

### **Our Resurrection Through Christ's**

Most people today if asked the question, "Are people basically good?" would answer it in an affirmative way. Answers vary from outright "yes" to a response that people are mostly good. Practically all secular counseling and psychiatric examinations begin with the fundamental assessment that people are basically good. Parents will argue that their children are basically good almost to the death even when the evidence shows the opposite. In our society people dodge taking responsibility by shifting the blame to others in an attempt to show they are basically good. I am afraid the truth is that these claims fall very short when compared to the reality of human nature.

Rather than being basically good and able to perform truly good works, the Bible is very clear that the opposite is true. The scriptural assessment of people's nature without Christ is very gloomy indeed. What the Apostle Peter wants us to understand today is that we have a great need and only Jesus Christ can meet that need.

I want to begin this message by identifying people's greatest need. One may not have enough money to pay their bills; money is not their greatest need. One may be suffering from a sickness or a disease; health is not their greatest need. One may have fought with their spouse before coming to worship this morning; a good marriage is not their greatest need.

Before one comes to belief in Christ; their greatest need is that they are spiritually dead. Just like the people of the world, before believing in Jesus as the Christ; people are spiritually dead and the problem is most people do not even know it. Even if a person realized they were spiritually dead there is nothing they could do on their own to change their condition. This is because Satan corrupts everything

relating to God to keep people from worshipping the One true God. Only God can bring to life a dead soul and make one desire eternal truth.

Without Christ as one's Lord and Savior - marriage, budgets, sickness, failures and sin will not be resolved, there will not be hope or salvation or joy. Without Christ people remain broken and lost; their greatest need is spiritual resurrection through Christ.

The Jews remain lost because they did not heed what God taught them in His Word and they still wait for the Messiah to come. They have bought into Satan's lie that the Messiah has not come. They continue to celebrate Passover in anticipation of the coming Christ and fail to see God clearly showed who the Messiah would be in the Old Testament and Jesus fulfilled every prophecy. For Christians, Jesus gave new meaning to the Passover and we celebrate it as the Lord's Supper. We celebrate the sacrifice Jesus made that we may have salvation through Him and be reconciled back to God. In today's language Jesus repurposed the Passover into the Lord's Supper.

The world calls this Sunday, Easter Sunday, which is said to be birthed out of the pagan ritual of celebrating the equinox marking the beginning of Spring. It appears to date back to the German pagan goddess **Ēastre**, who was celebrated at beginning of Spring. I said "it appears" to be because even though the Oxford English Dictionary states this as a definition of Easter, it admits there is no solid evidence to back this up but has been defined this way for over 1000 years. God, the true God, is the God of creation and Satan has worked to take people's focus off of God – the evil one desires people to worship that which is the created and not the Creator. The Christian Church gave new meaning or repurposed Spring and the coming of seasonal life by celebrating the resurrection of the Creator of the universe, Jesus Christ, who brings eternal life. The world celebrates Spring and Easter Bunnies and false gods, Christians celebrate Christ, the only true God. Preaching the resurrection of Christ is the only hope for the

lost and marks the separation of the worldly from the heavenly. So, this Sunday when Satan so desperately works to take the world's focus off of Christ; I ask the world and I ask you, "Do you really believe that you are in need of a resurrection? Another side note, the word "Sunday" means worship of the sun god and Thursday the day of the god Thor, but I would say that 99% of Americans that use the word "Thursday" or "Sunday" are referring to the day and not the gods Thor or Sun. Does this mean we need to quit using the word "Thursday" or "Sunday"? If this is true, what does it mean if a Christian uses the word "Easter" to refer a day of celebration of the resurrection of Christ? We call this Sunday, "Resurrection Sunday" but what do we replace the word Sunday with?

So again, this Sunday when Satan so desperately works to take the world's focus off of Christ; I ask the world and I ask you to ask yourself, "Do I really believe that I am in need of a resurrection? Does Spring that brings a season of new but temporary life and Satan's false worship of the created satisfy my innermost need or do I need the new life of the resurrection that is eternal?" As Paul taught, <sup>17</sup> "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself" (2 Corinthians 5:17-19) This Sunday, as with every Lord's Day, we call the world to turn from false celebrations and come back to God of Creation, the One true and eternal God. May we be witnesses of Christ calling people to reconcile themselves to the only true God.

My beloved, the war is coming. The Broad church is joining society in the persecution of the of the Remnant church. We must prepare ourselves and know what we believe and by teaching, and studying and meditating on God's Word we need to prepare our children to live in a broken world that will persecute them. We must witness to the world of who Jesus is, even amid persecution. Have you thought about

what a miracle the Word of God is? God inspired 43 to 45 writers over thousands of years to reveal to mankind who He is. He used ordinary people to write the only collection of books that has proven itself to be consistent and true throughout all of history of the world; it testifies to God of the Bible as the only truth God. You hold in your hands a true miracle that testifies to the truth of God and the salvation Jesus offers to the world. The Bible is truly the manual of eternal life.

Let me pray for our time in God's Word as we focus on Peter's teaching, inspired by God, in his first letter to the Christian churches.

### **Christ's Resurrection Imparts Hope** (v. 3-4 and 8-9)

What can a spiritually dead person do that is righteous before God? Absolutely nothing! As we read in Paul's letter to the Christians in Ephesus, before their belief in Jesus Christ they were spiritually dead. Paul writes, "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience." (Ephesians 2:1-2) Paul knew the world was spiritually dead and followed the evil one and the evil one's call to worship the created instead of the Creator. Paul wrote, <sup>14</sup> "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. <sup>15</sup> The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. <sup>16</sup> "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" (Isaiah 40:13) **But we have the mind of Christ.**" (1 Corinthians 2:14-16) When Christ saves a person, He gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit to dwell within and the Spirit gives a Christian godly wisdom the world does not have and this enables us to see the false and know it for what it is; it is the corruption by the evil one to take our focus off of God and to right worship; like the world's corrupt view of Easter. So, we come to understand God's

truth; those who are spiritually dead are not sick and in the need of medicine, but they are dead and their only hope is resurrection to eternal life in Christ.

In our text this morning, the Apostle Peter is speaking for God directly to believers. Open your Bible to 1 Peter chapter 1. Reading the beginning and the end of this passage it shows the surety of salvation through Christ, <sup>3</sup> “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, <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you ... <sup>8</sup> you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, <sup>9</sup> obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” My beloved, *the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead also raises believers in Christ from the dead and gives salvation and eternal life with God through Christ!*

If you are a believer in Christ as your Lord and Savior this morning and have experienced this new birth and resurrection you know the reality of being brought from spiritual death to eternal life. For those of you who believe in Christ, I desire to give you even more assurance as we examine the work of Christ. If, on the other hand, you have never trusted Christ as your Lord and Savior, follow along with me as we examine Peter’s great claims and see that they are all true. As you see this truth, repent, believe in Christ and be saved! Jesus is the only eternal hope.

### **Christ’s Resurrection Imparts Salvation** (v. 3-5)

As we enter into 1 Peter chapter 1, take a moment to think what would it be like to be dead? God tells us through Peter, <sup>3</sup> “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, <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last

time.” Have you stopped and thought what it would be like to be dead? What would it be like if you did not make it home today? What would you miss?

You would miss your family and friends. You would miss seeing your children grow up. I am sure you would have things you wish you could tell those you love, but did not take the time to share while you were alive because of the business of a life; working and paying bills, etc. Like the song *Cat's in the Cradle* by Harry Chapin. If you do not know the song, look up the lyrics, they do illustrate how the business of life interferes with the truly important things. I am sure there would be things you wish you would have done or perhaps done differently. You might say, I wish I would have told my son or daughter this or that. I wish I would have spent more time with my spouse and children. I wish I would have told my wife or husband what they truly mean to me. Would you be like the story Jesus told of Lazarus and the rich man? The rich man after he died wanted Lazarus to be sent back to his family to warn them and Abraham, said, <sup>29</sup> “ ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ <sup>30</sup> And *the rich man* said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ <sup>31</sup> *Abraham responded*, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’ ” (Luke 16:29-31)

Does this not speak to the world not being convinced by the resurrection of Jesus? But, back to you, what if after experiencing death for a few months, you were resurrected and could see your loved ones again. Like when the other Lazarus was raised by Jesus and was again with Martha and Mary but he would again later die. Would you live the rest of your life differently? Would you be rejoicing? What would you tell the ones you love? Even though you were raised from the dead would those you care for - but that are unbelieving – would they believe? Jesus was raised from the dead and most still do not believe.

Jesus was raised from the dead and when we believe in Him as our Lord and Savior, we too are raised from the living with dead souls and our souls are brought to life and Jesus brings about our resurrection to eternal life in God.

Peter experienced the new birth; the resurrection of his dead soul and the result was that he praised God. As Peter said, God has great mercy and looks down on His people and “has caused us to be born again to a living hope”. Just like in your imagination when you were physically dead and were given the gift of physical life again, so through mercy, God causes us to be born again spiritually through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus. Through Christ’s resurrection, we are “born again to a living hope” that is eternal.

We know this promise is true because Jesus is the first fruits of those who follow and are resurrected. Paul wrote, <sup>20</sup> “in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup> For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:20-22) Jesus is the first of true resurrections. There were others who were brought back to life before Jesus. Lazarus and the widow of Nain’s son are two examples. However, in each case these who were brought back from death and would eventually die again. Jesus, on the other hand, was brought back from death to life and will never die again. Remember before Jesus took on human form, He was spirit, coming to earth as fully God and fully man, He was the first to experience true resurrection. According to the Bible, the inspired words of God, He is the first but He is not the last. When Jesus came back to life, His body was different. It was free from decay and the effects of the fall. His body was a glorified resurrected body remade for eternity in heaven. Because one is resurrected spiritually by believing in Jesus as their Lord and Savior, they too will have glorified resurrected bodies when they leave this world for heaven.

Paul wanted those who came to belief in Jesus over the centuries until His return to understand this, so he wrote, <sup>50</sup>“I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. <sup>51</sup> Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup> 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 shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. <sup>55</sup> **O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’** (Isaiah 25:8) <sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 15:50-57) Jesus the God-man was the first one to put on immortality. His resurrection causes our resurrection. ***The same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead can also raise us from the dead and secure our salvation.*** Our being brought to life spiritually and then eventually receiving our resurrection glorified bodies, Jesus has conquered death for all time for all believers.

When King Jesus gives the command, history will end and eternity will last forever. At that moment death will surrender its final captives, those who are still alive on earth will be raptured before God pours out His Day of Wrath upon the earth. Can you imagine the great reunion that will take place? Loved ones that have gone on before will once again be with the ones they love. Saints of old will be walking around speaking to one another. All this will come to pass because our Lord conquered death. Satan’s death grip was not tight enough to keep Jesus in the grave. Jesus was victorious because He is God and we are victorious because Jesus is our God and He is our Savior.



## **Christ's Resurrection Imparts Joy** (v. 6-9)

I asked you to think about and consider what it would be like if after you mortally died you were brought back into the world, listen as I read verses 6 to 9 and then we will go a step further. Peter wrote, <sup>6</sup>“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup> so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup> Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, <sup>9</sup> obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” We mentally considered what it would be like to be brought back from the dead as a believer in Christ and how this would affect you and those in your life. Let's go a step further and imagine what it would be like after being physically dead for a few months and coming back to life as an unsaved person. How would you react? Would you at that point begin praising God and worshipping Him and rejoicing in Christ? The truth is this is what happened to you and me and to every person when the Lord saves a sinner. Because of the resurrection, Jesus has the power to snatch up sinners who are hanging by a thread and ready to drop into eternal darkness and the fire of hell. Jesus snatches them and places those He saves into His kingdom and makes sure nothing of the world or the evil one can damage them spiritually as long as their focus is on Christ. Is this not why you are rejoicing? It is why I rejoice – a sinner with no ability to save himself, a sinner who was completely unworthy of salvation was snatched from hell by Christ and given resurrection to life eternal – what joy, what love – I praise the Lord!

Peter makes clear that our rejoicing does not stop just because, in this life, we continue to experience trials of various kinds. Our rejoicing does not stop because we grow in our understanding that life is going to only get better in Christ even while life for the world gets worst. Because of the resurrection of Christ and His resurrection of

our souls we understand that our suffering in momentary and pales in comparison with eternity with Christ. We understand that trails can strengthen us and grow us spiritually in order that we can be better witnesses for Christ to the world. The Word of God tells us that these trails show the world our faith is genuine. If you have been sorely tested since becoming a believer in Christ as your Lord and Savior and your faith is intact - it should embolden you and give you a desire to share the saving gospel of Jesus.

This genuine faith, that now drives our life purpose also assures us the Jesus will return. When He returns, we will see Him completely and truly as He is for the first time and our joy will be complete. When we die and enter heaven or when Jesus returns the salvation of our faith will be eternally complete and all the years of trails and persecution will be shown to have been worth it.

The resurrection is all about the grace of God. It is grace because it secures salvation for the people of God. There is not a person who deserves it. You could go down through every name of every person who ever lived and not one of those people would be worthy of eternal life. But because of the gospel of Jesus Christ and His death for the elect and His resurrection to secure us, we can rejoice. The gospel is the good news of what Jesus did for His people what we could never do for ourselves. The law of God had condemned us but the gospel saves all who believe in Jesus!

If you have **never** known Christ as Lord and Savior, come to Christ today and be assured that everything He claimed is true because of His resurrection and because He is eternally alive. Not only did Jesus make fantastic claims but He proved them to be true when the stone was rolled away and He appeared for some fifty days. Many people saw Him during that time. Many people saw Him as He was taken back into heaven. Witnesses and history prove Jesus to be the Christ - trust Christ today and be spiritually resurrected.

**Remember** - and take into your heart, mind and soul - *The same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead also raises believers from the dead and secures our salvation.* Amen!

Let us celebrate Jesus' atoning sacrifice and resurrection that gives us spiritual resurrection. Please take moment to prepare to honor Christ in the Lord's Supper.