

The Importance of the Resurrection of Christ

Valleys Family Church Sermon
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 16th April 2017

Intro

- What is your favourite miracle Jesus did? Jesus did many miracles but there is one which surpasses them all- the resurrection.
- Today we will look at 4 passages from the book of Romans which explain to us the importance to us today of the resurrection of Jesus.

1. Proved His deity

Read Romans 1:4

He was declared to be God's Son through the resurrection:

'He was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit.' (Rom 1:4)

- If Jesus really was and is God, it would take a God-sized miracle to prove it. The resurrection is such a God-sized miracle.
- Jesus claimed many times to be God- Ex. 3:13,14 - (Note- 'I AM' is the name of God) compare with John 8:58,59. Thomas says 'my Lord and my God' and worships Jesus- and Jesus receives the worship.
- C.S.Lewis- Jesus- mad, bad or God?
- To say Jesus is any less than God- as the cults do- is to insult the resurrection of Jesus Christ- it was His proof to the world that He is God in the flesh. Just as Thomas recognised Jesus as His Lord and God because of the resurrection so should we- 'blessed are those who have not seen yet believe'
- The resurrection of Jesus is unique- it sets Christianity above all the religions of the world. Josh McDowell, 'Evidence that demands a verdict' says:

"All but four of the major world religions are based on mere philosophical propositions. Of the four that are based on personalities rather than a philosophical system, only Christianity claims an empty tomb for it's founder.

- Abraham, the founder of Judaism, died about 1900 BC but no resurrection was ever claimed for him.
- The original accounts of Buddha never ascribe to him any such thing as resurrection; in fact, in the earliest accounts of his death, we read that when Buddha died it was "with that utter passing away in which nothing whatever remains behind."
- There is no trace in the *Pali* scriptures or commentaries of Sakya Muni having existed after his death or appearing to his disciples.
- Mohammed died, June 8th 632 A.D. at the age of 61, in the city of Medina where his tomb is visited annually by thousands of devout Muslims. All the millions of Jews, Muslims and Buddhists agree that their founders have never come up out of the dust of the earth in resurrection."

2. Showed our sins were paid for

Read Rom 4:25 "...who (that is Jesus) was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification"

- **'was delivered up because of our offenses'**...There was a reason Jesus suffered and died- Isaiah 53 tell us the reason- it was for our iniquities- i.e. He was punished in our place so that we could go free. He is our substitute.

Why? Simply because He loves us and knew it was the only way our sins could be taken away for us to get to Heaven. There is no sin too bad to be cleansed if we come earnestly in repentance. Do you have an assurance all your sins are forgiven? Come to Christ in faith and humility and receive that assurance today.

- **"...and was raised because of our justification"** 'Justification' means to be acquitted of wrongdoing, declared righteous. In our case, it means having our sins wiped out. Jesus rose to show that our sins had been removed.
- How would we know if the sacrifice for our sins was successful or not if Christ had not risen from the dead? It proves our sins have been taken away by Christ's sacrifice- i.e. God the Father has accepted Christ's sacrifice on our behalf- otherwise how would we know if the sacrifice of Christ has been enough for us?
- If Christ is not raised then we are still in our sins:
'If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is empty, and your faith also is empty.... if Christ has not been raised your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.' (1Cor 15:14, 17). But Christ is raised so we are freed from our sins.
- Death was not in God's original design for the world- it occurred because of sin, as a consequence of the first sin in the garden of Eden. Christ proves that sin has been dealt with by dealing with the consequence of sin- death. Because He has conquered death on our behalf it is proof to us that the thing which caused death in the first place has been dealt with- sin.

Application-

A group of Moravian missionaries once decided to take the message of God to the Eskimos. One of their struggles in teaching the Eskimos was that they could not find a word in the Eskimo language for forgiveness. Finally, they had to compound a phrase to use in the place of forgiveness. This compound phrase turned out to be *issu magi joujung nainer mik*. It means "not being able to think about it anymore."

- Are you struggling to believe God has forgiven you for something you have done? If God the Father will not bring it up anymore who are we to? Get into a habit of not bringing it up again once you have confessed it to God- receive His forgiveness now.
- It would be unjust for Jesus to have to die again or for Jesus to die and for us still to be punished- God will not punish twice over- that is unjust. So stop punishing yourself. He has FULLY paid for your sins and the resurrection is God the Father's acceptance of it on your behalf! This is good news!
- No sin is too bad to be forgiven- blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is seen in extreme hardening of heart where we deny the cross and see it as the work of the devil. Someone in this position does not even want to be forgiven or see the need.
- Rom 10:9 "if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved." - stop trusting in other things- good works, religion, ritual, comparisons, heritage, etc.

1cross+3nails=4given

3. Broke sin's authority over us

Read Rom 6:1-14

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 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.

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. 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. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

- This passage is saying that 2 things happened to the believer in the death and resurrection of Jesus.
 - i) In the death of Jesus our sinful nature was put to death with Christ on the cross.
 - ii) In the resurrection of Jesus we were spiritually raised to a newness of life, which we can enjoy right now.
- This is legally true of someone the moment they become a Christian and will be the case for the rest of their lives. By God dwelling in us by His Spirit it is up to us to make it experientially true by putting it into practice and putting sin to death habitually. God has given us all we need to be able to do that.
- We are to regard sin as conquered in us- defeated once and for all, and live like we believe it is true.- Rom 6:11

reckon (consider) yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord

i.e. Our flesh was nailed to the cross and we are no longer to consider sin to be influencing us, in the same way as it cannot influence Christ anymore- we are to consider ourselves like Christ to be outside of sin's jurisdiction.

i.e. Our flesh was nailed to the cross

- Adam & Eve sinned and died- but not immediately, however, they died immediately spiritually- their very nature was effected. Believing in Christ means the old fallen nature we have is crucified with Christ and we are risen with Christ, and become spiritually alive, living a new life with a new nature- sons and daughters of God.
- Our new nature- 'If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation the old has gone, the new has come'.
- Jesus described the life of his followers as being 'born again' - born of God, having a new nature and outlook on life.
- Sin is not our boss anymore- God is. God has the authority now over our lives, sin does not. It is like a Sgt Major shouting at someone who is no longer in the Army- he can shout but he no longer has the authority. Sin is our old

taskmaster- we are released from that taskmaster through Christ's resurrection.

- And God gives us His Spirit so we have power to live for Him in newness of life. Rom 8- Law of spirit of life sets us free from law of sin and death- the Holy Spirit in us empowers us to obey God. Sanctification. Gal 5- the fruit of the Spirit.

Application-

Are you struggling with a particular sin? Sometimes we feel powerless, but we are not powerless- Christ is in us. Start to believe that the power of that sin is broken. Start declaring and behaving like it is.

- See yourself as God does. You are now a saint, not a sinner. Does that mean that we cannot sin? No, we can still sin and sometimes do, and there is forgiveness available when we do, but it doesn't have to define us anymore, it is not really us and we don't have to give in to it anymore.
- See yourself as a saint because that is what you are-1Cor 1:2 'To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours'
- I am not what I might be, I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I wish to be, I am not what I hope to be. But I thank God I am not what I once was, and I can say with the great apostle, 'By the grace of God I am what I am.'" -- John Newton, author of "Amazing Grace"

4. Guaranteed our future resurrection

Read Rom 8:11

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.

- 1Cor 6:14 And God raised the Lord and will also **raise** us up by his power.
- **We shall have physical resurrection bodies like His:**

And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.
1Cor 15:49

'who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. (Philippians 3:21)

- 1Cor 15:20-23 says 'But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the **first-fruits** of them that are asleep'- firstfruits means the start of a great harvest- we are the harvest, Christ is the firstfruits of that harvest- He was the first to be raised, we will also be raised.
- We shall have physical resurrection bodies like His:
- The nature of His body- physical. Thought they'd seen a ghost at first. Why? Didn't expect to see Him. When Jesus walked on water- they thought it was His ghost. Jesus made it clear on these occasions He was not a ghost - my parents when my mum had gone to loo & my dad did not realise & she got back into bed & he thought she was a ghost.
- People could touch Him. He ate. He sounded like Jesus. He had Jesus' knowledge- knew them and taught them. He had Jesus' character, personality.
- **How Jesus looked.** He was recognisable but different- like someone you haven't seen for ages. Me with my hair/beard cut/dyed.

- He had scars- there was evidence it was the same person, but the wounds had healed- we will have perfect bodies.
- **The nature of His body- eternal.** He was raised never to die again, or age again.
- God will wipe every tear from our eyes. There will be no more pain, or curse, or sin, or sickness etc.
- **The nature of His body- supernatural.** Could disappear- Emmaus road encounter- He disappeared before their eyes when He broke bread. Could appear even in locked rooms. Ascended into Heaven. Appeared in different form to different people.

Application-

- ⑩ No more fear of death. Do you worry about death? If you have concerns look into the facts again and believe.

Martin Luther: "We shall sleep until he comes and knocks at the tomb and says: 'Dr. Martin, get up!' Then in one moment I will get up and I will rejoice with him in eternity."

The Empty Egg

- Spring came, and the children talked excitedly about the coming of Easter. Doris told them the story of Jesus, and then to emphasize the idea of new life springing forth, she gave each of the children a large plastic egg. "Now," she said to them "I want you to take this home and bring it back tomorrow with something inside that shows new life. Do you understand?" "Yes, Miss Miller!" the children responded enthusiastically - all except for Jeremy. He just listened intently, his eyes never left her face. He did not even make his usual noises. Had he understood what she had said about Jesus' death and resurrection? Did he understand the assignment? Perhaps she should call his parents and explain the project to them. That evening, Doris' kitchen sink stopped up. She called the landlord and waited an hour for him to come by and unclog it. After that, she still had to shop for food, iron a blouse and prepare a vocabulary test for the next day. She completely forgot about phoning Jeremy's parents. The next morning, 19 children came to school, laughing and talking as they placed their eggs in the large wicker basket on Miss Miller's desk. After they completed their Maths lesson, it was time to open the eggs. In the first egg, Doris found a flower. "Oh yes, a flower is certainly a sign of new life," she said. "When plants peek through the ground we know that spring is here." A small girl in the first row waved her arms. "That's my egg, Miss Miller," she called out. The next egg contained a plastic butterfly, which looked very real. Doris held it up. "We all know that a caterpillar changes and grows into a beautiful butterfly. Yes that is new life, too" Little Judy smiled proudly and said, "Miss Miller, that one is mine." Next Doris found a rock with moss on it. She explained that the moss, too, showed life. Billy spoke up from the back of the classroom. "My Daddy helped me!" he beamed. Then Doris opened the fourth egg. She gasped. The egg was empty! Surely it must be Jeremy's, she thought, and, of course, he did not understand her instructions. If only she had not forgotten to phone his parents. Because she did not want to embarrass him, she quietly set the egg aside and reached for another. Suddenly Jeremy spoke up. "Miss Miller, aren't you going to talk about my egg?" Flustered, Doris replied, "but Jeremy - your egg is empty!" He looked into her eyes and said softly, "Yes, but Jesus' tomb was empty, too!" Time stopped. When she could speak again. Doris asked him, "Do you know why the tomb was empty?" "Oh yes!" Jeremy exclaimed. "Jesus was killed and put in there. Then his Father raised him up!" The end of school bell rang. While the children excitedly ran out to the school playground, Doris cried. The cold inside her melted completely away. Three months later Jeremy died. Those who paid their respects at the crematorium were surprised to see 19 eggs on top of his coffin, all of them empty.

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Summary

Jesus resurrection:

- Proved His deity
- Showed our sins were paid for
- Broke sin's authority over us
- Guaranteed our future resurrection

Prayer of Commitment

Song:

There is a day

To those who say: 'Maybe Jesus didn't really die'

- ⑩ Recorded by Roman Historian Tacitus (Annals 15:44): "Christ, while Tiberius was emperor was capitally executed by the Procurator Pontius Pilate".
- ⑩ Beaten with rods whilst blindfolded, crown of thorns.
- ⑩ Roman flogging- cat o' nine tails.
- ⑩ Length walked whilst carrying the heavy cross- a couple of football pitches.
- ⑩ Crucifixion- nature of it. Roman soldiers made sure you were dead or they would be punished.
- ⑩ Breaking leg bones speeded up death as the victim could not push up any more to inhale. Jesus was already dead when they came to Him.
- ⑩ A spear in the side proved this- blood and water came out- (medical proof of death)- clot separates from serum.

⑩

Crucifixion: Jesus Faced a Horrible Death

Crucifixion sometimes began with a scourging or flogging of the victim's back. The Romans used a whip called a flagrum, which consisted of small pieces of bone and metal attached to a number of leather strands. The number of blows given to Jesus is not recorded; however, the number of blows in Jewish law was 39 (one less than the 40 called for in the Torah, to prevent a counting error). During the scourging, the skin was ripped from the back, exposing a bloody mass of tissue and bone. Extreme blood loss occurred, often causing death, or at least unconsciousness. In addition to the flogging, Jesus faced severe beating and torment by the Roman soldiers, including the plucking of His beard and the piercing of His scalp with a crown of thorns.

After the flogging, the victim was often forced to carry his own crossbar, or patibulum, to the execution site. The patibulum could easily weigh 100 pounds. In the case of Jesus, the record shows that He may have carried His patibulum the distance of over two football fields. In a weak and tormented state, it's no wonder the record establishes that Jesus needed a great deal of assistance. Once the victim arrived at the execution site, the patibulum was put on the ground and the victim was forced to lie upon it. Spikes about 7 inches long and 3/8 of an inch in diameter were driven into the wrists. The spikes would hit the area of the median nerve, causing shocks of pain up the arms to the shoulders and neck. Already standing at the crucifixion

site would be the 7-foot-tall post, called a stipes. In the center of the stipes was a crude seat to “support” for the victim. The patibulum was then lifted on to the stipes, and the victim’s body was awkwardly turned on the seat so that the feet could be nailed to the stipes. At this point, there was tremendous strain put on the wrists, arms and shoulders, resulting in a dislocation of the shoulder and elbow joints. The position of the nailed body held the victim’s rib cage in a fixed position, which made it extremely difficult to exhale, and impossible to take a full breath. Having suffered from the scourging, the beatings and the walk with the patibulum, Jesus was described as extremely weak and dehydrated. He was probably losing significant amounts of blood. As time passed, the loss of blood and lack of oxygen would cause severe cramps, spasmodic contractions and probably unconsciousness.

Ultimately, the mechanism of death in crucifixion was suffocation. To breathe, the victim was forced to push up on his feet to allow for inflation of the lungs. As the body weakened and pain in the feet and legs became unbearable, the victim was forced to trade breathing for pain and exhaustion. Eventually, the victim would succumb in this way, becoming utterly exhausted or lapsing into unconsciousness so that he could no longer lift his body off the stipes and inflate his lungs. Due to the shallow breathing, the victim’s lungs would begin to collapse in areas, probably causing hypoxia. Due to the loss of blood from the scourging, the victim probably formed a respiratory acidosis, resulting in an increased strain on the heart, which beats faster to compensate. Fluid would also build up in the lungs. Under the stress of hypoxia and acidosis, the heart would eventually fail. There are several different theories on the actual cause of death for Jesus. One theory is that there was a filling of the pericardium with fluid, which put a fatal strain on the ability of His heart to pump blood. Another theory states that Jesus died of cardiac rupture. Another theory is that Jesus' death was “multifactorial and related primarily to hypovolemic shock, exhaustion asphyxia and perhaps acute heart failure.” Regardless of the actual medical cause of final death, the historical record is very clear -- Jesus suffered numerous hours of horrible and sustained torture on the cross of Calvary. (source: <http://www.allaboutjesuschrist.org>)

To those who say: 'Jesus escaped tomb or disciples stole body'- i.e there was no 'resurrection power' but it was a conjuring trick done by Jesus and His disciples

⑩ Body wrapped in linen cloths, anointed with oils which would set like a cast on a broken limb. Through the wrappings- cocoon. Bandages round pencil. John believed when he saw the wrappings undisturbed where they were left- John 20:5-8. The linen strips on the ground, but the head cloth folded up on it's own (like someone making their bed when they rise).

⑩ Massive stone rolled over entrance to tomb (Joseph of Arimathea provided the tomb, a Sanhedrin member and a secret follower of Jesus). Couldn't move it from inside even if tried- probably in a groove and needed to push from one side. Women knew it weighed tons and wondered who would move it for them (maybe afraid to ask the guards).

⑩ Guards posted 24-hr duty to guard the tomb & seal placed over the stone to prevent any tampering. Even if Jesus had not have died first he would have needed to be a bit more than a Houdini to get out of this one. A rescue attempt also seems unlikely as the male disciples had fled for fear of the authorities.

⑩ Yet empty tomb! All authorities needed to do to stop Christianity from spreading was produce the body, but they could not.

⑩

⑩ Stone moved away by angel. Angels appeared to soldiers and they were so afraid they fell down as if dead. Soldiers went straight away and told the Jewish leaders and got protection. Told to make up a story of the disciples stealing the body. The Jews knew that something had taken place, but they could not refute the facts (Matt. 28:15). This shows Matthew’s honesty in exposing the only explanation attempted by Christ’s enemies.

⑩ Rose again on the third day-v4. Sunday became the new day of worship for the believing Jews- this is an amazing testimony that something radical had taken place! Three days and three nights is a Hebraism (e.g. flood 40 days

and nights etc.) meaning 3 days, and it can be part of a day- eg. 3pm Friday to Sunday morning.

To those who say: 'Maybe people just hallucinated & thought they saw Jesus'

⑩ The same hallucination is unlikely to be shared by different people and over a long period of time.

⑩ From the various places where the resurrection is mentioned in Scripture we can piece together an incredible number of eye witnesses

1. Mary Magdalene (7demons), shortly after his resurrection. (Mark 16:9; John 20:11-18.)

2. The women returning from the empty tomb. (Matthew 28:8-10.)

3. Two disciples on the road to Emmaus. (Mark 16:12,13; Luke 24:13-35.)

4. Peter. (Luke 24:34, 1 Corinthians 15:5.)

5. His disciples, in Jerusalem-Thomas is absent. (Mark 16:14-18; Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-23.)

6. His disciples, in Jerusalem-Thomas is present. (John 20:24-29.)

7. His disciples on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. (Matthew 28:16; John 21:1,2.)

8. **500** believers at one time. (1 Corinthians 15:6.). Over 500 at one time in itself strongly refutes theory that they hallucinated.

9. James. **His brother, and author of the book of James, who was formerly an unbeliever.** (1 Corinthians 15:7).

10. His disciples on a mountain in Galilee. (Matthew 28:16-20.)

11. His disciples, blesses them, and ascends into heaven. (Luke 24:50-53.)

12. Paul, on the road to Damascus. **Who formerly was an unbeliever and persecuted the Church, but became a great witness for Christ and wrote many letters in scripture.** (Acts 9:3-6; 1 Corinthians 15:8.)

⑩ Of note are the hostile witnesses- James and Paul.

⑩ Most of the disciples died as martyrs for witnessing to the resurrection- why would someone be prepared to die for a lie? All but one of the disciples died for their faith and even John who died of old age was put into a vat of boiling oil, but delivered out of this by God.

⑩ Jesus appeared over a **40 day period**, and on many occasions. Ate with them, cooked breakfast. Jesus appeared to His contemporaries offering them “many infallible proofs” that He was alive (Acts 1:3).

⑩ His enemies could not deny it. All the opponents of Christianity needed to do to stop it was display the body of Christ, but they could not- the tomb was empty!

The pyramids of Egypt are famous because they contained the mummified bodies of ancient Egyptian kings. Westminster Abbey in London is renowned, because in it rests the bodies of English nobles and notables. Mohammed's tomb is noted for the stone coffin and the bones it contains. The Garden Tomb of Jesus is famous because it is empty!

⑩ Fifty days after the resurrection, Peter openly preached the resurrection to the Jews from fifteen countries, without any hint of refutation. Three thousand Jews became believers in Christ (Acts 2:14, 24, 31-36).

⑩ Paul preached the resurrection to Festus, the governor, and King Agrippa, without refutation (Acts 25:19, 26:23-26).

Other Proofs- Historical proof- Sunday became THE common day of worship

⑩ Sunday (the day Jesus rose) became the new day of worship for the believing Jews- this is an amazing testimony that something radical had taken place!

Other Proofs- Changed lives

⑩ Changed lives then and today.