

What the Resurrection Means for Us



Victory Over Death (Part 6)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you out of truths that life has taught me, truths that have made the difference between success and failure in my life and can do the same for you.

First of all, let me say "Thank you" to those of you who have been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. Feel free to share with us your personal needs, your problems, your prayer requests.

All last week I was sharing with you on a rich and wonderful theme that has so much meaning for us all, the theme of "Victory over Death." This week I'm going to continue with the same theme. There's so much more still to unfold.

Last week I explained how Jesus, as our Kinsman-Redeemer, took upon Himself the sentence of death that was due to each of us and yielded up His soul as the sin offering on our behalf, thereby expiating our guilt. Then on the third day, God the Father set aside the unjust decisions of the two human courts (Jewish and Roman) that had condemned Jesus to death, and vindicated the righteousness of his Son by raising Him from the dead.

Today, I'm going to continue with the theme of Christ's resurrection. I'm going to explain just what it means for each of us.

The first thing that we need to see is that the resurrection of Jesus, who was our representative, is the sure seal upon God's offer of forgiveness and salvation through Jesus.

In Romans 4:18-22, Paul explains how Abraham's faith in God's promise was "credited to him as righteousness." Then he continues with an application to us also as believers today. In Romans 4:23-25, he says:

> "The words 'it was credited to him [Abraham]' were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness, for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He [that is Jesus]

> was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification." (NIV)

Let me read that last verse again: "[Jesus] was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification." The word "justification" is a kind of technical theological word. We might render it "acquittal" or "that we might be rendered righteous." Perhaps the best explanation of what it means to be justified is this: Justified means "just-as-if-I'd never sinned," because Christ's righteousness, His sinless righteousness, is imputed or credited to us through our faith.

Now, I've explained the logic of this in a passage from my book, Resurrection of the Dead, which I'm going to read now.

> "In Romans chapter 4, verse 25, Paul says that Christ 'was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.'"

This shows that the sinner's justification is dependent upon Christ being raised again from the dead. Had Christ remained upon the cross, or in the tomb, God's promise to the sinner of salvation and eternal life could never have been fulfilled. It is only the risen Christ, received and confessed by faith, who brings to the sinner: pardon, peace, eternal life and victory over sin.

Paul states the same truth again in Romans 10:9, where he says:

> "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus [or Jesus as Lord] and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (NAS)

Here salvation is stated to be dependent upon two things: first, openly confessing Jesus as Lord; second, believing in the heart that God raised Jesus from the dead. Thus, saving faith includes faith in the resurrection. There can be no salvation for those who do not believe in the resurrection of Christ.

Logic and intellectual honesty permit no other conclusion. If Christ is not risen from the dead, then He has no power to pardon or to save the sinner. But if He is risen, as the Scripture states, then this is logical proof of His power to pardon and to save. This consequence of Christ's resurrection is clearly set forth in Hebrews 7:25:

> "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

The absolute, logical necessity of Christ's resurrection as a basis of God's offer of salvation is stated again by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:14 & 17. He says:

> "'If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.' [Again, in verse 17:] 'If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain: ye are yet in your sins.'" (NAS)

The condition of contemporary Christendom abundantly confirms these plain statements of Scripture. Those theologians who reject the personal, physical resurrection of Christ may moralize and theorize as much as they please, but one thing they never come to know in personal experience: the peace and the joy of sins forgiven.

I've said that Christ's resurrection is the sure seal upon God's offer of forgiveness and salvation to each one of us.

Secondly, Christ's resurrection is the guarantee of our resurrection. In Colossians 1:18, Paul says this of Jesus:

> "He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything." (NAS)

Jesus was the beginning of the first creation of God, and through His resurrection He is also the beginning of the new creation of God, which is made available to us through faith. Here, in this passage in Colossians, Jesus is said to be the beginning and the first-born from the dead. In other words, resurrection is here compared to rebirth out of death. This agrees with what we find in Psalms 2:7. Psalm 2 is also a prophetic preview of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. In verse 7, Jesus is speaking, and He is speaking of the decree that God the Father has made concerning Him. This is what He says:

> "I will surely tell the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, 'Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee.'" (NAS)

And this day on which the Father begat the Son was the Resurrection Day. Jesus was the first begotten of the first born from the dead. His resurrection was a birth out of death

to new and eternal life.

Now, if we return to Colossians 1:18, the picture that Paul gives there is that Jesus is the head of the body, which is the Church, and He's the first-born from the dead. If we picture resurrection as a birth, then we can apply to it the same order that applies to a natural birth of a child from his mother's womb and, of course, we all know that in a natural birth the head comes out first and then the body follows. So, this applies of course to the resurrection of Jesus and our resurrection. Jesus, the head, has come out in resurrection, so this guarantees that we, who are the body, will follow the head. It's a beautiful picture. So the resurrection of Jesus is our guarantee that we, who are united to Him by faith, will also be resurrected as He was. He, the head, has already come forth; we, the body, will follow in God's due season. This is summed up very briefly by Jesus Himself in John 14:19:

> "Because I live, you shall live also." (NAS)

His life is our life. We have a guarantee that we'll share in His resurrection because we're united to Him.

The third fact about the resurrection is that it is the goal of our Christian living. Let's look at Paul's attitude and motivation concerning this, as he himself expresses it in Philippians 3:10-14. Paul speaks about the whole purpose of his Christian life and service. He says this:

> "...that I may know Him [that's Jesus], and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. [Notice Paul's motivation 'that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.' Then, in the next verse, he says:] Not that I have already obtained it [that's the resurrection of the dead], or have already become perfect [or complete], but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. [That is, the resurrection of the dead. Paul is very objective about himself. He goes on to say:] Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (NAS)

That was Paul's attitude toward attaining to the resurrection of the dead. He didn't consider that he had already attained, but his purpose was to attain, and he said, "Nothing is going to stand between me and the fulfillment of Christ's purpose for me. I'm going to press toward that mark. I'm going to press onward and upward, and nothing is going to hold me back. The things of time, human attitudes and personalities, situations in the world, none of them will deflect me from my supreme ambition, which is to attain to the resurrection from the dead."

Now, Paul was certainly a successful Christian, and yet, that was his attitude. How can our attitude be different? How can we assume something that Paul could not assume? Do not we need, all of us, to cultivate this same attitude? "I press toward the goal. I have not yet attained, but it is my purpose to attain, and nothing will stand between me and the fulfillment of my purpose."

I believe that's the challenge of the resurrection for each of us just at this time.

Now our time is up for today, but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow, I'll be explaining how the resurrection was clearly predicted in the Old Testament. This provides an outstanding example of amazing accuracy of biblical prophecy.

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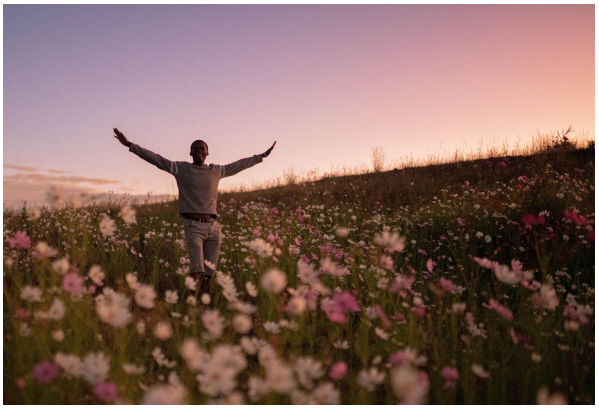

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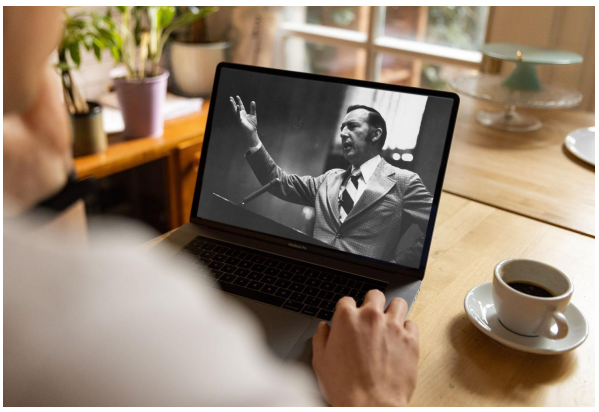

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