understand believing in the resurrection of Christ is a big deal. In fact, your salvation depends on it. In our age of relativism and hyper-tolerance that may sound shocking. In our age when the Gospel has been robbed of objective substance it may sound strange that it matters *what* you believe. For many today, the Gospel has been watered down to just believing in Jesus. The question is, believing what about Jesus? The Gospel is never void of objective truth. The New Testament often portrays the Gospel as synonymous with truth.

**2 Thessalonians 2:13 NAU** - "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth."  
**Galatians 2:5 NAU** - "But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you."  
**Gal. 5:7 NAU** - "You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?"  
**1 Timothy 2:3-4 NAU** - "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,  
<sup>4</sup> who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."  
**Hebrews 10:26 NAU** - "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,"
3. Saving faith is not believing some vague generalities about Christ. It is important *what* you believe.  
Paul makes it clear in 1 Cor. 15 that the resurrection is at the heart of the Gospel. Paul breaks the Gospel message down to three basic elements.

**1 Corinthians 15:1-4 NAU** - "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, <sup>2</sup> by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. <sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,"

4. Paul tells them this Gospel that was preached to them was the Gospel they had received and the Gospel upon which they stood—this was the Gospel by which they were saved. That makes the resurrection a big deal.
  5. This morning I want to set before you why the resurrection is essential to the Gospel and why belief in the resurrection is essential to your salvation.
- I. The resurrection displays the unity of the Godhead – God is triune. He exists as the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All three were involved the work of redemption.
- A. All three persons of the Godhead were involved in the resurrection
    1. Jesus Christ was raised by the will of the Father  
**Acts 13:32-33 NAU** - "And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, <sup>33</sup> that God has fulfilled this *promise* to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'Thou art My Son; today I have begotten You.'  
**Acts 2:23-24 NAU** - "this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death. <sup>24</sup> "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power."
    2. Jesus Christ was raised by the power of the Holy Spirit  
**Romans 8:11 NAU** - "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."
    3. Jesus Christ was raised by the prerogative of His own divine will  
**John 10:17-18 NAU** - "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. <sup>18</sup> "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."
    4. If you deny the resurrection you deny the work of the triune God
  - B. Our redemption is a Trinitarian work - All three persons of the Godhead were active in the eternal Covenant of Redemption
    1. The Father elected and gave His people to His Son
    2. The Son came to save His people from their sins
    3. The Holy Spirit applies the work of the Father and Son through the effectual call and the gift of faith and repentance
    4. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are active in our salvation  
This is why Baptism is performed in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
    5. Belief in the resurrection is an expression of our confidence in the work of the Godhead in our redemption.

- II. The resurrection displays the Father's acceptance of Christ's atoning sacrifice.
- A. Believing the resurrection is believing in the satisfaction of God's Divine justice.
1. This is the nature of saving faith. We believe that the death of Christ is a sufficient atoning sacrifice for our sin.
  2. Without the resurrection your faith is but an empty hope without any validation.
- B. Jesus came to accomplish the salvation of those whom the Father gave Him. How do we know He was successful? Our faith is not without substance.
1. The resurrection proves that Christ's sacrifice satisfied Divine justice. God raised Him from the grave demonstrating that His wrath had been appeased.  
**Romans 4:25 NAU** - "He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification."  
**Acts 17:30-31 NAU** - "God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent, <sup>31</sup> because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."
  2. If Christ is still in the grave we have no assurance that His sacrifice was accepted, no assurance that it was delivered before the throne of God.  
**1 Corinthians 15:14 NAU** - "if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain."
- III. If Jesus is still in the tomb we have no Mediator
- Romans 8:33-34 NAU** - "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; <sup>34</sup> who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us."
- A. Jesus Christ is our high priest who offered up the ultimate sacrifice
1. In the old covenant there were many priests who had to make continual intercession  
 Jesus' sacrifice was once for all ending all other sacrifices.  
**Hebrews 7:22-25 NAU** - "so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. <sup>23</sup> The *former* priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, <sup>24</sup> but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. <sup>25</sup> Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."
  2. If Christ did not rise from the dead He could not have made intercession for us – we would be without hope
- B. The resurrection makes possible Christ's continuing work as our Mediator
1. Jesus has been exalted as King of kings
  2. He is currently seated victoriously upon His throne.  
**Hebrews 1:3 NAU** - "And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,"

3. Jesus is presently reigning as Lord of all. His enemies are crushed beneath His feet. In the end all will stand before His judgment seat and all will bow and confess His rightful dominion.

**Philippians 2:10-11 NAU** - "that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

- 4 Without the resurrection Jesus decayed in the grave. We have no Mediator, no Intercessor, no King  
We have no salvation.

C. The resurrection gives us the joy that we serve a risen Savior

1. He is with us – There is no greater comfort as we face life's adversities  
**Matt 28:20 NAU** - "I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
2. The resurrection gives us yet another more cause for rejoicing. The same Christ who rose from the grave and ascended into heaven is coming back.  
**Acts 1:10-11** – "And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."  
**John 14:1-3 NAU** - "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup> "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also."
3. This is the great joy and celebration of Easter. We serve a risen Savior who will soon return for His Bride  
This is our great celebration every time we partake of the Lord's Supper  
**1 Corinthians 11:26 NAU** - "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."

IV. The resurrection is the surety of our own resurrection

- A. The day is coming when death will be forced to give up our bodies  
**Philippians 3:10-11 NAU** - "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; <sup>11</sup> in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."
1. Jesus Christ is the first of many  
**1 Corinthians 15:21-23 NAU** - "For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,"
2. If Christ had not risen what hope would we have of our own resurrection. Without the resurrection we go to the grave without hope. In Christ we have the surety that the grave is not the end. Death is God's terrible curse upon sin. Jesus Christ by His death and resurrection has conquered death.  
**1 Corinthians 15:55 NAS** - "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

B. The resurrection is the basis of our hope.

**1 Peter 1:3-5 NAU** - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

1. Our faith rests on the fact that Jesus is alive. He did not remain in the tomb. He accomplished our salvation and then returned to His throne in glory. A dead Christ might be a wonderful teacher but not the Savior and Giver of Life.

**1 Corinthians 15:17 NAU** - "and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins."

2. The Resurrection of Christ assures us that we will experience resurrection to eternal life. Jesus was raised unto life and is currently reigning in majesty and exaltation. Those united to Him by faith share in His life of glory.

3. Because of the resurrection of Christ we have absolute confidence in our own resurrection.

**1 Corinthians 15:51-53 NAU** - "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, <sup>52</sup> in a moment, 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 be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality."

#### Conclusion:

1. The Bible makes it clear you must believe the resurrection in order to be saved.  
**Romans 10:9 NAU** - "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;"
2. Believing in the resurrection is placing full confidence in Christ – His life, His death, and His victory over death. When He cried out "It is finished!" His work as our sacrifice had been completed. And then He was raised from the dead to validate it.
3. Have you trusted in Christ? Are you resting in Him? The resurrection cannot be separated from the Gospel.
4. What place does the resurrection have in your daily life?  
Are you living in light of the fact Jesus is alive, that He is seated upon His throne? Are you joyously awaiting His return?  
**Colossians 3:1-2 NAU** - "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."  
**Philippians 3:20-21 NAU** - "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; <sup>21</sup> who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself."
5. The resurrection is one of the greatest events in the history of the world. It is a really big deal.