

"Because He Lives"

Since the New Testament provides a basis for believing Jesus arose bodily from the dead, what difference does it make? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're considering how the resurrection of Jesus affects our lives. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. Because Jesus arose bodily from the dead, we can know that our life on earth is not the end. We'll live on beyond this life. Our bodies die, but our spirits live on. At death our spirits go back to God (Ecclesiastes 12, verse 7). You'll remember the Lord Jesus said at His death, "Father into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23, and verse 46). Now His resurrection on the third day, the first day of the week, means His prophecy proved true. Truth matters; no one wants to be deceived about their eternal destiny. Only the Son of God, who never deceives, can be trusted about our salvation and eternal destiny. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

The Lord Jesus came to Bethany to raise Lazarus from the dead; Lazarus had been dead for four days. His loved ones were grieving. He told Martha, Lazarus' sister in John 11, verses 25 to 26, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" And now I'm asking you what Jesus asked Martha, "Do you believe this?"

After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, some witnesses "went to the Pharisees and told them the things which Jesus had done" (John 11:46). The chief priests and the Pharisees, who were the enemies of the Lord, convened a council and talked about this event. They said in John 11:47 to 48, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs (that is, miracles). And if we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him." Now even the enemies of Jesus knew His miracles, that they were real and undeniable.

Now we offer this study free in this little booklet with four lessons, entitled "The Son Arose." If you'd like a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 1 Corinthians 15:12 to 19, and explore why the resurrection matters to you and to your destiny.

Our reading today comes from 1 Corinthians, chapter 15. And the apostle Paul is shocked that there are some who are denying the resurrection. And so he says, "Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. Moreover, we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied." That's a reading from God's holy word.

Let's pray together. "Father, we're thankful for all the evidence that Jesus Christ did indeed rise from the dead, and for the hope we have of being able to live with You forever and ever, when You

come for us and raise us from the dead. And Father we pray that we'll live faithfully, lovingly and obediently to Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

If Christ is not raised from the dead, there will be no general resurrection, our preaching is vain, our faith is vain, we are false witnesses to preach it, and our faith is worthless, we are still in our sins, the dead in Christ have perished, and our hope in Christ is for this life only, and we are of all men most to be pitied. If the resurrection account of Jesus is not true, then Christianity would be founded upon a lie. Christianity is based on the historical evidence concerning the claims and life of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scripture explicitly stakes its validity and its hope on the historical fact of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

But God did raise Jesus from the dead! There will be a general resurrection. Our preaching and our faith is not in vain. We are not false witnesses to preach it. Our faith is precious and priceless. We are saved from sin. The dead in Christ are now with the Lord. And our hope extends beyond this life. And we are of all men most to be congratulated and thankful for our blessings and inheritance in Christ. When one considers the evidence, he realizes Jesus is unique, and He's unique when it comes to a resurrection. The resurrection of Christ is essential to our faith and shows credentials, which no other religious leader possesses. While every other religious leader has died, Jesus Christ is risen from the dead and reigns as Lord!

The resurrection should make a difference in our personal lives. For the early disciples, the crucifixion was devastating; they lost their master and friend. Their hope of Jesus being the Messiah had been crushed. Well how they changed from hopeless to hope-filled? How did they have the courage to preach at Pentecost, fifty days later? It was because the disciples truly came to believe that God raised Jesus bodily from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus changed everything. Jesus was now in their hearts and their lives and He was the risen Lord and Christ to them!

Now here is why the resurrection matters. First, because Jesus arose, He is Lord. In the first gospel sermon Peter preached, "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. And being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.'" ' Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2, verses 29 to 36). Now to be Lord means that He is ruler of all, that every person is under His authority. To be "Christ" means He is the Messiah and now reigns as the King of His people.

Because He has risen and is Lord, He speaks with authority. His words are binding upon all people everywhere. We must listen to and obey Him. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:21 to 23 that "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"

The Lord Jesus explained clearly in Matthew 7:24 to 27 that "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it didn't fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

Now what the Lord Jesus says matters. He is the Lord who makes the rules about what we should believe and how we should live. No one can overcome Him or change His teaching! He will have the last say on judgment day. And people deceive themselves thinking that they can change what He taught about spiritual matters and about morality. The Lord Jesus said in John 12:48, that "The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day." Now don't imagine the grace of God will somehow turn what Jesus said was immoral into something that is moral, that won't happen. Don't imagine that our worldly and sinful culture can rewrite what God said to suit themselves. The words of Jesus are settled in heaven and cannot be changed!

Since Jesus is risen, we know that His teaching and His promises hold true. He alone has the answers to where we came from, why we're here, and what life is about, and then what will be facing us after we die. You know, when He teaches that we were created, we can believe it! When He promises to forgive our sins, we can believe Him! When He says we can have an abundant life and eternal life, we should have no doubt. 2 Corinthians 1:18 to 20 says, "As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it was always Yes. For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. And that is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory."

When you believe the words of the New Testament, you are believing the Lord Jesus Himself. His words are trustworthy because they come from Him, and we can trust Him!

Now since Jesus arose, He will one day raise the dead. The Lord Jesus promised in John 5:28 to 29, "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment."

The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 4:13 to 18, "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by the word from the Lord, that we who are alive, and who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of a trumpet, the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 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. Therefore encourage one another with these words."

When we face the death of our loved ones, a faithful Christian, we can face it with hope, knowing that this loved one will one day rise again. For nearly fifty years I've conducted funerals, often for people that I love dearly. I know what it is to grieve as Mary and Martha did for Lazarus. The resurrection of Jesus and His promised return give me hope of being with loved ones in heaven. This promise also reminds me to remain faithful to the Lord. Are you living a faithful and godly Christian life? Are you "in Christ"?

Death is the separation of the body from the spirit (James 2 and verse 26). Resurrection is the rejoining of the body and spirit. After we are resurrected from the dead, our fleshly bodies will be changed so that we can live with God in heaven. Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 15, verses 50 to 53, "I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be

changed, 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. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.”

Yes, our bodies will not be like they are today. They will die, but we will never die because our bodies will be changed like the glorified body of Jesus, and that body will live forever. Philippians 3:20 to 21 says, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state (the one that we have now) into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.” This humble body that gets sick and dies will be transformed to be like the Lord’s immortal, imperishable body.

Because God raised up Jesus and He is Lord, we know that He will judge us all on the last day. 2 Corinthians 5, and verse 10 says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” Revelation 20 verses 11 to 12 tells us more about the judgment:

John says, “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

Because Jesus lives, faithful Christians have a home in heaven. The Lord Jesus promised in John 14:1 to 3, “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” The apostle Peter explained in 1 Peter 1, verses 3 to 4, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.” Oh, I pray, I hope, I wish, I want for you to be living a faithful and a godly life that’s devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ. His resurrection ought to make a difference to you, how you live and how you think. It ought to make a difference in how you pray and how you treat other people. The resurrection is not simply a doctrine to be believed. It’s a way of life, of being like Jesus in everything we do, and everything we say.

Let’s pray together. “Father, we’re so grateful for Your love, and we’re thankful that You raised Jesus from the dead. Help us to devote ourselves to Him, and to You, with a loving heart filled with faith and obedience to Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.”

Since Jesus rose from the dead, since Jesus is Lord, since Jesus speaks with authority, since Jesus will judge us at the end of time, since heaven and hell are real, since His promises are true, and since He is coming again one day, shouldn’t you take the Lord seriously and turn your heart and soul to Him? Jesus is everything that He claimed to be! Take a long look at what He did on the cross. He loved you enough to bear the brutal penalty of death for your sins on the cross. And no one can free you from sin or bring you to God but Jesus Christ (John 14, verse 6). No one can assure you of eternal life except the Lord Jesus who arose from the dead.

No matter what your past has been, you can come to Christ for salvation. Set your heart on the Lord, who loved you enough to die for you. Take hold of the gospel that you've heard and take your stand on it. Hold fast to God's Word, and don't believe in vain. Believe in the Lord who died for your sins and rose again so you might have eternal life. Repent of your sins, turn your heart and life toward the Lord Jesus.

It's not enough merely to say that you believe or to pray a simple prayer. Saul of Tarsus prayed fervently for three days (Acts 9, verse 11); but he didn't have his sins washed away until he was baptized calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22, verse 16). 1 Peter 3:21 says, "Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Won't you have your sins washed away too?

We hope that today's study about the resurrection has stirred you to consider your soul. We're offering a free book "The Son Arose," and if you get a hold of us we'll be glad to send you one, free. And if you live in the United States, and want a free printed copy of our booklet, The Son Arose, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. You can also watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry", and as you're watching remember to like each program. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

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