

Holy Week 2025

“Because of the Resurrection...”

I Corinthians 15:3-9, 12; Romans 8:9-11; I Peter 1:3-5

Join me in prayer. Father, we thank you for this time together. Thank you for, Easter, Resurrection Sunday, where we celebrate our Savior's death for us on the cross. And that he went to the grave and rose on the third day, third day, so that we may have life. Father, would you bless us as we learn through your word tonight? We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

Well, tonight I want to talk about how does the resurrection impact our sanctification? In other words, how does the resurrection help us grow in our walk with Christ or make us more like Christ? First Corinthians 15. We're going to be looking at First Corinthians 15 and several other passages. Romans eight and, first Peter, but first Corinthians 15, Paul tells us that the resurrection didn't happen. We of all people, are the most to be pitied, that are that our faith is futile, that it means nothing if Christ didn't raise from the dead. Jesus died on the cross and overcame sin, and he went to the grave on the third day, and he overcame death by raising from the dead. And just as Christ was raised from the dead physically, if we put our faith in Christ, we are raised from the dead spiritually to newness of life. So obviously the resurrection is essential for our salvation. But what impact does the resurrection have on our sanctification, on our growth in Christ?

So tonight, I want to briefly look at three ways the resurrection impacts our sanctification. And they all start with peace. So the first one is proof. The second one is his powerful presence. And third, his promise.

So let's look at the proof of the resurrection. The proof is the ultimate proof that Jesus is God. And this proof really does strengthen our faith. You know, the Christian life is not a blind leap in the dark. I think that's how we think of it sometimes. Or people do. They think of it as you put a blindfold on and you kind of step out on a cliff and just hope what you've been told, hope what you have learned about God is true. And we know faith is believing in that which we can't see. But God has given us great evidence of who he is that he is God. If you look at creation, you can look at creation and know that God exists. Psalms 19 one. The psalmist says that the heavens declare the glory of God, and the skies proclaim the work of his hand. He's also given us his word. God has not hidden himself. He is not. Remain silent. He's told us who he is and his word. Proof that that he is who he is. And then you look at Jesus when he lived on this earth, did many, many things to prove his deity. He turned water into wine in his first miracle. He healed many, healed the leper, healed the lame, the paralyzed, healed the blind, and gave them sight.

He multiplied the loaves and the fish. And he fed many thousands, cast out demons. He raised Lazarus from the dead. He claimed to be God and he proved it. But the resurrection really is the ultimate proof. Proof that Jesus wasn't just a mere man, that he was God in the flesh. Think about the apostles and how the resurrection was the turning point for them.

From the moment that Jesus was arrested, they fled. You couldn't find him. And the one that was most bold of all, Peter, when asked if he knew Jesus by a little girl, denied Jesus three times. And then think about when Jesus went to the cross and the apostles were watching it from afar. Most of them, they didn't get close up on the scene and think of all they saw. They saw Jesus die on the cross. They saw him put in the grave. But when he was dying on the cross at his death, there was an earthquake. At his death, the day turned to darkness. The veil at the temple would have been torn from bottom, from top to bottom. And then even the saints in the tombs would have risen and walked into the holy city. And they saw all of that. Yet what did they do? They went to the upper room, and they hid. They were afraid. They were struggling with believing this claim that Jesus had been making to them all along, that he was God in the flesh, that he was the Savior, that he was the true King, that he was bringing his kingdom. But then seemingly in a moment, everything changed. They went from cowards to martyrs, cowards to proclaiming Jesus boldly. What happened? The resurrection. They saw the resurrected Jesus with their own eyes, and they would go on from there with incredible faith, with incredible boldness, with incredible confidence, proclaiming the good news of Christ to the whole world. And you know all of them, that John died a martyr's death.

They went from hiding in the upper room to dying for their faith. As you know, Peter, historians say that he was probably crucified upside down, for his faith. Well, there were other doubters as the gospel was spread and as it was preached, there were some that continued to doubt the resurrection. You see that in the book of Corinthians. If you turn to, first Corinthians, 15 and look at verse 12, Paul tells us about these doubters, first Corinthians 15, verse 12. He says, now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? See, Paul is identifying that even in the church there were some that were saying that the resurrection couldn't have happened. It's too far fetched. And then Paul deals with this head on. He deals with it, with it head on. And so look back at first Corinthians 15. Look at verse three. This is how he set this up. He said, for I delivered to you as a first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephus, then to the 12. Then he appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared to me. Dr. Doriani talked about this a little bit this morning, but Paul is giving them proof these that they're

in the church of Corinth, that Jesus did indeed raised from the dead and he's telling them, as are witnesses.

When I was in high school, we saw the, the infamous O.J. Simpson, police chase when he was in his Bronco flying down the highway on LA. And we all stopped in class, and we watched that, and it was pretty fascinating. And, you know, you could watch the trial and all that. Now there's a documentary on it, all kinds of things. But, that the problem was there's no witness. No one saw O.J. Simpson kill his ex-wife and her friend or lover. And so he got off. He was found, even though there's a lot of evidence he was found innocent at that time, at that main trial. But think about it. Two of O.J. Simpson's neighbors just would have happened, have been peering over the fence or into the house, and they would have seen him commit that murder, that two witnesses, collaborating testimonies, he would have been found guilty. Two witnesses probably would have done it along with the evidence that they found. Well, imagine if he would have gone into a restaurant and found his ex-wife and this friend in a restaurant.

Let's say there was 30 people there, and he would have killed her in cold blood right there. 30 witnesses and all 30 of them would have, appeared in court and told about what they had seen. He'd be in jail. He would have gone straight to jail. What Paul is saying is they're 500 witnesses. Most of them, he says, are still alive.

In other words, you can go talk to them. They're still here. If you need proof, go talk to these 500 witnesses. 500 witnesses, that's all. Jesus. After he had resurrected from the dead, Jesus in his glorified body rose from the dead. And you can find them. He also says you can talk to the 12. You can talk to James.

James is interesting because that was Jesus brother who didn't believe in Jesus until Jesus rose from the dead. And so this proof of the resurrection, the ultimate proof that Jesus was who he said he was, provided the apostles great confidence in their faith. And I would say, that's so for us, too, that Christianity isn't a blind leap in the dark, that God has given us

God has given us things that we can look at and go, this is true. Jesus was God who died on the cross from our sins and resurrected on the third day. Paul gives us that beautiful truth later on in that chapter. In fact, he says Christ has been raised from the dead. Some of you may have doubts. There's a mountain of evidence that, that you can find that support the life of Jesus, the ministry of Jesus and especially the resurrection of Jesus. So we have proof that gives us confidence in our faith.

What else do we have? We have the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit. So if you'll look in Romans, turn to chapter eight, Romans, chapter eight, one book, before Corinthians. We're going to I'm going to read nine through 11. Romans eight nine through 11 says this.

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the spirit. If in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you, anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness. Listen to this in verse 11.

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Because of the resurrection, we have been dwelling powerful presence of Christ, of the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead.

Remember what Jesus told his disciples in John chapter 16? it must have confused them a lot. He had been talking about his death, that he was going to have to go away, and he looks at them and says, it is to your advantage that I go away. Think of someone that was really special to you, a family member or spouse or, a friend came up to you and said, I'm going to die, and it's going to be to your advantage.

Trust me, it's going to be great that I die. It's going to be to your advantage. It's going to be better for you. That I go would be in shock. You wouldn't believe it. Apostles were probably in shock and wondering, what does Jesus mean? And he goes on to say, because if I don't go, you will not receive the helper, the Holy Spirit, and the what Jesus was telling them.

He's reminding them that while he was on earth, he could only be in one place at a time if Peter needed him over here. But John was over here. He couldn't be with both of them physically at the same time. But when he when he died and he went to heaven, we received his spirit. And his spirit dwells in us, and His spirit is everywhere that we go because it dwells inside of us.

The very presence of God is in us wherever we go. So God's presence, but we also have it's also a powerful presence. So remember what Paul says. He says that this spirit that lives in you, that lives in us, is the same spirit that raised Jesus from the from the dead. Paul is making a point here in Romans eight saying that that there is power in the spirit, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is in you.

If you're a believer. Whenever I talk to especially children and youth and youth ministry, and we talk about what it means to become a Christian or, when they're joining the church, and we talk about how do you grow in Christ and how do you, how do you honor the Lord in your life? I always remind them that if they're Christians, they have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them.

And I tell them, you have the same Holy Spirit that Reverend Barker had in him. That Pastor Reeder has in him you have the same Holy Spirit that Dr Doriani. He has these men who have lived the faith and have been bold in their faith. You have the same power in you that they have. And what Paul is telling us, he's taking it to the next level.

You have the very Spirit of Christ, the same power that raised him from the dead is in you. That's an amazing truth. And as I was thinking about this topic, how does how does the resurrection impact our sanctification and looking and thinking and meditating on Romans eight? it just it just hit me and convicted me that I just don't think about that a lot.

So often I don't rely on the Holy Spirit. I quench the Holy Spirit. I don't I don't think about the reality that I actually have the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit in me. And so I tend to do things on my own, in my own power. You know, in some ways, as Presbyterians, we can be a little afraid of the Holy Spirit, but we have the Holy Spirit in us, the very Spirit of Christ in us.

And because of that, we have resurrection power through the Holy Spirit. Think about what that means in your sanctification, that you have resurrection power through the Holy Spirit to kill that sin that so easily entangles you, that we can go to the Holy Spirit in confidence and ask the Holy Spirit to that has the same power to raise Jesus from the dead, to kill the son, to give us victory over those sins that we struggle with.

We have resurrection power through the Holy Spirit to flee temptation. We have the resurrection power through the Holy Spirit to love our neighbors much harder, to love our enemies, to love those that have not loved us, who have wronged us. And we need the Holy Spirit to do that. We can't do that on our own. We have resurrection power through the Holy Spirit to display the fruit of the spirit, to be bold in our faith, or when we're at school or, with our neighbor or at work and a coworker and we're nervous about what they're going to say.

If we're bold and we share our faith and we can't do it in our in our own power, but we have the power of the Holy Spirit, we can say, God, would you give me through the Holy Spirit the power to have this conversation, to persevere through persecution and trials? so many of you are going through something very, very difficult right now, whether it's a sickness or, some hurt in your family, somebody that's hurt you, a trial, whatever it is, be reminded that you have resurrection power through the Holy Spirit to overcome, to persevere, to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus.

In those hard moments, we have resurrection power to honor God with our thoughts and our words and our deeds. So remember that that encouraged me over these last couple of weeks. I needed to hear that. I needed to be reminded of that, to walk in the spirit and humble reliance upon him. And then finally, the third way that the resurrection impacts our sanctification, our growth in Christ.

So we have we have proof that strengthens our faith. We have his powerful presence where he's with us wherever we go. And we have resurrection power to glorify him in every area of our life. But we also have a beautiful promise. This great promise is found in First Peter. So if you'll turn to First Peter chapter one, I'll read verses three through five.

This is what Peter says in chapter one, verse three. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his great mercy he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

Go back to right before verse four that he has caused us in verse three is calls us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that's imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. So through the resurrection he has called us to salvation, and he has called us and given us an inheritance.

And that's the beautiful promise. Jesus, the Bible says, is the first fruit of the resurrection. And because he resurrected one day when we die, we will resurrect and we'll be united, spiritually united with our bodies, will be a glorified body, and we will be with him forever and ever and ever. And that inheritance is for everyone who believes in Jesus Christ, and it's imperishable, and it's undefiled and it's unfading, and it's kept in heaven as a promise for you who have faith in Christ.

That's amazing. Promise. Jesus conquered death, rose from the dead. The grave and death will have no victory over us. Death will have no sting. Death for the Christian means life forever and ever. How does that help us in our sanctification? Well, I've told this story before. Some of you have heard it. But when Alice and I first got married, I noticed that she did something really odd.

When she read books, she would always go to the end of the book and read the very last chapter. And so finally I asked her, why do you do that? And she said, well, when it gets hard in the middle, I like to know how it ends. Well, that's the story of Christ. We know how it ends. We know how the story ends and we go through hard times.

And first Peter goes on to talk about various trials, and he's saying, even when you go through these various trials, remember the promise you have the end of the story, that death has no victory, death has no sting because you will be perfected and in the presence of your Savior forever and ever and ever. I don't know if you've heard of the Thomas Jefferson Bible.

Thomas Jefferson, our third president, did not believe in all the claims of Christianity, didn't claim to be a Christian, but he created his own Bible. He didn't believe in the supernatural things of Scripture. And so he took all the kind of sayings of Jesus he took out, and he took out all the miracles. And basically his Bible just had the life of Jesus without the miracles.

So no virgin birth, no healing of the blind, no raising of Lazarus, none of those miracles. and then it ended in this way. I'll read how his Bible ended. Now, in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new grave, where in never man yet laid there laid de Jesus, and rolled a great stone to the door of the grave.

And they departed. That's a sad ending. That's not how our story ends. Let's now have the story of the gospel ends. The story of the gospel ends with a miraculous resurrection, and we can proclaim he is alive. And because he was raised, we are raised to life spiritually because he was raised. We have the powerful presence of Christ.

And because he was raised, we have the powerful promise of eternal life. He is risen. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this time together. Thank you that Lord, you did give your son to die on the cross for our sins and atoning death. Lord, we thank you that the story doesn't end when his body was put in the grave.

Lord, we're thankful that the story never ends, that Jesus was buried. Then on the third day, he did rise. He's alive and he's preparing a place for us where we will live with him forever and ever and ever. May the resurrection help us grow and be bold in our faith to keep our eyes fixed on you. We pray these things in Christ's name.

Amen.