

## Resurrected

Today, I'd like for us to take a brief detour off our usual course of study in the Book of James and rejoice for the next hour in the most wonderful event that God has ever brought to the souls of men and women, the "Resurrection of Christ".

As we know, it was on a Friday, about 2000 years ago, that Jesus, our Savior and Lord, was crucified. And after the worst of all suffering, He died there on that cross, His death paying the penalty for every sin that you and I have ever committed and will ever commit throughout our lifetime.

And then, praise be to God, on this day, Sunday, 2000 years ago, God the Father accepted the sacrifice of His dear Son as "payment in full" for all our sins. And to show to the world that the death of His Son was the acceptable payment for our sins, God the Father resurrected Jesus back to life and seated Him at His right hand in heaven, His resurrection completing the miraculous provision that His death and burial had begun.

And it was through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus that your life and my life have now been radically changed for all eternity.

May I begin our day of celebration by reading several precious passages from the scriptures that tell us about all that God did for us in the death, burial and resurrection of our blessed Lord?

First the suffering and crucifixion of our Lord as it is given in Mark chapter 15. There we read that after the soldiers had beaten Him

<sup>20</sup> And . . . had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him. (Mark 15:20)

<sup>33</sup> And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. <sup>34</sup> And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud

voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:33-34)

<sup>37</sup> And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. <sup>38</sup> And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. <sup>39</sup> And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15:37-39)

A short time after Jesus had died, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were able to retrieve His body from the Roman soldiers and bury Him in a nearby tomb. Then after Jesus' body lay in that tomb for three days, we read in Luke 24 that . . .

24 . . . on the first day of the week, at early dawn, (some of the women) went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. <sup>2</sup> And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup> but when they went in, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. <sup>5</sup> And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here, He has risen. (Luke 24:1-6)

And in 1 Corinthians 15, the Apostle Paul recounts for us . . .

<sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. <sup>6</sup> After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. <sup>8</sup> Then last of all He was seen by me (Paul) also, as by one born out of due time. (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

<sup>20</sup> . . . now Christ is risen from the dead *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup> For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each one in his own order: Christ the

firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming. (1 Corinthians 15:20-23)

As I read these words about the death, burial and resurrection of our blessed Lord, I am grieved by the sinful behaviors of all those men, men who cruelly tortured and then crucified the innocent and Holy Son of God. Blinded by the darkness of sin and by the wiles of satan, those men did the worst thing imaginable. They crucified the "Lord of Glory".

But praise be to God, though the crucifixion was carried out by the hands of sinful men, it was also a part of a perfect plan of God, conceived and agreed upon by the Holy Trinity, by God our Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, a plan decided upon even before the foundations of the earth were laid and sinful man was created; a plan to redeem the souls of sin-filled men and women, you and me.

And yes, it was in every way, a painful torturous plan, His suffering on that cross, and then also the many, many other forms of suffering that scripture doesn't tell us about that took place out of the sight of human eyes, and then the death of our Lord Jesus that paid all those penalties. But it was all necessary to cleanse and change our wretched souls, and to guarantee us eternal life with Christ in heaven, when our own resurrection takes place.

And no, though I would love to say that I fully comprehend all that I have just said to us, I do not. But by faith I do know that it is all true and trustworthy for your and my salvation.

And again, it has taken all of these things that I just said to bring those of us who have received Christ as Savior and Lord to where we are right now, fully saved and fully forgiven for all our sins, for all eternity.

And on this blessed resurrection Sunday, I want you and me to rejoice in the benefits that are ours because our dear Lord Jesus did endure all those sufferings and then was resurrected.

And for those of us who have been saved by all that the Lord Jesus did, the benefits are wonderful and vast beyond measure, beginning with the incomprehensible fact that we have now been "changed", thoroughly and completely "changed". Those words of 2 Corinthians 5:17,

<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

And in the Book of Ezekiel, God tells us about how He made that change take place in us. There, He tells us that when we first came into this world, we were not the sweet innocent child that we think ourselves to have been. None of us were.

Yes, we did begin with a sweet and innocent behavior. But hidden within the depths of our being, even then, was a heart made of stone, a heart that would all too quickly develop into a sinful condition that would never be fixable by anything we might try to do.

But thanks be to God for all that Christ did through His death and resurrection. And thanks be to God that He "drew" our hearts to the Lord Jesus for salvation. Because the moment that we then received Him as our Savior, we were changed, completely changed. Listen to these words in Ezekiel 36.

<sup>26</sup> I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

<sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. (Ezekiel 36:26-27)

As God made this miraculous change in our heart, we became as Jesus said to Nicodemus, we were "born again", "born from above".

And as we read a moment ago in 2 Corinthians 5:17,

<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

May I repeat myself, because this was a miraculous event that took place within our souls. It was in that first moment that we first believed and received the Lord Jesus as our Savior, that an incomprehensible change began to take place within us.

Listen to how God describes it in Romans 6 and listen especially to how Christ's "resurrection" has changed our heart and our soul.

<sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup> For one who has died has been set free from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup> For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6:1-11)

Folks, in these words, can we not hear of a miraculous change that has taken place within our souls, brought about by a special power within the "resurrection" of the Lord Jesus.

Recall that as He died, Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of all the people of the world, especially, yours and mine. But in His resurrection, all those sins were removed from Him. God the Father had accepted His sacrifice and wiped them all away, fully and completely. And as He wiped all the sins away from the Lord Jesus, He also wiped them away from you and me, from your and my souls.

And not only did God wipe away the sins from our souls, He also removed all the enslaving power that sin has over us.

Because, before we were saved, the sin nature within us had power and control over us and over everything we did. Even every thought was under sin's control. But as these words here in Romans 6 plainly tell us, when we received Christ as our Savior, the miraculous things that took place with Christ in His resurrection, also took place within us. Listen again to these words! They are powerful!

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup> For one who has died has been set free from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup> For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6:5-11)

Folks, we who have Christ as our Savior truly have been changed, set completely free from any form of power or control of sin. We now have the "power of His resurrection" residing within us. That is why we can pray the words we read in Philippians 3,

<sup>10</sup> I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, <sup>11</sup> and so somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. (Philippians 3:10-11)

There is a "Power" within the resurrection of the Lord Jesus that now resides within you and me. It is the power to not only "resist" sin and the temptations that come from the world, the flesh and the devil, it is the power to live a daily life that is pleasing to the Lord Jesus.

Listen to these further words of encouragement given in Romans 6.

<sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

<sup>12</sup> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. <sup>13</sup> Do not present your members to sin as instruments for

unrighteousness but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. <sup>14</sup> For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. (Romans 6:11-14)

Folks, unfortunately, as most of us read these words, we falter in our belief of them. We can't seem to fully accept and believe that these words are really, really true. We can't imagine the simplicity of them, that we can actually say "No" to any sin and any temptation to sin.

But these words in these scriptures continually remind us that God is ever-present to help us. In 1 Corinthians 10:13 He tells us that,

<sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Sometimes, God simply rescues us out of our temptations. But also, sometimes, He enables us to use the "resurrection power" that He has already put within us. And through that power, we are enabled to simply say "No" to a temptation and walk away.

Again, that is not power of our own, but the actual "power of Christ's resurrection" abiding within us that gives us the strength to just turn away from sin. And "Praise be to God" for His miraculous presence within us.

Folks, this Christian life can probably be a lot, lot easier if we would simply trust the provisions that Christ brought with Him into our souls.

And I want to do that. And I want you to do that, this day and every day. May we close with those words in Philippians 3,

<sup>10</sup> I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, <sup>11</sup> and so somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. (Philippians 3:10-11)

