

# The Resurrection

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] This morning I would like to look at the resurrection. I know I read it out of Luke's Gospel, but I want to be able to use bits out of all four Gospels. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John give us the life of Jesus.

Large parts of his life story are left out. For example, we don't hear anything from his birth until he's 12. In the temple with his mum and dad.

Except in Luke 2.40 where it says, The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom and the favour of God was upon him. But when we get to Good Friday, the Gospels seem to all go into slow motion.

And we get a lot more detail of what's happening. The Jewish day begins with sunset. And as we see Jesus sitting with his disciples in the upper room having the Last Supper.

Then we see Jesus in the garden when he prays and asks his disciples to pray with him. He's then betrayed by Judas Iscariot.

[ 1 : 1 9 ] Kissing him. And then arrested. He then had the trial of Pontius Pilate and Herod. And then the flogging by the Romans.

And finally the crucifixion. After his death he was taken by Joseph of Arimathea. And wrapped in cloths and laid in a tomb. And a stone put at the entrance of that tomb.

But then on the third day. The temple is empty. Christ is risen. This resurrection I would like to look at under three headings.

The first one is the tomb itself. Then the witnesses. And then the importance. While it's true that most victims of crucifixion were either thrown into a graveyard.

Reserved for common criminals. Or simply left on the cross. For birds and other scavengers to feed upon. The case of Jesus appears to be different.

[ 2 : 2 7 ] Even the historical record indicates that Jesus was buried in the tomb. Of Joseph of Arimathea. A member of the Sanhedrin. But one who did not agree.

With the decision. Or action. To crucify Christ. Times in the early period. That we're reading here. According to archaeological information.

Usually consisted of several burial chambers. Which had burial niches cut into the side walls. In which to place the bodies. Of the deceased. And also arched niches.

Where chests of bones were placed. After the bodies had decomposed. Tomb. Architecture confirms.

That newly cut tombs. Usually only consisted of a simple chamber. Which had three benches around it. And an excavated pit.

[ 3 : 2 9 ] This pit allowed the workmen to stand upright. When working. The entrance to the tomb. The entrance to the tomb. Would have been low. Causing anyone. To stoop down.

To look inside. Or go in. Even as we see in Luke 24. Verse 12. Where it says. Peter rose and ran to the tomb. Stooping and looking in.

He saw the linen cloths by themselves. Stooping and looking in. The tomb. Only very few of the tombs. At this time. Had rolling stones. To close off the entrance. And so this luxury.

Was restricted. Was restricted. To the wealthy. Which shows that Arimathea. Was a wealthy man. The stone we're talking about. That was.

In front of the entrance. Would have been about. Four and a half feet. In diameter. Or 1.4 meters. And so would have been. Rather heavy. To move.

[ 4 : 27 ] The location of. Jesus' tomb. That we're seeing here. Would have been known to. The early Christians. And non-Christians alike.

And so the Sanhedrin. Would certainly have known. The location of. Joseph's tomb. Where Jesus was interred. But having looked at this tomb.

Would not the Jewish leaders. Have taken the short walk. To the tomb. To verify. The resurrection. Also would it not. Have been a motivating factor. For the Sanhedrin.

To provide a corpse. To put an end. To the rumors. Of a resurrection. Jesus. Once and for all. But yet they did not.

Instead. They acknowledged the resurrection. By claiming that the disciples. Had come and stolen the body. The resurrection. The resurrection. It was. The resurrection.

[ 5 : 26 ] This we can see. In Matthew 27. 62 to 66. Where the chief priests. And the Pharisees. Get authorization. To seal the tomb. And set the guard on it.

And then. When they are told. By the guards. What had happened. In Matthew 28. Verse 11. That the resurrection. Had occurred. but they bribed the guards to tell the people that the disciples had come by night and stole that body.

We also have in the tomb the cloths that were wrapped round the body lying by themselves. Many commentators and authors have different viewpoints and significance of this apart from the fact there was no body.

But one I've heard from a representative from Christian Witness for Israel was that when a carpenter was completely finished manufacturing an item he folds his cloth which is used for wiping his sweat from his face and sets it over the item to state that it is finished.

In a way Jesus would have known this as his father Joseph was a carpenter and so would have seen it many times. And he would have known that the Jews would have known the significance of setting of the cloths on the bench where he lay as he is stating that it is completely finished and that he has conquered death even death on the cross.

[ 7 : 02 ] Of course there is more to the story than merely an empty tomb. The reason the tomb was found empty was that the man Christ Jesus who was buried there had been raised from the dead by God the Father.

Not only did he leave the tomb but he also appeared to numerous people. and this leads us on to our second point the witnesses. There are actually two scenes to be witnessed.

Firstly there is the empty tomb and then there is the risen Christ. The empty tomb the first witnesses to arrive at the empty tomb were a group of women who had gone to the tomb with spices that they had prepared before the Sabbath to put in the body.

They had got up at sunrise as they had been waiting having witnessed the crucifixion and also the burial of Jesus. On the way to the tomb we have in Mark's Gospel 16 verse 3 the women talking to themselves and asking who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb.

But when they got there we see in the Gospels that the stone already had been rolled away. And the tomb was empty. They also witnessed the angels who were in the tomb and he spoke to them as we see in Luke 24 5 and 7 when the angels say to them Why do you seek the living among the dead?

[ 8 : 41 ] He is not here but has risen. Remember how he told you while he was still in Galilee that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.

returning to Jerusalem the women told the apostles but they did not believe them. Why?

Well in the first century Jewish society women were in a very low rung of the social ladder. Women's testimony was regarded so worthless that it would not even be allowed to serve as legal witnesses in a Jewish court of law.

There are even old rabbinical sayings that say Let the words of law be burned rather than delivered to women and blessed is he whose children are male but woe to him whose children are female.

The fact then is that women made the discovery of the empty tomb and that the gospel writers faithfully recorded what had happened even if it may have embarrassed him.

[ 9 : 50 ] The next witnesses to the empty tomb were Peter and another disciple as we see in John's gospel. chapter 20 verse 3 where having heard that the women had to say they raised each other to the tomb.

Although the other disciple beat Peter to the tomb it was Peter having reached the tomb stooped down and went in and marvelled at what he saw. But the other disciple then followed him and having so believed.

Another set of witnesses to the tomb who were probably actually the first witnesses of the resurrection but were not followers were the guards. Then the chief priests and Pharisees had put over the entrance so as to stop the disciples from taking the body and saying look he is risen.

The only possible reason for the story of the guards is that it's true. There had been a guard that had not prevented the resurrection. So the chief priests dragged the soldiers and circulated the story that the disciples had stolen the body while the guard was asleep on duty.

This was highly embarrassing but to the chief priests and the Pharisees it was not as embarrassing as admitting the truth of the resurrection.

[ 11 : 25 ] The authorities thought to themselves that they were actually making the best of a bad situation. Then we have the witnesses to the risen Christ.

The first witness is Mary Magdalene. Although she has witnessed the empty tomb already Mary Magdalene was in the garden outside the tomb weeping over Jesus' death and thinking about who had taken his body away.

She then turned and saw whom she thought was the gardener. But when he spoke to her she realised it was Jesus and called him Rabboni Master Teacher.

Mary Magdalene was therefore the first person to physically see the risen Lord. The next to see the risen Lord were the two disciples on the road to Emmaus who only realised that they were speaking to the Lord when he had broken bread with them after they had persuaded him to stay with them.

But once they realised who he was he vanished. Jesus then appeared to the disciples as they were discussing what had happened. The disciples were confused about the physical side as he just appeared and then disappeared.

[ 12 : 47 ] But Jesus proved who he was by appealing to their senses. Firstly to their sight when they were able to see him. Then to their hearing he asked them to listen.

Then to touch he invited them to touch him. and then he also asked for food so that they could see him eating because spirits cannot eat or be touched.

He then appeared to Thomas who was missing and doubted all that the other disciples had said until he physically saw for himself. There were also other sightings by the disciples and Jesus and others in the early church.

But are these eyewitnesses statements all true? Many of the early Christians who were eyewitnesses willfully endured prolonged torture and death rather than denounced their testimony.

Why, if this was all a lie would they all knowingly cling to such an unprofitable lie in the face of persecution imprisonment torture and even death?

[ 14 : 14 ] Among the most professed eyewitnesses were the apostles. they collectively underwent an undeniable change having seen the resurrected Christ.

Because once Christ was crucified they all scattered and hid in fear of their lives. But following their resurrection and seeing the Christ they took to the streets and boldly proclaimed the resurrection despite intensifying persecution.

Even sceptics such as Paul and James underwent drastic change once they had encountered the resurrected Christ. But still under persecution committed themselves to Christ.

James even willingly suffered and died for his testimony. Many other Christians were willing to die for their faith. The gruesomeness of the torture is unbearable to think about.

In the reign of Emperor Nero it is said that he eliminated his garden parties with Christians whom he burnt alive at the stake. In fact there is no record of any of the early Christians denouncing the faith to end their suffering.

[ 15 : 43 ] The late Sir Lionel Locu who was a world defence lawyer wrote having looked at all the evidence of the resurrection he said I say unequivocally the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is so overwhelming that it compels acceptance by proof which leaves absolutely no room for doubt.

This therefore shows that scripture presents conclusive evidence that Jesus Christ was in fact resurrected from the dead. This leads us on to our third point.

Why is the resurrection of Jesus Christ important? The resurrection of Jesus is important for many reasons.

I've got a few here. Firstly the resurrection of Jesus is the heart of the good news. There could be no good news to proclaim had it not been that Jesus Christ was crucified but is no longer in the tomb because he has risen.

The gospel is nothing other than the resurrection of the crucified Jesus. On this hangs the truth of the kingdom of heaven and the supreme evidence for God's existence.

[ 17 : 00 ] Without the resurrection there is no good news. Just as the hymn writer says one day the grave could conceal him no longer, one day the stone rolled away from the door.

Then he arose over death he had conquered now as ascended my Lord evermore. Living he loved me, dying he saved me, buried he carried my sins far away, rising he justified freely forever, one day he's coming oh glorious day.

Secondly the resurrection of Jesus is the proof of his sonship. God the father of God who alone is the one to be worshipped.

just as the father who loved his only son God the father had the immense power to raise Jesus from the dead. Therefore to believe in the resurrection is to believe in God.

If God exists and if he created the universe and the power over it he has power to raise the dead. If he does not have such power he is not a God worthy of our faith and worshiped only he who created life can resurrect it after death.

[ 18 : 35 ] Only he can reverse the hideousness that is death itself and only he can remove the sting that is death and the victory that is the grave. Just as it says in 1 Corinthians 15 verses 54 to 57 when the perishable puts on the imperishable and the mortal puts on the immortal then shall come to pass 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.

Thirdly the resurrection of Jesus is the springboard for mission. the disciples can go and proclaim the good news only because of the resurrection without it there would be nothing to declare but because of it how can they keep silent it is the most exciting news in the world it should be impossible for believers to refrain from mission as missionaries we should be willing to serve but as to where to serve that's the Lord's choice you may want to serve him here in Barbos but he may want you to serve in Timbuktu you may want to stay and teach your Sunday school class but he may want you to go and teach his word to thousands across the world fourthly the resurrection of Jesus means that his power and his presence are available the Lord Jesus when he comes to the disciples claims all authority in the universe and promises he will be with them until the end of the age disciples down the centuries have rejoiced and still do in constant presence of the mighty risen Christ who is both the ultimate controller of all circumstances that come to them and the strength they need for moral victory and untiring service

Paul himself in 1st Corinthians 15 58 says therefore my beloved brothers be steadfast and movable always abounding in the work of the Lord knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain Paul reminds us that because we know we will be resurrected to new life we can suffer persecution and danger for Christ's sake just as he did we can follow the example of the thousands of martyrs through history who gladly traded their lives for everlasting life because of the resurrection finally the resurrection of Jesus is the key to eternal life Jesus Christ died was buried and rose the third day according to the scriptures and his coming again the dead in Christ will be raised up and those who remain and are alive at his coming will be changed and receive new glorified bodies as it says in 1st

Thessalonians 4 13-18 but why is the resurrection of Jesus Christ important to salvation it demonstrates that God accepted Jesus sacrifice on our behalf it proves God is the power to raise from the dead and it guarantees that those who believe in Christ will be resurrected to eternal life this can be seen in the Westminster Larger Patechism commentary by Johannes Voss where he asks having looked at the question what is justification he asks what is the only ground of God's act of justification and the answer given is the only ground is the righteousness of Christ his perfect obedience and full satisfaction which God imputes or regains to the credit of the sinner Christ's sufferings and death on the cross cancel the guilt of our sins the positive righteousness of Christ by which he actively and perfectly obeyed the whole of

God's law throughout his entire earthly life is the ground of basis for God's accepting our persons as righteousness in his sight Christ not only died for us he also lived for us a life of perfect total blameless obedience to the whole law of God and without this no human being could possibly receive eternal life so what does this all mean to us here to us Christians we should be rejoicing that Jesus Christ died and was resurrected and the tomb is empty because we know that he has come and died so as we can receive forgiveness for our sins just as it says in Hebrews 9 verse 22 without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins and that he has been resurrected so as there is new life that of eternal life and that he will one day return to take us to heaven we should want to continually worship him as Mary and the disciples did when they saw him it also reminds us as Christians that we cannot do anything but it is all in the

[ 24 : 20 ] Lord's hands and that we must have to do as he wishes us to do as the hymn writer Augustus top lady penned when he was writing the words of the hymn Rock of Ages in 1776 he wrote not the labours of my hands can't fulfil thy laws demands could my seal no respect no could my tears forever flow all for sin could not atone thy must save and thy alone also as Christians we should go out as missionaries into the world and spread the gospel as the Lord Jesus commanded his disciples before he left them to go and sit at the father's side and not hide our light under a bushel let us be bold be strong for thy Lord thy God is with us and let us go out and spread the good news for those of you here who do not trust and believe in the

Lord as your own impersonal saviour I would encourage you to consider your life today whatever your age whether young or old look at the cross and look at the empty tomb the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified as we see from the writing about the cross but we also see that he was raised from the dead and that he has gone to be with his father in heaven if you believe that he was crucified and was raised from the dead then just put your trust in the Lord and ask for forgiveness and quicker than a blink in the eye you will be saved as you don't have to do anything else just accept God's free grace given through Christ's death on the cross more words even penned in the hymn Rock of Ages are nothing in my hand I bring simply to thy cross I cling naked come to thee for dress helpless look to thee for grace file

I to the fountains fly wash me saviour or I die you do not need to know everything first simply cling to the cross and the word will be explained to you the tomb is empty so the Lord has risen to share with you an illustration used by Charles Spurgeon at the end of one of his sermons and he says your condition is like that of a child in a burning house who had an escape to the edge of the window hung on by the windowsill the flames were pouring out of the window underneath and the poor lad would soon be burnt or falling would be dashed to pieces he with the clutch of death he did not dare to relax his grasp until a strong man stood underneath and said boy drop drop I'll catch you now it was no saving faith for the boy to believe that the man was strong that was a good help toward faith but he might have known that and yet have perished it was faith when the boy let go and dropped down into his big friend's arms there are you sinner clinging to your sins or to your good works the saviour cries drop drop into my arms it is not doing it is leaving off doing it is not working it is trusting in that work which

Jesus has already done trust that is the word simple solid hearty earnest trust trust and it will not take an hour to save you the moment you trust you are saved you may have come in here as black as hell but if you trust in Jesus you are wholly forgiven in an instant swifter than a flash of lightning the deed of grace is done all I ask today is are you leaving here this afternoon trusting and believing in the Lord Jesus who came to this world to be crucified and then to be raised or are you leaving just as the chief priests and Pharisees who made excuses because they were embarrassed and so did not believe let us pray heavenly father we pray and thank you for this time that we have been with you we thank you lord that you did come to this world that you did die on that cross and that you rose again we thank you lord that we can worship you and we pray lord that nothing that was said was unto word towards you we pray lord that your word will be encouragement to each one here and we pray lord this in your son's name amen we'll close our worship singing to

God's praise in psalm 103 psalm 103 in the Scottish Psalter it's on page 370 psalm 103 and we'll sing from verse 13 such pity as a father hath unto his children dear like pity shows the father to such as worship him in fear for he remembers we are dust and he are free and well knows frail man his days are like the grass as flower and field he grows for over it the wind of pass and it away is gone and off the place where once it was it shall no more be known we'll sing verses 13 to 18 to God's praise such pity as a tune to

[ 30 : 57 ] God's love and hear and hear thy■■■ And there is the air For he remembers We are just And he our prayer And those We are on his day But like the cross As the river he grows

Born over In the wind of mine And in the wind Is gone And no place Where once it was It shall no more He knows But not to them And no place In the air God's mercy Ever ends And to them Children's children

Still Is Christ Extends To such I error■ Is And no place Below The Bethany contact you Christmas just doming and that faith may then obey let's pray heavenly father we pray again and thank you that we have been able to worship you we thank you lord for this another day we thank you lord for this time and lord we pray that you will give us all the strength and the ability lord to come back out tonight to hear your word being expended to us again and now may the grace of the lord jesus christ the love of god and the fellowship of the holy spirit be with each one of us now and forevermore amen