

**April 5, 2015**

**"Jesus Christ is the Resurrection and the Life."**

Read through **Mark 2:1-9**.

As Jesus is proclaiming the good news in a crowded room (**vv. 2-4**) four men carry in a paralytic but they can't get to Jesus through the crowd, so they go up the outside stairway to the roof; they dig through the thatch and earth roof, remove the roof tiles, and then lower the man to the room below.

It says (**v. 5**), Jesus "saw their faith," and said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." It was clear to everyone that the man's greatest need was to be able to walk, to be healed of his paralysis. But Jesus basically says, I have healed your spirit, and by forgiving your sins.

This man has just received eternal life, but he still can't walk.

The Pharisees (**vv. 6-7**), equate Jesus' statement about forgiving sins to blaspheming, for only God can forgive sins.

Many of the Jews living at that time, believed that diseases and afflictions were the result of one's own sin. And so, Jesus asks the Pharisees, (**v.9**) "Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'?"

Anyone could say, "your sins are forgiven," I mean, who could verify whether or not it had happened? But to say, "Get up... and walk" that miracle could be witnessed by all who were there.

By healing the paralytic, Jesus was verifying His claim to grant forgiveness; for just as sure as there was physical healing, there was also spiritual healing, through the forgiveness of sins. The emphasis here is not the healing of this man's body, but the healing of this man's spirit (**vv. 5, 10-11**).

So, how does this relate to the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

We are told in the Scriptures that Jesus came to take upon Himself our punishment for sin's penalty, to the point of death.

**Isaiah 53:3-8** says He was despised and rejected by men... pierced for our sins; the punishment that brought us peace was poured out on Him, and by His shed blood we are healed, for God placed on Him then penalty for all our sins. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. He was cut off from the land of the living [put to death]. Verses **11-12** tell us that after suffering death for the sins of all who will believe in Him, He would come out of the grave alive.

What if we only had the reality of Christ's death, but no resurrection? If you had been the paralytic man in Mark chapter 2, it would be like Jesus saying to you, "your sins are forgiven, really!" But there would be no way for you to know if that were true, until after you die and regain your consciousness, either in heaven or in hell.

But, if along with saying to you, "your sins are forgiven," Jesus also said, "now, to affirm that you really are saved, and that I have such authority, "I say to you get up and walk, for you are healed of your paralysis," you would definitely know that you were also healed of sins's penalty.

In the apostle John's vision in **Revelation 1:17-18** he records the Lord's words, "I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever!"

The resurrection of Jesus Christ sovereignly confirms and declares that Jesus, through His own shed blood on the cross, did in fact take the full punishment for our sins before God, and therefore, we have forgiveness and eternal life!

**1Peter 3:18**, "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

Listen, Jesus died on a Friday afternoon and was placed in a tomb, and on Sunday morning His body was missing, because He had risen from the dead!

**Read Matthew 28:1-15...** If Jesus did not rise from the grave, and His body was missing, then, either He did rise, as He said, or someone took His body away.

**1. The Jewish Leaders** didn't want Christ's body removed from the tomb; a missing body could be a resurrected body, that would look bad for the Religious Leaders; for this reason (Matthew 27:62-65), they pressured Pilate to put a seal on the tomb and a Roman guard unit there to keep the body in the grave, for Jesus had said (v. 63), "after three days I will rise again."

**2. The Roman Guards** were stationed in order to make sure Jesus' body stayed put; moving it or allowing it to be taken, was punishable by death; therefore, they made sure Christ's body remained in the tomb, at all costs, against all foes, but then, they had never met one of God's mighty angels, like the one who rolled away the stone.

**3. Jesus' Disciples** wouldn't dare move His body and falsify His resurrection; for if they knew Jesus did not rise from the grave, they had no hope of eternal life, and it would have been better for them to quickly and quietly get out of town, change their names, and deny any prior relationship with Jesus of Nazareth.

Why would the Disciples continue to proclaim the risen Lord, if it were not true? Why did the Jewish authorities bribe the Roman soldiers to spread the "stolen body" story if it were true?

Jesus told His disciples on several occasions, that He would be arrested, put to death, and on the third day He would rise from the grave. He told them He would return to the Father; but at a future time, He would come back to get all those who belong to Him (Christians) to be with Him in heaven, forever; all this is according to God's own sovereign plan and purpose.

**Mark 8:31...** "He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again."

**Matthew 17:22-23...** "When they came together in Galilee, he said to them, 'The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life.' And the disciples were filled with grief."

**Luke 24:44-48...** "He said to them, 'This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.' Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, 'This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.' You are witnesses of these things."

**John 14:1-3...** "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." **29** "I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe."

After His resurrection, before ascending back into heaven, Jesus appeared to many of His followers, and we will look at those events next Sunday morning.

When you repent of your sins and trust in Jesus Christ's death on the cross to provide forgiveness for your sins, you receive salvation; and Christ's resurrection demonstrates God's sovereign power and authority over sin, death, and judgment, and is proof that you indeed have eternal life from God.

The only reasonable explanation for the empty tomb is the one that is repeatedly revealed in Scriptures: Jesus Christ rose from the grave, by His own divine power and authority (John 10:17-18), "I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down and [I have] authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

Christ's death provided forgiveness; His resurrection proclaimed and demonstrated that He alone provides eternal life.

**John 11:25-26,** "Jesus said to [Martha], 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'"

Going to where Lazarus was buried, Jesus said (**39-44**), " 'Take away the stone.' "But, Lord,' said Martha, 'by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.' Then Jesus said, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said,

'Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' [Lazarus then] came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, 'Take off the grave clothes and let him go.'"

Do you see what just happened? Jesus loosed Lazarus from the bonds of death, declaring that he indeed had eternal life, for Lazarus belonged to the Lord.

Let that sink in. The resurrection is not just an event. It is a Person. Jesus is the Son of God. All authority rests in Him. "Resurrection" is through Him. The great hope that we have on this holiday is that He is "the resurrection and the life".

**1John 5:11-13**, "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

Because Jesus Christ alone is "the resurrection and the life"; and because He Himself has tasted death for us—bearing our sins on the Cross; and because Himself now lives forever more—having been raised from the dead three days later; we have eternal life and hope in Him!

Today, we celebrate the resurrection of our Savior from the dead. Our celebration isn't only looking back at some event in the distant past, or looking forward to some event in the distant (or maybe not so distant) future —Christ's resurrection should impact our lives every single day.

God wants us to see that Jesus Himself is the substance of real hope for everyone who has placed their trust in Him. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

After He made that affirmation, He asked Martha, "Do you believe this?" And so today, as we end this study, I want to ask you a similar question:

Do you believe in and confess Jesus Christ as Lord?

Do you have the assurance in your heart [your spirit] that you belong to the Savior and that you will live, even though you die?

Take a moment right now, soberly consider this in your heart.

If you know that you have eternal life, praise God, Hallelujah!

But if you are unsure that you are saved, that have been granted eternal life, please, settle the issue right now, right here.

Admit to God that you are a sinner (we all are).

Repent of your sins, asking God to forgive you (He turns no one away).

Believe in Jesus Christ as Lord & Savior - that He died for your sins, and rose from the grave to proclaim victory over death and judgement.

Prayerfully read God's Word daily, obey what you understand, following the Lord as your example in this life.

Participate in a Bible Believing, Teaching, and Practicing Church, as a member of Christ's Body, serving through word and deed, as if serving the Lord Himself, Jesus Christ, for He is the Way, the Truth, the Resurrection, and the Life!

He is Risen!