

## **The Resurrection We Desperately Need**

### **Our Transformation**

Most people today when asked the question, “Are people good?” would answer it in an affirmative way. Answers vary from an outright “yes” to that people are mostly good. Some would respond, people are good, it is the world that inflicts bad things and even bad people are basically good. So, most people think of themselves as good and therefore most people lean towards thinking all people are basically 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 good beyond what the facts show. Even when a child is caught red-handed committing an offense, parents will argue they are basically good. I am afraid that these claims of human goodness fall short when compared to the reality of the history of human nature and behavior.

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 is very gloomy indeed. What the Apostle Peter wants us to see today is that we are broken; our heart and mind have been corrupted because of the Fall and sin entering the world. This is why we have a great need and only Jesus Christ can meet that need.

I want to begin this message by identifying our greatest need. You may not have enough money to pay your bills...money is not your greatest need. You may have suffered setbacks in your career path...a successful career is not your greatest need. You may be suffering from a sickness or a disease...health is not your

greatest need. You may have fought with your spouse before coming to worship this morning... a good marriage is not your greatest need.

Our greatest need, before one accepts Christ, is that we are spiritually dead and we need spiritual life. We are spiritually dead and most people do not even know they are the walking spiritual dead. Even if a person did know they are spiritually dead, there is nothing they could do to change their condition. A dead person has no ability to affect change because of their deadness.

Do people ask themselves before their souls are awakened by God, “Do I really believe that I am in need of a resurrection?” No, because they do not know they are spiritually dead and they do not know what it is to believe in God and they have no power within themselves to bring their souls alive. Paul explained this in his letter to the believers in Ephesus, **“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—<sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.<sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,<sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.”** (2:1-5) To the Corinthian church, 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?’ But we have the mind of Christ.”** (1 Corinthians 1:14-15) In John’s gospel, we read the words of Jesus,<sup>44</sup> **“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last**

day. <sup>45</sup> It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.” (John 6:44-45) These passages, as well as many others, make clear people without Christ are spiritually dead – people are not spiritually sick in need of medicine, but are spiritually dead in the need of resurrection!

Here at the beginning of Peter’s first letter written to the Jews converted to Christ of the Jerusalem church, Peter wrote these believers because they are suffering persecution from the Jews, so he writes the words given by God to encourage these believers. Peter is saying, the same God that raised Jesus Christ from the dead has the power to raise all people from the dead through His Son, bringing them to spiritual life and securing their salvation.

If you are a believer and have experienced this new spiritual birth or this resurrection you know the reality of being brought from death to life. Spiritual life is truly a miracle by God. With spiritual life one is given God the Holy Spirit to dwell in their soul to guide them as they grow spiritually. But beyond this God has given those He brings to spiritual life, spiritual wisdom through the Spirit to discern His Word. The Word of God breathes spiritual life into one as they now journey through life by faith. Our faith is not a blind faith, it is supported historically and bolstered by the proven truths of God’s Word that reveals the work of Christ. If, on the other hand, you have not trusted Christ as Lord and Savior, look with me at Peter’s great gospel truths and see that it is all true. Surrender your life in humility to Christ and receive the promise of eternal life with God.

### **Our Salvation** (vs. 3-5)

Close your eyes and imagine with me what it would be like to be dead. Cold and lying on the slab in the morgue and unable to do anything. If God gave you

awareness, even though you are dead, would you have regrets? What would you miss? I am sure you would miss family and friends. I am sure you would miss being able to be part of your children or grandchildren growing up. I am sure you would have things you would want to tell those you loved and didn't have a chance to or you just never got around to. I am sure there would be things left unfinished. What is after you had been dead for a while you were resurrected and you were given a second chance to see your loved ones again. Would you live the rest of your differently? Would you be rejoicing? Considering the way you lived your life, would your family rejoice?

Peter begins his letter with a greeting and then in verse 3 gets down to God's business, ["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."](#) Jesus lived as the Man-God or the incarnate God and God the Father resurrected Jesus returning Him to His position as God the Son of the Trinity to sit at God the Father's right hand. In the same way Jesus brings people to spiritual life by resurrecting their souls. Jesus' resurrection brings about our resurrection for those who surrender their lives to Him.

Peter experienced the new spiritual birth and the result was he praised God and served Him all his days. God has great mercy and looks down on His people and caused us to be born again. Just like in your imagination when you were physically dead and were given the gift of life again, so through mercy, God causes us to be born again spiritually. We are born again to a living hope. We are brought from eternal death to eternal life.

In fact, Paul teaches that Jesus is called the “**firstfruits**” of those who would experience resurrection. <sup>20</sup> “**But 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 the true resurrections. There were others who were brought back to life before Jesus’s resurrection; Lazarus and the widow of Nain’s son are two examples. However, in each case these who were brought back from death would eventually die again. Jesus, on the other hand, was brought back from the dead to never die again. He was the first to experience a true eternal resurrection. According to the Bible, 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 was a body remade; imperishable. As Paul continued explaining a few verses later saying, <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: *by the Prophet Isaiah (25:8), ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ And as Hosea wrote (13:14),*** <sup>55</sup> **‘O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’** <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, as 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 bodies takes place through the prototype of Jesus. “According to God’s great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”! <sup>(1 Peter 1:3)</sup> When you die mortally you live eternally with Christ. When? Remember the robbers on the cross in Matthew and Luke’s gospel accounts? Luke recorded, <sup>39</sup> “One of the criminals who were hanged railed at *Jesus*, saying, ‘Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!’ <sup>40</sup> But the other *criminal* rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?’ <sup>41</sup> And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.’ <sup>42</sup> And he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’ <sup>43</sup> And *Jesus* said to him, ‘Truly, I say to you, **today you will be with me in paradise.**’” <sup>(Luke 23:39-43)</sup> The moment you breathe your last on earth you are with Christ in heaven.

When King Jesus returns and gives the command, the angel will blast the trumpet and all Old Testament saints will come alive and all who have been saved will come with Christ. At that moment death will surrender all its captives. Those who are still alive on the earth will also in the twinkling of an eye be changed as well, both the saved and unsaved. Can you imagine the great reunion that will take place for those saved? Loved ones that have gone on before will once again be together. Saints of old will be walking around speaking to one another. All this will come to pass because our Lord conquered death. Death did not have a tight enough grip to keep Jesus in the grave. He was and is victorious and through Him we too are victorious.

## Our Joy (vs. 6-9)

Again, imagine how you would feel if you were allowed to return after being dead. Would you be moved to share Christ with those who are lost? The urgency you would now have, you would have urgency because of experiencing Christ, sharing the gospel of salvation would be a driving force. Consider this as Peter continues in verses 6 to 9, “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.” Now let me take us a different direction, imagine what it would be like to be brought back to life after you were dead and you were not saved. How would you react then? Would you be praising God and rejoicing? Or would you cry the tears of deep remorse. Remember the rich man and the poor man, Lazarus, they died and the rich man had a conversation with Abraham, <sup>24</sup> “he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send *Lazarus* to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ ... <sup>27</sup> And *the rich man* said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send *Lazarus* to my father’s house—<sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ <sup>29</sup> But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ <sup>30</sup> And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ <sup>31</sup> He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’ ”

(Luke 16:24, 27-31) These are the truths that takes place when one is saved or if one

refuses salvation. Only by Jesus' resurrection is there the power to snatch sinners who are hanging by a thread ready to drop into the darkness and eternal fire of hell. Jesus places those who believe into His kingdom and makes sure nothing ever happens to us. This is why we are rejoicing and this should give you the urgency to share the gospel with the lost. For the lost once their mortal life comes to an end so does their opportunity for salvation.

The text also tells us that the rejoicing does not stop because, in this life, we experience trials of various types. Our rejoicing does not stop because we see that life is going to only get better, despite the chaos of the world, as we journey towards heaven. Because of the resurrection our suffering now will be seen as only momentary and light when we view it against the peace we will experience for all eternity with Jesus. As believers, we also know that our suffering is momentary and light and also that it is making us more suited for heaven and that by testing, our faith proves to be genuine. Have you ever had your faith tested? If you pass the test, survived the testing, it should bring you peace and joy for it validates your faith is real saving faith.

By faith we understand that someday Jesus will return. When He is revealed to us then our joy will be complete. When that day comes the salvation that our faith had reached for all those years will be eternally realized. 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 has ever lived that deserves salvation. 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 by His death for the elect and by His resurrection to secure us, we can rejoice. The gospel is the good news that Jesus did for His people what we could never do for ourselves. The law of God had condemned us but the gospel saves us.



As John or Ralph said helps brings all that has been said this morning into focus. First, John Bunyan (1628-1688) is usually attributed with the following saying but it cannot be verified: **Run, John, run, the law commands:**

**But gives us neither feet nor hands,**

**Far better news the gospel brings:**

**It bids us fly and gives us wings.**

More probably this saying originated with the 18th century Scottish preacher Ralph Erksine (1685–1752) who penned:

**A rigid matter was the law,  
demanding brick, denying straw,**

**But when with gospel tongue it sings,  
it bids me fly and gives me wings.**

—*The Sermons and Practical Works of Ralph Erksine*, vol. 10 (Glasgow: W. Smith and J. Bryce, 1778), 283.

It is because of the gospel of Christ that we are able to sing praises to God. It is because of Christ, that even when the world is in chaos around us, we can fly into the presence of God and we are given wing to fly towards heaven. It is because of Christ we can begin to live eternity with God now, even as we live our mortal lives in preparation for heaven. It is because of Christ we have been re-born, we have been resurrected to live with spiritual minds, hearts and souls.

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 the resurrection. Not only did Jesus make fantastic claims but He proved them to be true when the stone 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. History verifies and the Bible verifies that your only hope is to trust Christ today.

**The same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead can also raise us from the dead and secure our salvation. Amen and amen!**