

WHY IS THE RESURRECTION IMPORTANT? Easter Sunday – April 21, 2019

Today is Easter Sunday. The Scriptures say that what we teach and preach, especially on Easter Sunday, seems like foolishness to the world. The world says that the cross and the resurrection are fairy tales meant for weak individuals who need a crutch to lean on because they cannot handle the things that life throws at them. This brings to mind a song written by a friend of mine in the 70's during the "Jesus Movement." The words of this song seem as timely today as they did 42 years ago when they were written.

FOOL FOR JESUS

People try to tell me that I can't live this way
That things have changed and life is not the same
And they try to tell me that I'm missing all the fun
But I know this peace I've found has only now begun

Some have tried to tell me to live and just be free
That we must seek life's pleasures while they last
And they try to tell me that these are modern days
And that I'm just a fool to go on living in the past

Someone's always tryin' to shake my faith and bring me down
But all I know is what I feel inside

People try to tell me that I am just a fool
But I guess I'll be a fool for Jesus
Yes, I guess I'll be a fool for Jesus

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I agree with this song. I'd rather be a fool who believes in the power of God to raise me from the dead than be foolish and miss that opportunity. And I agree with the world's assessment for I truly am a weak individual who needs something and Someone to lean on. I cannot do without Jesus in this life and I do not want to be without Him in the next. 1 Corinthians chapter one says this:

1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-23

"For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside.' Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?"

"For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness; but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God."

Since Paul speaks of the wisdom of the world verses the wisdom of God I felt it appropriate this

Easter morning to take a look at why belief in the resurrection is important. The resurrection of Jesus is central to the Christian faith. Believing in the resurrection is not foolishness as some say but is rather the wisest thing a person could do if they were to receive forgiveness from sin and find salvation for their soul.

There are seven reasons why belief in the resurrection is important. The Resurrection is important because it is: The Proof of Salvation, The Power Behind our Faith, The Power of God over Sin, The Power of God over Death, The Power of God over Separation, The Provision of God for Transformation, and The Assurance of Attaining the Resurrection of Life. Let's go through them one at a time.

Belief in the Resurrection is important because
#1-IT IS THE PROOF OF SALVATION

Salvation is not possible without belief in the resurrection. If you do not believe that God raised Christ from the dead then you cannot be saved. It's as simple as that.

ROMANS 10:9-10

“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; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”

Notice that it is from the heart that a person believes. And what is it that Paul says you must believe in your heart? He says, *“Believe in your heart that God raised Christ from the dead.”* Once this belief is established then confession follows and results in salvation. There is no salvation without belief and confession. And belief comes from acknowledging that God has raised Christ from the dead. Confession alone is not enough. Many give lip service to their faith but the only ones who are truly saved are those who acknowledge that the resurrection occurred. So the resurrection is important because belief in the resurrection is the proof of your salvation.

Belief in the Resurrection is important because
#2-IT IS THE POWER BEHIND OUR FAITH

Faith in the power of the resurrection is the linchpin of our salvation. It is what connects us to the righteousness of God. Without belief in the resurrection there is no impartation of righteousness and no hope of forgiveness of sin.

If Christ has not been raised from the dead then our faith is worthless for we have placed our faith in the fact of the resurrection. And if God did not raise Christ from the dead then He will not raise those who die believing they too will rise. If the resurrection did not occur, then all who believe in the resurrection will perish in their faith.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-19

“Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still

in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.”

Without the resurrection our faith is worthless and we are still in our sin. If our hope is in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and this is a false hope, then people should pity us for having such a hopeless hope. But we have not placed our faith in a false hope. The resurrection did occur the power that raised Christ from the dead is the same power that resides in us. This same power has cleansed us from our sins and will raise us up from the dead as well. The resurrection is important because it is the power behind our faith.

Belief in the Resurrection is important because
#3-IT IS THE POWER OF GOD OVER SIN

ROMANS 6:3-11

“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.

“Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that he lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

The Scriptures tell us that the same power that raised Christ from the dead lives in us. If there was no power that raised Christ from the dead then there is no power living within us. And if there is no power living within us we have no ability to live righteously. For if He was not raised from death then neither are we. And if we are not raised then we are destined to continue to live in our body of sin, unable to control the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the boastful pride of life (1 John 2:16).

But because of the resurrection we can walk in newness of life. Our old self has been crucified with Him. Our body of sin has been done away with. We have been freed from our life of sin.

ROMANS 6:12-14

“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”

We are no longer slaves to sin and sin is no longer a master over us. The resurrection is important because it is the power of God over sin.

Belief in the Resurrection is important because
#4-IT IS THE POWER OF GOD OVER DEATH

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 15:50). Perishable flesh cannot

enter an imperishable kingdom. As the Scriptures say, “No man can see God and live”. Even Moses had to be hidden in the cleft of the rock as God passed by lest he be destroyed by the righteousness of the Eternal One (Exodus 33:18-23). It is only through the resurrection that we attain an imperishable body that is able to endure the glory of God.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:50-57

“Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 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.

“For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

We too shall put on immortality. We too shall rise from the dead. We died to the Law through the body of Christ. Death is no longer master over us. Death has lost its sting and its power. Death has been swallowed up in victory. The resurrection is important because it is the power of God over death.

Belief in the Resurrection is important because #5-IT IS THE POWER OF GOD OVER SEPARATION

When we were dead in our trespasses and sins we were separated from God, with no hope of reconciliation. The sinful spirit within us was contrary and opposed to the Spirit of God. Though we were His creation we chose to separate ourselves from Him through the sin and disobedience we committed. In essence we became orphans, alienated from our Heavenly Parent. But through the resurrection we have been adopted back into the family of God as His children, and reestablished as heirs of His kingdom. This occurs through the Spirit that raised Christ from the dead.

ROMANS 8:15-17

“For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.”

We have been adopted as children of God. We are joint heirs with Christ. The Spirit of God dwells within us. We have become one with the Father through the resurrection of Jesus. The resurrection is important because it is the power of God over separation.

Belief in the Resurrection Is Important Because #6-IT IS THE PROVISION OF GOD FOR TRANSFORMATION

ROMANS 12:2

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

The Scriptures tell us that the mind set on the flesh is death because it is hostile toward God and does not subject itself to the law of God. Because of this it cannot please God in any way, shape, or form. The mind needs to be renewed but without the power of God to do the renewing it is not possible. The mind alone is incapable of removing sinful thoughts which inevitably lead to sinful deeds. We need an extreme mind makeover which only the power of the resurrection can accomplish.

ROMANS 8:6-13

“For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

“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. So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh - for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

Our spirit is alive because of the righteousness that has been imparted to us through the resurrection of Christ. Through belief in the resurrection our mortal bodies have received God’s immortal Spirit, allowing us to put to death the deeds of the body. No longer under any obligation to obey the flesh, we are able to set our minds on the Spirit which brings life and peace. The same Spirit that gave life to the mortal body of Christ after His death will also give life to our mortal bodies after our death. The resurrection is important because it is the provision of God for transformation, not only of the heart and mind but ultimately of the flesh as well.

Finally, Belief in the Resurrection of Christ is important for one more reason

#7-IT IS THE ASSURANCE OF ATTAINING THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE

Jesus speaks of two separate resurrections – the resurrection of life for those who did good deeds and the resurrection of judgment for those who committed evil deeds.

JOHN 5:25-29

“Truly, truly, I say to you, an 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 just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.”

All the natural deeds of man are evil; even his righteous acts and considered as filthy rags by a holy God (Isaiah 64:6) because they are covered by sin. But the deeds of those who have been made righteous by faith in the resurrection of Christ are considered good deeds because they have been covered by the righteous blood of Christ. It is not by works that we are saved but by faith alone (Ephesians 2:9). Yet the deeds we do are the by-products of what we believe (Matthew 7:17-20).

When the believing Christian sins he seeks forgiveness. There is no forgiveness for the sins of

those who do not believe. John tells us that *“no one who is born of God practices sin, because (God’s) seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God”* (1 John 3:9). God knows those who are His and He sees their deeds through the eyes of forgiveness. Those who do not confess their sin are seen through the eyes of judgment.

All those who die will hear the voice of the Son of God calling to them from their grave. But only those who believe in the resurrection of Christ from the dead will attain eternal life because they do not come into judgement; they have already passed from death into life (John 5:24). But those who do not believe in the resurrection will pass through judgment. And once judged they will pass from death to death. They will suffer the second death which is to be thrown into the lake of fire along with the devil, the beast and the false prophet, where they will be tormented day and night forever. Belief in the resurrection of Christ is important because it guarantees us attaining the resurrection of life and avoiding the resurrection of judgment.

Though all of us who believe in the resurrection of Christ have already been guaranteed eternal life we have not yet attained it. Scripture say that, *“He who perseveres ‘till the end will be saved”*. Our journey of faith is not over until God calls us home. Until then we must persevere in our faith even in the midst of persecution, frustration, sickness, financial chaos, and old age. We may lose some things along the way, possessions, friends, spouses, even our youthful vigor. But nothing is more important than Christ. If we are to cling to anything it should be to cling to Christ. If there is anything of value that we do not want to lose it is Christ Himself. Everything else can be lost. But we cannot lose our grip on Christ.

PHILIPPIANS 3:7-11

“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

So let’s recap all the reasons why the resurrection of Christ is important:

Belief in the resurrection of Christ is important because it is:

- #1-The Proof of Salvation
- #2-The Power Behind our Faith
- #3-The Power of God over Sin
- #4-The Power of God over Death
- #5-The Power of God over Separation
- #6-The Provision of God for Transformation
- #7-The Assurance of Attaining the Resurrection of Life

Let me leave you with one final thought why Christians believe in the resurrection. And this comes from the words of Jesus Himself.

JOHN 11:25-26

“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.”

You cannot separate the resurrection from Jesus and you cannot separate Jesus from the resurrection. Jesus IS the resurrection. To disbelief in the resurrection is to not believe in Jesus. And that is why salvation is so directly linked to the resurrection. If you do not believe in the resurrection you cannot believe in Jesus who IS the resurrection. To deny one is to deny the other. Jesus and the resurrection are eternally intertwined and cannot be separated. If we believe in Him we will live even if we die. If we believe in His resurrection we will attain the resurrection of life, just as He attained it. But if we do not believe we will experience the resurrection of judgment and the second death.

Our eternal destiny depends on our belief in the resurrection. Easter is not just another holiday on the church calendar. It is the foundation stone upon which the entire Christian faith is built. There can be no more important fact on which to build our faith.

Psalm 14:1 says, *“The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’”* The unbelieving say there is no resurrection. But those who say such things have been blinded by Satan. God has revealed His truth through His word and through the testimony of those who were eyewitnesses of the resurrection. Those who believe their testimony believe in the resurrection. This may seem like foolishness to the world but this foolishness leads to eternal life. This foolishness allows those who believe to escape the judgment of God.

Belief in this foolishness brings us into a relationship with God that will usher us into His eternal presence where there is no more pain, or tears or sorrow. Contrast this with the consequences of those who do not believe in the resurrection; for they will be tormented day and night forever in the lake of fire.

It is not foolishness to believe in truth. It is only foolishness to deny truth. As believers in the resurrection of Christ from the dead we may be pitied now by some but we will be rewarded by God for our belief.

I believe in the resurrection of Christ because without it salvation is not possible, forgiveness of sins is not available, and the resurrection of life is not attainable. But with my belief in the resurrection I know I have already obtained salvation. I know I have already passed from judgment into life. And I know that just as my Redeemer lives so I too will live; and that even after my skin has been destroyed, in my resurrected flesh I will see God (Job 19:26). This is the power of belief in the resurrection.

So the 8th and final reason Christian’s believe in the resurrection is because:

JESUS IS THE RESURRECTION

I AM THE RESURECTION AND THE LIFE

I am the resurrection and the life
He who believes in Me will never die
I am the resurrection and the life
He who believes in me will live a new life

I have come to bring the truth
I have come to bring you life
If you believe then you shall live

I am the resurrection and the life
He who believes in Me will never die
I am the resurrection and the life
He who believes in Me will live a new life

In my word all men shall come to know
It is love that makes the spirit grow
If you believe then you shall live

I am the resurrection and the life
He who believes in Me will never die
I am the resurrection and the life
He who believes in Me will live a new life

Keep in mind the things which I have said
Remember Me in the breaking of the bread
If you believe then you shall live

I am the resurrection and the life
He who believes in Me will never die
I am the resurrection and the life
He who believes in Me will live a new life

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