

April 9, 2023

“All Things New” 1 Corinthians 15:12-28

FCF: Failure to really grasp the significance of the resurrection of Jesus

PROPOSITION: (anchor) Christ is risen. And He is making all things new.
(magnet) We need to lay hold of that reality and live out of it.

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

When you see a radical shift in something, it's worth asking, “Why the change? Why that hard turn?” Such a change took place in the lives of Jesus' disciples, a hard turn. Once cowards, they became committed to loving God and one another, emboldened and refusing to back off of the claim that “Jesus is Lord.” No matter the cost. What caused this? They knew something had happened. And what it meant. What was this event? The resurrection of Jesus.

What about us? Studies show that most Americans acknowledge Easter as a religious holiday, but far less identify Jesus' resurrection as its purpose. Such a hollowed out celebration would have been a bit surprising to the early church. What would they have us to know?

SCRIPTURE READING: [1 Corinthians 15:12-28](#)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON INTRODUCTION:

Just after the climax of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Return of the King*, there is a golden moment where the heroic hobbit Samwise Gamgee has awakened and just discovered that his dear friend, the beloved wizard Gandalf, is not dead after all but very much alive (**READ**):

But Sam lay back, and started with open mouth, and for a moment, between bewilderment and great joy, he could not answer. At last he gasped: “Gandalf! I thought you were dead! But then I thought I was dead myself. Is everything sad going to come untrue? What's happened to the world?”

That's a beautiful line of Easter reality, Resurrection Day echoes from Middle Earth all the way here - harkening to John's vision in Revelation of Jesus saying, “I am making all things new.”

Easter is a celebration of Jesus' resurrection, the most vital event in history. Now some will say we cannot take the reports of the disciples as literally true. “Such stories are mythical or symbolic.” They grant to us, “The spirit of the man lives on through his teaching.” But when the Bible speaks of the resurrection of Jesus, it means His dead corpse came back to life again.

Jesus has come to make all things new - all things in the cosmos and all things in our lives. Listen to this quote from the *Heidelberg Catechism*. It forms our outline (**READ**):

45. Q. How does Christ's resurrection benefit us?

A. First, by His resurrection He has overcome death, so that He could make us share in the righteousness which He had obtained for us by His death. Second, by His power we too are raised up to a new life. Third, Christ's resurrection is to us a sure pledge of our glorious resurrection.

Christ is risen! Everything sad is coming untrue. He is making all things new, giving us a new past, a new present, and a new future. And we need to lay hold of that and live out of it.

I. A NEW PAST

First, Christ has come to give us a new past. Try to imagine what that could mean for us.

A) *Jesus' Resurrection – His Proof to Us*

(**READ 1 Corinthians 15:14, 17, 20a**) Jesus' resurrection was part of His proof to us.

1. Of who He is

Proof of who He is as the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, fully man and fully God.

2. Of what He's done

Proof of who He is and what He's done. A work of expiation - removing our guilt. Redemption - ransoming us from the curse of the law and the power of sin. Propitiation - appeasing the wrath of God. Reconciliation - restoring our relationship with God. It's the proof of it all.

Illustration:

On proof of the resurrection, there are many ways to speak of that. But there's also proof from the resurrection, what it demonstrates and authenticates. It's the piece of evidence needed to close the case, to put to rest the question beyond a reasonable doubt "Did Jesus pay it all?" Well, look in the empty tomb. That's our answer. God raised Him from the dead to show us.

Jesus' resurrection is the final conclusive solid proof of who He is and what He's done.

B) Jesus' Resurrection – His Saving Us

But more, the resurrection was part of His saving work (**READ 1 Corinthians 15:17-19**).

1. Where we would stand without it

The resurrection was vital for our full salvation, for all to be done. Why? Without it, nothing was accomplished. Nothing would have been conquered – not sin, not Satan, and not death.

2. Where we stand with it

But with the resurrection, divine justice is satisfied. The victory is won. And the spoils are ours, spoils of a war our conquering King has decisively won. And He is glad to share of it all with us.

With Jesus' resurrection, His followers have a new past. Even now.

Application:

The war is won and now we know. We know. With the proof, we now have nothing to prove. With what He's done, there's nothing left to be done. It's been said often and well that because of Jesus' finished work, there's nothing we can do to make God love us any more. And there's nothing we can do to make Him love us any less. Our standing with God is that secure.

Everything sad is going to come untrue. Jesus has given us a new past. Which should intensify our drive to serve Him. Not to get His love but because we've got His love already. And that is something we need to do more than think about but lay hold of and really live from.

II. A NEW PRESENT

Second, He has given us a new present. Such possibilities have been opened. How?

A) Jesus' Resurrection – Our Life from Him

With Jesus' resurrection, we have new life within us, a power that comes from Him.

1. Not just a future goal

Eternal life is not just a future goal. It is not something we have to wait for. It's far more.

2. But a present reality

It is a present reality. This is not just an everlasting life then but an ever-deepening life now.

B) Jesus' Resurrection – Our Union with Him

And it comes through our union with the risen Christ. As Paul points out repeatedly, we were one with Adam in his fall. But we are also now one with Christ (**READ Romans 6:5-11**).

1. A shared death

Ours is a shared death. Our union with Christ is such that when He died, we died with Him.

2. A shared life

But ours is also a shared life. Meaning that when He rose, we rose to life with Him. Understand that Paul is not just speaking of the future rising of our bodies. He is speaking of new life, of new power that is at work within us now. Hence his clear command to live in light of that.

With Jesus' resurrection, His followers have a new past and present, even now.

Illustration:

There are a lot of seemingly immovable things in our lives. Think just of companies that specialize in moving structures you would never think could be moved. A friend once told me about how his father-in-law's one story house was lifted up and a whole new first story was built under it. This same group was also contracted to float a plantation house down the coast once they realized it was too big to move down the street. Then there's an operation I still marvel at – the movement of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse several hundred feet back from the ocean.

Application:

There are a lot of seemingly immovable things in our lives, things that the power of Jesus at work within us can move. What are yours? That seething anger. That crippling insecurity. That hellish self-centeredness or bitterness. That addiction you've long settled into excusing.

There are a lot of seemingly immovable things. But Jesus can move anything. The resurrection is real. Everything sad is coming untrue. He has come to give us a new present. And that is something we need to do more than think about but lay hold of and really live from.

III. A NEW FUTURE

He has come to give us a new past, a new present, and even a new future - redirecting our hope. Paul speaks to this in many ways in 1 Corinthians 15 (**READ 1 Corinthians 15:20-23**). Jesus' resurrection is the firstfruits of our own. It's an agricultural image. What does it mean?

A) Jesus' Resurrection – An Indication

1. Image of firstfruits

Partly, the firstfruits are an indication of what's coming with the rest of the harvest.

2. Image applied

So, as we look at Jesus and His resurrection body, we have an idea of what our own will be like.

B) Jesus' Resurrection – A Guarantee

1. Image of firstfruits

But the firstfruits are not just an indication of what is coming but also a guarantee. That initial crop is a preview and a promise of a fuller harvest that awaits. Do you hear what Paul is saying?

2. Image applied

As we see that empty tomb on that first Easter morning, we have then the confirmation that we have new bodies coming. Now, no one knows exactly how God will gather all our molecules together. But we do know that He can and will put us back together again. It will be in some ways just like we are. And in other ways it will be new and better. Better days are coming. And with that unshakeable hope in mind, Paul is then so bold to say (**READ 1 Corinthians 15:58**).

With the resurrection of Jesus, we can have a new past, present, and future. Even now.

Illustration:

We can grasp something of this. When you know what's coming, it helps you hang on. I can think back to a hard roommate situation I had in college. I was holding on, counting down the days. Think of an exhausting school year, a tiring work shift, or a long wrenching deployment. When you know what's coming, it helps you hang on. All the more so when you know who's coming and a sweet reunion or rescue awaits. That's very much what we have here.

Application:

Things are not the way they should be. But things are not going to stay this way. We have a hope that is real. And it is not just a wish or a projection of our desires. It is a certainty of what is to come, a confident longing and expectation, based on the promise of Jesus Himself.

So let's be specific. What are some things we know are wrong and need to be made right? Think just of recent events. One day there will be no more tornados, no more school shootings, no more helicopter crashes. Our relationships will be whole with no more secrets or shame, no more rifts or divorce. Our bodies whole, our spirits whole. Finally like Jesus and able to see Him face to face. He's given us a new future. We need to lay hold of that and live from it.

CONCLUSION:

But what we need to keep in mind is that it's one thing to say something happened. It's another to lay hold of it and live from it. It's a difficult time in our nation's history. We are divided on many fronts, fractured in so many ways. These are hard times. But they are not the hardest. On a Palm Sunday 158 years ago, the Civil War came to an end at Appomattox. As the news spread, it was clear that the time had come to lay down the guns and go home. On a Good Friday 158 years ago, President Lincoln was assassinated. It was a time for a nation to mourn. With either event, to pretend it didn't happen or fail to adjust to what happened was foolish.

Thinking of this historical event, of Jesus' resurrection, this brings some adjustments as well - not only a challenge to live consistently with our profession but an encouragement to hear that profession and know what it is to live. Everything changes with "Christ is risen!" This isn't just something that should convict us. It should compel us. It is news to be embraced. It is the news we've been waiting for, better news than any other. If there was ever an historical event which we should live from, it's the resurrection of Jesus. Everything sad is coming untrue. He's given us a new past, present, and future. He's making all things new - the whole cosmos and us.

PROPOSITION: (anchor) Christ is risen. And He is making all things new.

(magnet) We need to lay hold of that reality and live from it.