

The First Resurrection



Resurrection (Part 9)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we continue with our theme that has opened up to us such measureless blessings: the theme of "Resurrection."

In my previous talks this week, I've shared with you three wonderful blessings made available to us through Christ's resurrection. The first, we can be begotten again, or born again. We can be born into a totally new life. We can have a totally new start through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Second, we can be justified, acquitted, rendered completely righteous with Christ's righteousness, not with our own. I have explained the word "justified" this way: to say I'm justified means I'm just-as-if-I'd never sinned. Because the righteousness of Christ which is credited to me through my faith in His death and resurrection is a sinless righteousness, one which has never known sin, never been stained with sin. And that's the righteousness which God offers us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Third, through the resurrection of Jesus, God offers us victory over all our enemies, and particularly the last enemy, Death. And I explained how death has already been defeated but not yet finally destroyed. And meanwhile, death merely serves the purposes of Almighty God in our lives. And when we come to that moment of death, we do not pass into the realm of darkness, we do not have to face the satanic angels of Death and Hades, but the way is opened up for us as it was for Stephen into the immediate presence of God.

Today I'm going to share with you yet one more blessing, made available to us through Christ's resurrection. It is this: His resurrection is the guarantee of our resurrection.

Paul paints a vivid picture of this in Colossians 1:18, where he says of Jesus:

> "He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence." (NKJ)

And when it says, "that in all things He may have the preeminence," it speaks about the first order, or the first creation, and the new creation. And in both creation has the

preeminence, has the first place. And in this connection Paul says two things about Jesus. First of all, He's the head of the body, the Church. And secondly, He's the beginning, that's the beginning of the new creation, through being the firstborn from the dead. So when Paul speaks of Jesus being the firstborn by implication, there are others to follow. He must be the first that is to be followed by others.

And there is implicit there a very vivid picture. Paul speaks about resurrection as being a birth from the dead. And he says Jesus was the first to experience this birth, to emerge from the dead, and he also says He's the head of the body the Church. Now know that in a normal, natural physical birth, the first part that emerges is the head. And when the head emerges, that is sure evidence that the body is going to follow. And so when Jesus, the head of the body, emerged by resurrection from death, that was sure and final evidence that the body, the Church, will follow Him in that resurrection out of death.

I'd like to share with you also the words of John in Revelation 1:4-5, where he says:

> "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, [that's God the Father] from the seven Spirits who are before His throne. [That's the Holy Spirit and His seven aspects] and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth..." (NKJ)

There are three statements there made about Jesus. Three descriptions which follow one another in a logical order. First of all, He is the faithful witness. He's the one who faithfully and completely represented the Father to the people of His time. He never compromised, He never spoke one false word, He never misrepresented God. Even at the cost of His own life He remained the faithful witness. Because He was the faithful witness, therefore He became the firstborn from the dead, the first to be resurrected from the dead. And as the firstborn from the dead, then He became the ruler over the kings of the earth. You see that resurrection leads to rule. And again the use of the phrase "firstborn" indicates that there are others to follow. Christ was resurrected to rule and so shall we be.

You remember we've quoted several times from Ephesians 2, the three "together" statements of Paul: we are made alive "together," we are resurrected "together," we are enthroned "together." Resurrection leads to the throne! Paul brings out the same truth again in 2 Timothy 2:11-12, where he is quoting what is apparently a saying that was current in the early church. This is what he says:

> "This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him [that is, Jesus] we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him." (NKJ)

So if we are identified with Him in death, we shall be identified with Him in resurrection. If we hold out faithfully in our witness as He held out in His witness, we shall be like Him, resurrected to reign with Him.

And then in Revelation 3:21, Jesus gives this promise:

> "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." (NKJ)

That's a breathtaking promise, isn't it? Jesus overcame, the Father raised Him to the throne to sit with Him on the throne to rule. Jesus says, "Through My death and resurrection, you can overcome. And if you overcome I will do for you what My Father did for Me. I will raise you up and I will sit you with Me on My throne to rule."

Then in 1 Corinthians 15:22-24, Paul outlines the order of resurrection and he gives three successive phases.

> "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. [In due course all will be resurrected.] But each one in his own order: [Now Paul gives the order:] Christ the firstfruits, [That's the first phase. The second phase:] afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. [And finally the end:] Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power." (NKJ)

So we see the order of resurrection. Christ the firstfruits, that's already taken place. The next phase is "those who are Christ's at His coming." This is called in Scripture "the first resurrection." The Scripture says, "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection." And the end, the final resurrection of all the remaining dead described at the end of Revelation 20.

As we think on this glorious theme of resurrection, it is very natural for us to ask ourselves, "What will the resurrection be like?" And this question is actually asked in the New Testament and answered in various places. I want to give just two brief New Testament answers to this question: What will the resurrection be like? How will we be when we come into

the fullness of resurrection? The first answer is found in the first epistle of John 3:2:

> "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (KJV)

So already we are the sons of God by that inward life that we have which is Christ in us the hope of glory. But that is not yet fully manifest in our external person. That will only happen when Jesus comes and is manifested in His glory, then we will be like Him. We will receive a body like His. And we will be like Him because we shall see Him as He is. There will be a revelation of the resurrected glorified Christ to the believers who are waiting for Him, that will be transforming in its power. It will transform those mortal bodies into immortal bodies, those weak bodies into strong bodies. Those bodies of humiliation into bodies of glory. Those corruptible bodies into incorruptible bodies. And so again in Philippians 3:20-21, Paul returns to this theme of what the resurrection will be like in our experience. And he says this:

> "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; [Notice these words are only true of those who are expecting the Lord Jesus to return. And it says about Him:] Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (KJV)

Paul speaks about our vile body but the Greek says, "The body of our humiliation…" Our body is a body of humiliation as a result of our sin. We live in a body that continually reminds us of our weakness, our limitations, that things are not the way that God originally planned they should be. And because of the humiliation we're reminded of our sin. But thanks be to God, there is this promise that if we are looking for Jesus Christ when He appears and when we see Him, we will be transformed into the likeness of the body of His glory. We will share His glory even in our physical body. And Paul says and listen to these words, "…according to the working whereby he [Jesus] is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

Do you believe that? Do you believe that Jesus can subdue all things to Himself? Even these weak, corruptible, frail bodies of our will be subdued and brought into the likeness of His glorious body.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll continue and complete this theme of "Resurrection." I'll be sharing about being witnesses of Christ's resurrection to our generation.

Radio Program

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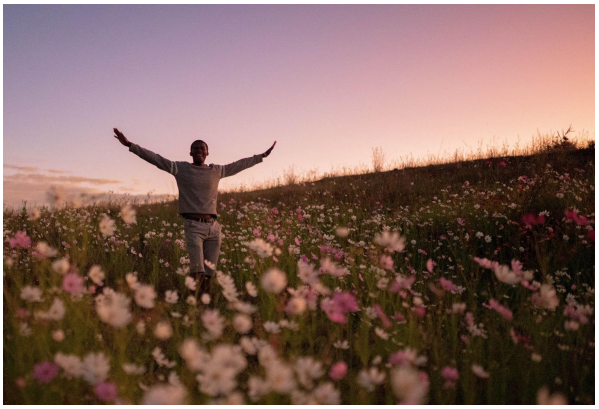

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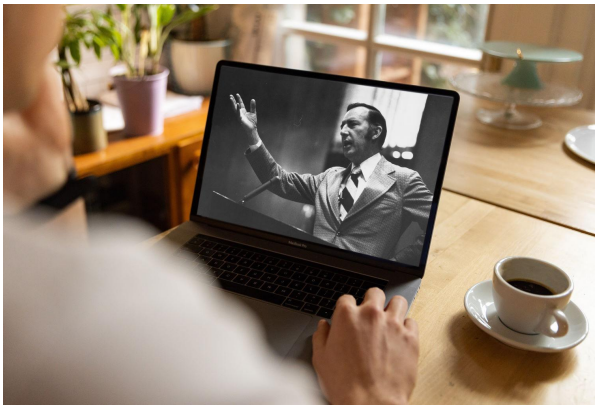

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