

Series: Resurrection Sunday	Reference: 2 Corinthians 5:14-21	Title: Christ is Risen!	Date: 04.17.2022
Website Writeup:			
<p>Christ the Lord is risen! Christ's death & resurrection has freed us from sin & condemnation. We're called in this freedom to live in the light of His resurrection glory. Resurrection brings salvation, and with salvation comes a new identity in Christ & a hope that surpasses everything. Live into the hope of the resurrection by proclaiming "Christ is risen!" Allow Him to restore your soul through salvation - find in Christ your originally intended purpose & identity once more.</p>			

COLOR CHANGES IN TEXT INDICATE SLIDE CHANGES

In the book, *Tip Lewis & His Lamp*, Tip's whole identity is wrapped up in his terrible behavior. He's known throughout town as a thief, a hellion - a boy who won't meet a good end. Tip is perfectly satisfied with this since it means no one chases after him to put him in school, and keeps him free from responsibility to family & others. But one day he attends Sunday school, hears the gospel for the first time, and realizes Jesus loves people like him. In his journey of faith, Tip realizes his identity in Christ, which transforms him into one of the most respected young men in town.

If you've ever witnessed the change wrought in a person after a saving encounter with Jesus, you can't be anything but amazed at the change! But you don't have to be a total social reprobate to experience it. Seemingly good people come to realize their need for salvation as well. Since sin, which separates us from God, is a condition of the heart not only shown in overtly wrong behavior. It's a spiritual malady, a condition. Sin as condition leads sometimes to sinful behavior, subtly in some, overtly in others - which is why it doesn't matter how good you are, sin must be addressed in all of us.

Mankind was made to be in relationship with God. Yet, because of sin, our original purpose & identity was lost. Our purpose being to enjoy & worship God, stewarding His creation. Our identity being image bearers reflecting His attributes to the world in peaceful relationship with others. The original picture of Mankind in the Garden of Eden was one of peace, tranquility & relationship with God & each other as He walked among us. Life, goodness, healthy connection, intimacy, fidelity & love at the heart of it all; what everyone longs for now even if unaware of it - the God shaped hole in all of us. Healthy relationship with God & others - all as it should be, until...sin was birthed into the world.

Picture a hot day sitting poolside with a refreshing cool glass of water. Someone comes along & spits in it! You wouldn't drink it. Couldn't purify it. Only good to throw out. Pour out contents, wash glass, re-pour. Sin's done this, polluting us beyond repair. We can't purify ourselves - can't pour out your soul & refill.

Thomas Merton said, "*Sin strikes at the very depth of our personality. It destroys the one reality on which our true character, identity & happiness depend: our fundamental orientation to God. We're created to will what God wills, to know what He knows, to love what He loves. Sin is...to love what He does not love.* Therefore,

every sin is a sin against Truth, a sin against obedience & against love. But in all these three things sin proves itself to be a supreme injustice not only against God but, above all, against ourselves."¹

Mankind self-destructed. If we don't see that, we're in denial. We spit in our own glass. Can't blame Satan. Nor God. We chose to turn our backs on the best thing for us - our Creator. No longer to live out of the freedom of our true purpose & identity. Sin's the spit in the glass. But Easter is the Good News - the Gospel! The reversal of order.

Turn with me to p790 of your pew Bibles to 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 a passage we looked at some last week as well...*For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that One died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them & was raised again.*

Today, the world over Christians proclaim, 'Christ the Lord is risen!' That Christ's death & resurrection frees us from sin & condemnation. We're called in this freedom to live in the light of His resurrection glory. Resurrection brings salvation. In Christ, salvation comes & human identity is restored in Him, which brings all surpassing hope. So today, live in the hope of the resurrection - proclaim 'Christ is risen!' Allow Him to restore your soul in salvation.

It continues...*¹⁶So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*

Christ renews us, refills the glass & adjusts our worldview. We are more than bodies knocking into each other, we're physical image bearers of God. Spiritual beings animated in physical form - there's more to life than rat race & death. Eternal life beyond, like a rope extending into eternity with one inch of the tip painted red - life now. Wisdom considers where the rest of the rope leads. God deemed all creation 'good', and us as 'very good' back in the Creation account in early Genesis! Unfortunately, that image has been shattered like a mirror. Shards reveal a remnant of the image of God in us, but it's broken nonetheless. The Easter message is that, in Christ the mirror's restored!

It continues...*¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ & gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*

¹ (Thomas Merton, *No Man is an Island* [New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1955], 84)

Sin broke relationship with God - God & sin cannot coexist - incompatible. Last week we outlined the Gospel starting with Romans 3:23, *“For all have sinned & fall short of the glory of God.”* If you’ve ever hated someone in your heart, looked at someone lustfully, lied (even a small one), etc... These are all in the category of sin which separate us from a holy God - the spit in the glass. We only need look at the 10 Commandments in Exodus 20 to know we’ve all fallen short of the glory of God. We look at sin as if looking at the skyline of a city comparing the heights of the buildings. If my sin is shorter in comparison to yours I feel okay, at least I’m not like you! But God looks down on the city, not from the side, all sin equal in His eyes with the same result...

Bringing us to Romans 6:23, *“For the wages of sin is death...”* But the good news of Easter is the resurrection of Christ does the opposite promising restoration of relationship with God. In Christ, God restores that cool drink. It pours out the polluted water, washes the glass & refills it with water pure & new! Acts 10:45 says...*“the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out...”* on those who receive it. Romans 5:5 says...*“And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”* And 1 Timothy 1:14 says...*“The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith & love that are in Christ Jesus.”*

According to Tim Keller, *“The resurrection promises us more than consolation for the suffering & death we experience in this world; it promises us restoration. The resurrection means nothing is truly lost.”*² True & it’s due to the second half of Romans 6:23, *“...but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* Which leads to Romans 5:8...*“But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* Christ was the only human, perfect in holiness, without sin, able to make the prescribed sacrifice of death to benefit anyone who’d accept Him as Savior & Lord. This because God is just, the sin which brings death & destruction in us must be killed off in us. There had to be a perfect sacrifice. Jesus, the only one who can clean the glass & refill it!

Which all ends with Ephesians 2:8-9...*“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”* This reiterates the first point, we can’t live a good enough life. Can’t clean the glass, but Jesus can & His work on our behalf is a gift.

And finally, Romans 10:9-10 tells us how to simply gain this new relationship with God, *“If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”*

Thanks to Easter, faith & salvation are a free gift, a work of God in us. In Christ, we’re given what we don’t deserve (eternal life), in order not to be given what we do (death),

² (quoted in Petar Nenadov, *The Gospel Coalition*, “Restoration: The Promise of the Resurrection,” May 5, 2013, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/restoration-the-promise-of-the-resurrection/>)

which transforms the heart, birthing gratitude, redefining purpose & direction. The end result of Jesus' sacrifice for us is stated in Jude 24 where it says, He's "*able to keep you from stumbling & to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy.*" 2 Corinthians 5:21 says it this way, "*God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*" Rightly related to God!

The ceremonial sacrifices of the Old Testament foreshadowed Jesus. Once a year the Great High Priest would enter the inner most sanctum of the Temple of God to make sacrifice for the sin of Israel. There, he'd sprinkle the blood of a perfect sacrificial lamb on the Mercy Seat of the Alter of God in the Temple. He'd make atonement for his sin before doing so lest he die in the presence of God. As a matter of fact, he entered with a rope tied around his ankle so they could pull him out if he died in process revealing how incompatible sin is with Gods holiness.

The Mercy Seat covered the Ark of the Covenant with two angelic cherubim overshadowing it. The Ark housed the 10 Commandments of God as written in Exodus 20; our moral measuring stick - that which brings conviction & reveals sin in us. The Law of God, a blessing, since if you need salvation, you need to know from what you're being saved.

The events of the cross & resurrection come at Passover commemorating the Israelites freedom from slavery in Egypt when God sent 10 plagues on Pharaoh. The 10th being the death of every firstborn son. We remember from last week how the Israelites were to paint the doorposts & lintels of their homes with the blood of a perfect lamb which had been sacrificed to save them. The angel of death passed over those homes & they were freed. Again, all foreshadowing Jesus. He becomes the final sacrificial perfect lamb for us. His blood shed for the sin of the world on the Mercy Seat of God! The blood on the doorposts & lintels of our homes allowing the judgement of God on sin to pass over. Which enables us to boldly enter God's presence now.

John 20 outlines the discovery of the empty tomb at Easter. It says, "*Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹²and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head & the other at the foot.*" Notice what she sees - a living replica of the Ark of the Covenant with the two cherubim at either end, symbolizing Christ as the perfect sacrificial lamb of God. The stone rolled away, and now we can enter. **And we Remember what happened to the veil in the Temple when He was crucified. The veil which closed off the inner sanctum, the Holy of Holies, the place where the glory of God resided...it was ripped in two when Christ was crucified opening up the way to God.**

That veil was made of fine linen & blue, purple & scarlet yarn - 60' tall, 30' feet high & at least 4" thick. It took 300 men to lift it. The ripping of that veil, which no person could ever do, symbolized Christ's sacrifice as sufficient to restore our relationship to God. Which is why Hebrews 4:16 says that because of Jesus we can... "*...approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy & find grace to help us in our time of need.*"

Think of your life is a book filled with your sinful record. Christ's life is a book filled with His perfect record. In the cross & resurrection He switches the covers. He takes on your sin as 2 Corinthians 5:21 tells us, *"God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us."* He dies in your place, takes on your punishment for sin. As a result, you're covered with His blood & righteousness, His perfect record, making you presentable before God the Father. Reconciled with a Holy God - your sin's been atoned for in Christ!

The death of Christ on the cross won humanity its salvation. In Him, we're dead to sin & raised to life in Christ. Because it didn't end at the cross, Easter came 3 days later. *"The Resurrection is the completion of the story of the Cross."*³ If you'd read your bulletin last week concerning Good Friday, it said, *"Good Friday commemorates the crucifixion & death of Jesus at Calvary. It is also known as Holy Friday, Great Friday, Sorrowful Friday or Black Friday."* Those last two terms outline the weightiness of the crucifixion account. But whereas the cross is a sign of death & sacrifice, the empty tomb is an invitation to new life.

He died for a reason. He rose for a reason. The whole story of God from Genesis to Revelation is about this. This is the true reality in which we live. The rat race, war, tears, suffering & death are only temporary, thanks to the cross & resurrection of Christ! We no longer regard anyone in a worldly way, we're spiritual beings animated in physical form, created by & for a good God who loves & makes way for reconciliation of relationship by His own sacrifice!

When we accept Christ's death & resurrection as sinners needing salvation, only then can we become children of God. When we become children of God, we're given a new name & identity. This identity is spoken over us by Jesus. He determines who we are. Our new identities are meant to be so caught up in Christ that we're now, like Romans 8:17 says, *"heirs of God & fellow heirs with Christ."* We inherit all that God had originally intended for humanity!

Christ the Lord is risen! Christ's death & resurrection frees us from sin & condemnation, and we're called in this freedom to live in the light of His resurrection glory. Resurrection brings salvation. In Christ, salvation comes & human identity is restored in Him, bringing all surpassing hope. Live in the hope of the resurrection - proclaim Christ is risen today! Allow Him to restore your soul & pour life back into you. Be about the ministry of reconciliation - the retelling of this great story to all who need to hear!

If you don't know Him yet, know Him now Romans 10:9-10 outlines it simply, *"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."* Do you believe in your heart God raised Jesus from the dead for your sake? Will you confess with your mouth right now, Jesus is Lord!? Let me hear you say it - HE IS RISEN - JESUS IS LORD!

³ Mike Breen, *Covenant & Kingdom: The DNA of the Bible*