

THE EMPTY TOMB
The Power of the Resurrection
Luke 24:1-12

The powerful climax of God's purposed plan for the redemption of man is the **resurrection** of Jesus Christ...the *payment for the wages of sin... victory over death...His gift of eternal life*. The **resurrection** is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. Everything that we *are*...everything we *have*...everything we *hope*...is predicated on its reality. **There would be no Christianity if there were no resurrection.**

The message of Scripture has always been a message of **resurrection hope**...a message that death isn't the end for those whose belong to God. For the believer, death has never been an end...but rather the transition that leads to eternity with God...from the *mortal* to *immortality*.

The promised **hope** of God's people throughout history is predicated on the **resurrection** of Jesus Christ. That's why **Paul** wrote...

“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. But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep...The last enemy that will be abolished is death.”

~I Corinthians 15:12-20, 26

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the single greatest event in the history of the world. It's so foundational to Christianity that no one who denies it can be a true Christian. Without resurrection there is no Christian *faith...no salvation...no forgiveness of sin...no heaven...and no hope*.

Jesus Himself even stated...

“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies.”

~John 11:25

I. THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION SHOWED JESUS' DIETY...HIS DIVINITY:

Anyone can claim to be divine or be a god...but if Jesus backed up His claim by returning from the dead, then that was *indisputable evidence* He was telling the truth...He was who He said He was.

“Who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

~Romans 1:4

Was Jesus really executed? The evidence is so strong that even atheist historian **Gerd Lüdemann** said His death by crucifixion is *indisputable*.

Is the resurrection a legend? **A. N. Sherwin-White** of Oxford said it took *more than two generations of time* in the ancient world for legend to develop and wipe out a solid core of historical truth. Yet we have several reports of the resurrection that have been dated to within months of Jesus' death...reports that state that Jesus appeared to *named individuals* and to *groups of eyewitnesses*.

Was Jesus' tomb empty? Scholar **William Lane Craig** points out that *its location was known to both Christians and non-Christians alike*. So if it hadn't been empty, it would have basically been impossible for a movement founded on the resurrection to have exploded into existence in the same city where Jesus had been publicly executed just a few days or weeks before.

Besides, even Jesus' opponents implicitly admitted the tomb was vacant by claiming that His body had been stolen. But nobody had a motive for taking the body, especially the disciples.

We have *seven ancient sources* that report that the disciples were willing to endure lives of *deprivation* and *suffering* as a result of their proclamation that Jesus had risen. It's unlikely they would have done that if they knew they were *propagating a lie*.

Did anyone see Jesus alive again? We have *nine ancient sources*, both inside and outside the New Testament, that confirm the apostles' conviction that they encountered the resurrected Christ. Repeatedly, these sources stood strong when people have tried to discredit them.

“This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses... Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ...this Jesus whom you crucified.”

~Acts 2:32, 36

Could these encounters have been hallucinations? No, experts state. Hallucinations *occur in individual brains*, like dreams, yet Jesus appeared to *groups of people* other than His disciples on *three different occasions*...including to more than **500** at one time (**I Corinthians 15:6**)!

II. THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION SAVES SINNERS:

There is no salvation without the physical resurrection of Christ, and no one can be saved without *believing* and *trusting* and *confessing* in it (**I Corinthians 15:17**...*you are still in your sins*).

“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...for ‘Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved’.”

~Romans 10:9-10, 13

Jesus Christ...**Who is He?**

A lot of people...and even some religions will admit that Jesus Christ was *a good man*...some will even say that He was *a prophet*. But He was much more than that...He is **God in human form**...He is **God incarnate** (**Philippians 2:7-8**).

But just as important as **who He is**...is **what He did**. He died on the cross and rose from the dead, to pay the penalty for our sins, and to purchase a place in heaven for us which He offers as a free gift.

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”

~Romans 5:8-9

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

~Romans 6:23

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

~Ephesians 2:8-9

When we realize that we are *sinners* and that we *can't save ourselves* we must be willing to *repent of our sin* and see that God, through His Son, Jesus Christ, *paid for our sin* and *offers us forgiveness as a free gift*...**grace**. We receive this gift of **grace** by **faith**!

Grace gives someone what they *can't earn*...and what they *don't deserve*. If we could make *restitution* for our sin...there is no need for *forgiveness*. *Restitution* brings *payment* and a *settlement*. That's why the word *forgive* has the word **give** in it. *Forgiveness* isn't getting even...it's *giving* away all rights to get even.

That's what God does to us when we trust Christ...when we become a believer.

“There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

~Acts 4:12

“...Through His name (Jesus) everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.”

~Acts 10:42

If we trust in Christ...God no longer holds our sins against us. *Forgiveness* cost us nothing. That's why we call it **grace**. It may be *free* but it isn't *cheap*. It cost Jesus His life. That's why we call it **justice**.

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.”

~Ephesians 1:7

How *precious* is the news that God does not hold our sins against us! And how *beautiful* is Christ...whose blood made it right for God to do this! How *glorious* is His resurrection that defeated death!

“For this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.”

~Matthew 26:28

As Christians, we are to always be prepared to give an answer for the **hope** that is in us (**I Peter 3:15**), namely, the **hope of eternal life**. Only the Lord's victory over death, proven by His resurrection, can guarantee us that heavenly inheritance. We need to be prepared and equip ourselves to defend and proclaim this truth as we witness to others about the risen Lord and Savior.

III. THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION SANCTIFIES BELIEVERS:

Sanctification...*The progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and more like Christ in our actual lives.*

It is only through the power of God that lives can be transformed. We may work hard to change (resolve...resolutions)...but only God transforms.

“But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.”

~Romans 6:22

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And 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.”

~Romans 12:1-2

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”

~II Corinthians 3:18

“Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.”

~Hebrews 12:14

“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.”

~II Thessalonians 2:13

IV. THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION GIVES VICTORY OVER DEATH:

“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.”

~I Corinthians 15:51-57

“...Jesus, because of the suffering of death that is crowned with glory and honor, by the grace of God, He might taste death for everyone...that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

~Hebrews 2:9, 14

“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. 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.”

~Acts 2:23-24

“Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power...”

~Revelation 20:6

That is why when we grieve over the loss of a loved one...we grieve as one with hope verse those who grieve without hope.

V. THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION SECURES OUR HOPE:

Hope...not based on wishful thinking...but on the reality of God's promises...***a confident anticipation...waiting for something to be actuated.***

Biblical **hope** isn't "*for*" something...it's hope "*in*" someone. **Hope in** Christ...what He *has done* for us and what He *has promised* He will do.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you"

~I Peter 1:3-4

"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...For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 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."

~Philippians 3:10-11, 20-21

WHAT DO WE GAIN FROM THE RESURRECTION:

- **VICTORY OVER DEATH**...a faith based on the resurrection that with death things don't end. In reality, they only just begin. *Changed lives...transformed lives.*
- **HOPE**...a *confident anticipation* of Christ's return in victory. An *anxious anticipation* of heaven and being face-to-face with God.
- **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH**...the **bride of Christ**...the **body of Christ**. **Christian faith**...the title, **Christian**.
- **SUNDAY WORSHIP**...the original day of worship was **Saturday**... the **Jewish Sabbath**. Now we worship on the **first day of the week**... **resurrection day**.
- **BAPTISM AND LORD'S SUPPER**...**Baptism**...buried with Him in baptism, raised to walk in newness of life...to fulfill all righteousness. **Lord's Supper**...do this in remembrance of Me.
- **TIME AND HISTORY SPLIT**...the Gregorian calendar established with **B.C**...before Christ and **A.D**...Anno Domini...in the year of our Lord. In recent times, there has been a push to replace it with **B.C.E** and **C.E.**, meaning "*before common era*" and "*common era*,"