

LET GOD ARISE!

The Wondrous Cross #4

Prayer Guide for Eastertide • Rev. Dr. Don L. Davis



He Is Risen!

Luke 24.1-12

Jesus Has Risen! He Is Not Dead!

An Easter Chorus • Don L. Davis

On Sunday at first light, the spices they brought
To set on his body, and do as they ought
The huge stone they found there, had been rolled away
The tomb there was empty, the place where he lay!

Jesus has risen, he is not dead!
The Lord rose victorious, just as he said!
Evil's been conquered, on death he has tread,
Jesus has risen, he is not dead!

Don't be alarm-ed! I know whom you seek;
The Crucified Jesus, the dear Nazarene
But, look, he is risen, and lives evermore
Death could not hold him for he is the Lord!

Why seek you the living among all the dead?
The Lord is not here now, he's risen instead!
Go tell his disciples to Galilee flee
For he goes before you, and there he'll be seen!

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Christ Is Risen! He Is Risen, Indeed!

Christ Is Risen! The Tomb Is Empty!

Luke 24.1-12 - But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. [2] And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, [3] but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. [4] While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. [5] 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? [6] He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, [7] that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” [8] And they remembered his words, [9] and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. [10] Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, [11] but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. [12] But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.

John 20.3-10 - So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. [4] Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. [5] And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. [6] Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, [7] and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. [8] Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; [9] for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. [10] Then the disciples went back to their homes.



Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV)

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But Shall the Dead Live Again?

Job 14.12-15 - so a man lies down and rises not again; till the heavens are no more he will not awake or be roused out of his sleep. [13] Oh that you would hide me in Sheol, that you would conceal me until your wrath be past, that you would appoint me a set time, and remember me! [14] If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my service I would wait, till my renewal should come. [15] You would call, and I would answer you; you would long for the work of your hands.

Job 19.25-27 - For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. [26] And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, [27] whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!

The Righteous Shall Behold God's Face in Righteousness

Ps. 16.9-10 - Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. [10] For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

Ps. 17.15 - As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness.

Ps. 49.15 - But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me.

Isa. 25.8 - He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.

Isa. 26.19 - Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead.



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Dead Bones Shall Live Again (Figuratively and Literally!)

Ezek. 37.1-14 - The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. [2] And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. [3] And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord God, you know." [4] Then he said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. [5] Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. [6] And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord."

[7] So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. [8] And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. [9] Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." [10] So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

[11] Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.' [12] Therefore prophecy, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. [13] And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. [14] And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord.'"



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We Shall Be Redeemed from the Power of Death

Hos. 13.14 - Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from Death? O Death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your sting? Compassion is hidden from my eyes.

Dan. 12.2-3 - And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. [3] And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

Apostolic Preaching and Testimony That Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, Has Risen from the Dead

Acts 1.1-3 - In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, [2] until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. [3] To them he presented himself alive after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

Acts 2.22-28 - Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— [23] this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. [24] God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. [25] For David says concerning him, “I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; [26] therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. [27] For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. [28] You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.”



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Acts 2.31-32 -he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. [32] This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.

Acts 3.12-15 - And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: “Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? [13] The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. [14] But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, [15] and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.”

Acts 4.10 - let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well.

Acts 4.33 - And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

Acts 5.30-32 - The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. [31] God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. [32] And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.

Acts 10.40-41 - but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, [41] not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.



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Acts 13.30-34 - But God raised him from the dead, [31] and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. [32] And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, [33] this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you.” [34] And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, “I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.”

Acts 26.23 - that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.

Acts 26.26 - For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner.

Rom. 1.4 - and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,

Rom. 4.24-25 - but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, [25] who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

1 Cor. 6.14 - And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

1 Cor. 15.3-8 - For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, [5] and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. [6] Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of



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whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. [7] Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. [8] Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

Gal. 1.1-5 - Paul, an apostle— not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— [2] and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: [3] Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, [4] who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, [5] to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Eph. 1.15-21 - For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, [16] I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, [17] that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, [18] having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, [19] and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might [20] that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, [21] far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

2 Tim. 2.8 - Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel,

Heb. 13.20-21 - Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, [21] equip you with everything good that you may do his



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will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

1 Pet. 1.3 - 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.

Christ Will Raise Up His Own on the Last Day

John 6:37-40 – All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. [38] For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. [39] And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. [40] For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

John 6.54 - Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

Christ Is the Resurrection and the Life

John 11.23-27 - Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” [24] Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” [25] Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, [26] and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” [27] She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

Through Christ, the Believing Shall Live Forever

Rom. 5.17-19 - If, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. [18] Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of



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righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. [19] For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

Rom. 8.10-11 - But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. [11] If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Rom. 8.21-23 - that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. [22] For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. [23] And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Phil. 3.20-21 - But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, [21] who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Rev. 21.4 - He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

The Resurrection Is Real, and Christ Himself Is Risen from the Dead

1 Cor. 15.12-28 - Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? [13] But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. [14] And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. [15] We are even found to be misrepresenting God,



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because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. [16] For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. [17] And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. [18] Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. [19] If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

[20] But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. [21] For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. [22] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. [23] But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. [24] Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. [25] For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. [26] The last enemy to be destroyed is death. [27] For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. [28] When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

Sown Perishable, Raised Imperishable

1 Cor. 15.42-58 - So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. [43] It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. [44] It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. [45] Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. [46] But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. [47] The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. [48] As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. [49] Just as we have



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borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

[50] I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. [51] Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, [52] 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. [53] For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. [54] 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.” [55] “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”

[56] The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. [57] But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. [58] Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

The Dead in Christ Shall Rise First

1 Thess. 4.14-18 - For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

[15] For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. [16] For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. [18] Therefore encourage one another with these words.



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The Resurrection of Christ Is the Ground of Divine Power for Christian Living

Ps. 18.46 - The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock, and exalted be the God of my salvation . . .

John 14.19 - Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.

Rom. 6.3-11 - Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? [4] 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. [5] 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. [6] 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. [7] For one who has died has been set free from sin. [8] Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. [9] We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. [10] For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. [11] So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

2 Cor. 13.4 - For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God.

Gal. 2.20 - It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Col. 3.3 - For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.



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Heb. 7.25 - Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. ■

He Is Risen!

WHAT IS the most decisive and critical doctrine in all of Christian theology and belief?

Just think of all the possible answers that could possibly be given to this question. Surely the doctrine of God as creator is a key doctrine, speaking unequivocally about God as the source of all things and the end of all life. What about the tri-unity of God, i.e., the Lord God revealed to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Such a doctrine, it could be argued, safeguards us from the idolatry and slippage of an age gone mad with power and false devotion. Or, how about the doctrine of community, especially in a world filled with sectarian division and cultural and political alienation. Aren't there other key doctrines and issues central to the faith: the notion of covenant, salvation, righteousness, love? How can we ever truly know what is the center and the circumference of Christian philosophy and thought?

The exclamation "Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed!" is as old as the Church itself. It testifies to the central, controlling belief of believers in Jesus of Nazareth worldwide as they celebrate his victory over the grave in his bodily resurrection from the dead. As was prophesied in Scripture, and foreseen by our Lord himself, he suffered on the Tree bearing our sins in his body and overcoming the guilt and power of the grave and the curse. Yet, on the third day down he rose triumphant from the grave, and is alive now forevermore! His resurrection serves as the pinnacle of all Christian belief, and is itself the ground for all biblical revelation on the redemption won to us through the Father's love.



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The apostles taught that the resurrection of Jesus represents the central doctrine in all Christian faith and belief. Paul told the Corinthians that if the resurrection did not occur, then not even Christ has been raised, their apostolic preaching was worthless, and their faith would be futile. The apostles themselves would be found to be misrepresenting God, having borne witness that Christ has risen, when he did not (1 Cor. 15.12-15).

Listen to Paul's clear and compelling reasoning regarding the centrality of resurrection to the Christian faith:

1 Cor. 15.12-22 - Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? [13] But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. [14] And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. [15] We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. [16] For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. [17] And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. [18] Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. [19] If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. [20] But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. [21] For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. [22] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

Paul is definite and unswerving in the centrality of the belief in our Lord's resurrection from the dead. If Jesus is still dead, our Christian faith and ministry is futile, we are still guilty and trapped in our sins, and those who died in Christ have utterly perished. A Christianity of ethics and hope in this world alone is meaningless and empty in Paul's mind. Either Jesus is alive, or life has no meaning whatsoever.



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Thank God, he did not end his argument there! On apostolic authority and inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul testifies that Christ has been raised from the dead, and is himself the beginning of all those who will ultimately be raised, he is “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (v. 20). Since death came upon the entire human race through Adam, so did never-ending life come upon all humankind through a single man’s resurrection from the dead. As all have been condemned and judged and ultimately die in Adam, so also in Jesus of Nazareth all who believe will be raised to never-ending life.

The Resurrection as the Centerpiece of Our Doctrine and the Heart of Christian Faith

As those who pray and strive for the Lord’s name to be known throughout the cities of the world, this doctrine is the heart and soul of our urban proclamation and presence. We begin with this message, our belief in the apostolic testimony, and our hope in never-ending life for all who believe in Christ. This is not anchored on our own actions and duties, our efforts and performance. Rather, we proclaim Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, the anointed one of God selected by him to ransom to God a people of his own possession, and one day, to grant to them unending life through faith in his name. This is the ground, the foundation of our hope, as well as the wind in the sails of our ministry efforts. Christ is risen, and he is risen indeed; because he lives, new life can be offered to all who believe, and they can know that, in truth, they will never die if they trust in him alone.

The doctrine of the resurrection is not, therefore, merely abstract theology and doctrine, taught in a speculative manner by Christ and the apostles. The fact is, however, that Jesus did not simply teach *the doctrine* of the resurrection; he claimed *to be*, in fact, *the Resurrection and the Life itself* (John 11.25-26)! As such, his rising affirms God’s veracity and truthfulness, confirming the Scriptures. From its earliest worship, the Church made the resurrection the centerpiece of its worship and community. As the living Savior he is with us to the end of this age (Matt. 28.20). Even his “going away” (in suffering and death) did not prevent him from coming to us again



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in his resurrected glory, leading to his gift of the Holy Spirit to all believers (John 14.28). By faith we died with him, have been made alive together with him, are raised with him through baptism, and even have ascended and sit with him in heavenly places (Rom. 6.1-4; Eph. 2.5).

Clearly, it is in Jesus' resurrection that Christus Victor ("Christ, the Victor," or, "To Christ be the victory!") becomes most convincing (Gal. 1.4; Col. 2.15; 1 John 4.40). In the person of Jesus Christ, and through his resurrection, the life and manifestation of God's Age to Come has broken in upon us into this present age, with our Lord becoming the first-fruits (the very first evidence) of those who one day will rise from the dead to live forever under God's reign. Christ is the first fruits of the eschatological harvest of souls destined to live in the fully consummated Age to come (1 Cor. 15.20). Moreover, he is the "firstborn" from among the dead, i.e., the primary one, the preeminent one, and the pattern of all who with him will rise from the dead, and inherit eternal life in the new heavens and earth (Col. 1.18; Rev. 1.5-6). By the power of his resurrection, God has birthed us to a living hope, rooted in God's mercy and an inheritance that will never perish or fade away (1 Pet. 1.3-5).

Surely then, it makes sense that the early Church chose Easter as the singular event to welcome new converts into the Church, to restore backsliders and penitents, and to convocate in joyous gatherings of remembrance and worship. Christ's resurrection does not merely guarantee the life of the Age to Come for a future time; rather, it provides us with hope, power, and confidence to live a new life today, right here, right now in him. Truly, if anyone is in Christ, s/he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come (2 Cor. 5.17).

Christ Is Risen! He Is Risen, Indeed!

It is simply impossible for me to imagine how anyone claiming to be doing vital urban ministry in Christ's name could do so without emphasizing the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Regardless of how bleak, depressing, unjust, or



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ungodly a place or situation may be, we know that, in the end Christ will triumph and evil will not reign supreme forever. Christ's resurrection from the dead ensures that all the work, all our efforts and prayers, all our hospitality and proclamation, is neither futile nor misplaced. This same Jesus of Nazareth who was brutally killed reproachfully and wrongly on the Tree, the same one that was laid in a borrowed tomb, is alive today, and has been since that amazing Sunday over two thousand years ago. His presence, his living dynamic presence among his people, is our confidence and glory, and soon and very soon he will return and display his grave-conquering power for his own all over this world.

Is it any wonder why we ought to redouble our efforts and strive to make him known to the very ends of the earth, even among the cities farthest away from the reach of his Good News today?

The warriors are first worshipers, the workers are first filled with wonder at the mystery of the Nazarene thought to be dead but who was raised in power by the Father's own Holy Spirit. It is only appropriate for us, urban workers in the vineyard of Christ, to rejoice and celebrate this Easter season with glad shouts of victory and honor to Jesus, our risen Lord! His resurrection serves as the absolute proof of the coming consummation of the plan of God, the coming resurrection of the dead, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and promise of eternal life for those who believe. Let us gladly stir up pure longings for his return, and the end of this present fleeting age of darkness and sin. Join us in confessing that Jesus is Lord, and that God has raised him from the dead. This same Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified and killed by lawless men is no longer dead. God has raised him up as victorious conqueror, and being loosed from the chains of death, he can secure all who believe by the same power. Because he lives, we can live today and face tomorrow.

“Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed!” ■



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The Season from Easter to Pentecost: The Resurrection of Christ – He Is Risen!

1 Cor. 15.20-22 - But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. [21] For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. [22] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

Biblical Principle of the Season: Seek the Lord Sacrificially with Passion and Desire

As believers in Jesus of Nazareth, God's Son and his Christ, we gladly enter into this Easter season filled with wonder and joy as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the grave. No dark power, no demonic interference, no evil hindrance could block our Lord's resurrection from the dead as the firstfruits of all who sleep and believe in him as Savior and Lord. Because he is alive, he ever lives to make intercession for us, he leads us as the Great Shepherd of the sheep, and ever loves us as his cherished people and possession. As workers called to bear witness of this amazing truth, let us pray with confidence and heart, knowing full well that our message of the Cross and the empty Tomb are neither false nor faltering. Christ is risen, and he is risen indeed!

Rom. 8.10-11 - But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. [11] If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Heb. 13.20-21 - Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, [21] equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.



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An Example of Unswerving Faith in God's Ability to Raise the Dead: Abraham

Rom. 4.16-22 - That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, [17] as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. [18] In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.” [19] He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. [20] No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, [21] fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. [22] That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.”



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