

The Power of the Resurrection

by Harrison Conley

Copyright © Answers with Bayless Conley

If you have a Bible, go ahead and pull it out. We're going to use it this morning. You can get ahead of the game. We're going to turn in just a moment to 1 Corinthians 15. First Corinthians 15, and by way of introduction, if we've not met, my name is Harrison. I get to be one of the pastors here, and it's been my great honor and privilege over the last few years to open the Bible with you on Easter Sunday in particular. This is my favorite message to preach. As a matter of fact, it's the most important message that can be preached: Jesus and the resurrection. When you consider all of those in the faith that have come before us, especially the early believers, it was this message and this truth about the resurrection that they lived their lives from. It was the glue that held their faith together. It was the thing that they held tightly to that enabled them to lay down their lives as martyrs for the case of Christ. It was the resurrection. I'm telling you, the exclamation that Christ is risen is the most important statement that can ever be made, and before we jump into our text, I wonder if we can maybe do something together. We could practice something together.

We've done this over the last couple of years. I think it's really important. It brings a sense of continuity, I think, to the body of Christ. It's a greeting of sorts, and it dates all the way back to the first century. This is how the early church greeted each other when they came into church or as well when they saw another believer in the marketplace. One person would look at the other and say, "Hey, Christ is risen," and then the other person would respond, "Yes, risen indeed." I wonder if we can maybe practice that this morning? So, I'm going to say to you, "Church, Christ is risen," and you are going to respond to me, "Yes, risen indeed," okay? Can we try that together? "Hey, church, guess what? Christ is risen." That felt good. We should do that one more time. "Hey, church, guess what? Christ is risen." "He's risen indeed." If you have your Bible, 1 Corinthians 15. First Corinthians 15. I want to start today by reading a few verses of Scripture. The reason we want to start here is because in case the rest of the sermon goes downhill from here, at least we can come back and say that at the beginning, we started with God's Word. So, I want to share a few verses with you. I believe they're going to kind of frame the rest of what God has put in my heart to share with you today. First Corinthians 15, beginning in verse number one says this. It's the Apostle Paul writing, "Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel," and if you have a pen, maybe you want to just kind of circle, underline, or highlight that phrase, the gospel, the gospel. It's so important. 1 Corinthians 15:1-2 NKJV,

¹ Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

Now, if you have your Bible, just kind of pause yourself there and mark your place. We're going to read the next couple verses in just a moment, but I want to come back to this word gospel. It literally means "good news." Now, I realize most of you understand that. Most of you have heard that before, but the gospel is a proclamation of good news. It declares the news of an event. It declares the news of something significant that has happened for you, and as a matter of fact, at the time of Paul's writing, this was a popular term. It was one that most people would have been familiar with. Often, it was used in making a declaration that a new king had ascended the

The Power of the Resurrection

throne. It was a gospel, or maybe a conquering army had won a great victory, and they came into town. They would announce to the villagers a gospel. They would say, "Hey, there was a battle. We fought. We won, and it's affected you. You used to be slaves, but now your status has been changed because we won the victory. You now are no longer slaves."

A gospel is an announcement that something has been done for you and that your status is forever changed. This is what separates Christianity from all other worldly religions. Worldly religions, at best, are advice. "Hey, do this, do that, and then maybe you can make your way to God." Other religions are advice. Christianity is different because it's not advice. It's an announcement. Christianity is a proclamation that something has been done for you by Jesus and that now, through Him, your status has been changed forever. You were dead, but now, because of Christ, you are alive. You were lost, but now, because of Christ, you are found. You were a slave to sin, but now, in Christ Jesus, you're free. You were once cut off and separated from the life of God, but now, in Christ Jesus, the way back to the Father has been made open and available. This is the gospel. It's a declaration of good news. Do you understand what I'm saying? Now, looking back at our text, Paul also says that when it comes to the gospel, it has to be received. It's a gift. I have to receive this proclamation of good news, and if you do, it results in salvation. This word saved that we see here in the text is the Greek word *sozo*, and included within this word is the idea of the forgiveness of sins. Thank You, Jesus, for the forgiveness of sins as a part of salvation, but also healing from diseases. Thank You, Jesus, for healing. Thank You for salvation. It also includes the idea of being delivered from your enemy. This is the good news of the gospel, and then we drop into verses 3 and 4. Paul's going to highlight for us the specific things that Jesus did in order to make this gospel, this good news, a reality in our lives. Let's look at verses 3–4 NKJV. Paul says this,

³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

So, we have three elements of the gospel here. Jesus died, He was buried, and He rose again, all according to the Scriptures, fulfilling prophecy in the Scriptures, and these three elements, when you put them together, they comprise the gospel. Here's the point. You have to have all three because, without all three, it's an incomplete gospel. An incomplete gospel is not the gospel at all. The reason I bring that up is because oftentimes, myself included, we're really good at talking about the first two elements. We're really good at talking about Christ up on the cross and in His atoning work. Thank God for the cross. Don't misunderstand me. Thank You, Jesus, for the cross. Thank You for shedding Your blood. Without the shedding of blood, there can be no remission of sin. Thank You for the cross, but sometimes I feel like we accidentally leave Jesus up on the cross.

Let me show you what I mean. I want to give you a bit of a hypothetical here or a theological exercise, whichever you choose it to be. Let's say you're at work. You have a co-worker who, for years, you've loved on. You have a co-worker that you've prayed for, a co-worker that you want to come to faith. At times, you've even shared your faith. You've said, "I really want you to accept Jesus into your life," but all of your efforts seem to have been to no avail. When all of a sudden, one day, your co-worker rolls their chair into your cubicle, and they go, "Hey, you know that Jesus thing you've been telling me about? Tell me more. I want to know what it is to be saved." And you are like befuddled, and you about fall out of your chair, and you're like, "Yeah, okay!"

The Power of the Resurrection

So, you start to think back to all the Sundays you were in church. “How does the invitation go? What does the pastor say? I know Harrison always says, ‘Became, become.’ How do I make this a thing here?” And you begin to lay out the gospel, and you start by going, “Hey, look, we're all sinners.” That's the baseline. The Bible says that we've all sinned. We've all fallen short of the glory of God, and that the wages of sin is death. All of us, because of Adam and Eve, who are the fountainhead of the human race, because they disobeyed God, sin entered the world through them, and because we're born after them, we're all born into this state of sin, which causes separation from the life of God. Then, you begin to lay out how the Bible says that no amount of good works on our part can ever make the way back to God available. The guy goes, “Well, that sounds like kind of bad news.” You're like, “Yeah, it is, but there's also good news! God, in His great love with which He loved us, even when we were separated, even when we were dead in our sins and trespasses, sent His Son, Jesus.” The guy goes, “Okay, well, tell me more about Jesus.” You're like, “He's the second person of the Godhead.” The guy's like, “What does that mean?”

You're like, “We serve a triune God. God the Father, God the Son, which, by the way is, Jesus, and God the Holy Spirit. God is fully Jesus, and Jesus is fully God, and He came to this earth, He condescended, He put on flesh and blood, fully man, but also fully God, and He lived a perfect, sinless life, and He was raised in a city called Nazareth, born in a city called Bethlehem. He grew in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and men. Even though He was sinless, even though He was perfect, out of hatred and out of jealousy, His enemies crucified Him on a Roman cross. It seems like this really sad ending to the story, but God was just getting started. It was part of His master plan, and there on the cross, Jesus became our sin so that we could become the righteousness of God in Him. If you will put your faith, if you'll put your trust in the finished atoning work of Jesus on the cross, you can be saved.” So you're like, “Hey, do you want to be saved? Do you want to put your faith in Jesus' finished work on the cross?” And they go, “Yeah, I do.” So, you pray with them. Here's the question. Did they just get saved? I'll let the Apostle Paul answer that for us. Let's look at our text. First Corinthians 15, look at verse 17. He says this,

¹⁷ And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!

The reason I put that in all caps is because he ends with an exclamation point here. You're still in your sins! “Paul, what are you getting at here? What are you saying?” He's saying this. If we leave out the resurrection, then we've just preached an incomplete gospel. Again, an incomplete gospel is not the gospel. You see, at no point in my sharing the gospel with my coworker did I ever mention the resurrection. Unintentionally, I left Jesus up there on the cross without ever conquering death. I left out the part where he bursts out of the tomb and offers resurrection life to anybody who will believe. Sometimes, I think we're really good at highlighting the defeat of Good Friday, but we forget to emphasize the ultimate victory of Easter. And if I'm honest, and if I'm introspective, I think about my own preaching from this very pulpit, and I have to ask, how many times have I accidentally left Jesus up on the cross without talking about the power of the resurrection? Hear me, without the resurrection, it's an incomplete gospel. If Jesus is not raised, it's not good news at all. Paul said it best, “Without the resurrection, our faith is futile, and we're still dead in our sins.” It's the resurrection that completes the story. It's the resurrection that brings victory.

Think about it. This is why we call Jesus Lord: because He conquered death and because He conquered hell and the grave. Those things were our greatest and our oldest enemies. But now, because of the resurrection, because of its power, death is no longer an enemy. For the believer, death is a friend. It becomes the doorway to which we step into eternal life, a face-to-

The Power of the Resurrection

face fellowship with our Creator and our Savior. That's the power of the resurrection. And if you're taking notes this morning, which obviously I hope that you are because statistics show if you take notes, you have a better chance of getting into heaven. I haven't said that one in a long time. If you need a sermon title, I just simply want to call the next few minutes, The Power of the Resurrection. I want to talk to you about three truths that the power of the resurrection brings. Number one, truth number one, it raised a man from the dead. Truth number two: it raises men from the dead. And truth number three, it will raise men from the dead. I want to look at each of these truths from our text here in 1 Corinthians 15. So, the first truth, the power of the resurrection, raised a man from the dead. And, of course, by that man, I'm referring to Jesus. What we have to understand is that the resurrection is not a made-up fairy tale. It's not some elaborate hoax perpetrated by the disciples to trick the masses into following Jesus. No, the resurrection of Jesus is a matter of irrefutable fact.

Now, you may or may not be aware of this, but the Bible is actually not the only source we have of historical knowledge as far as the resurrection of Jesus. It's not the only recording that we have. There are actually tons, volumes and volumes of secular and historical writings about the resurrection. One of those writings comes from a secular Jewish scholar who lived during the first century named Josephus. He writes about the crucifixion. He writes about the resurrection. Another historical document that we have written to us or written to the point of the truth of the resurrection was written by a guy named Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. Does his name sound familiar? He's the one who condemned Jesus to death. But even beyond these secular and historical writings, the Bible is full of facts that speak to the truth of the resurrection. I want to give you just a couple to consider. Number one, consider this: the tomb is empty. Consider that the tomb is empty. All other religious saviors, quote-unquote, are still in their graves. Jesus just borrowed His for a couple of days. He's not there. He is alive.

You can read this account in John 20. We read that on Easter morning, Mary was making her way to the tomb. She gets there. She sees a couple of things. Number one, she sees that the Roman guards who were supposed to be standing guard have scattered. They've disappeared. They're no longer there. She also notices that the big stone that was put in front of Jesus's tomb to seal Him in has been rolled away. And then Mary pops her head in the tomb. She looks and realizes Jesus is not there. So, she runs. She goes and gets Peter and John. I love that it's recorded in John 20 that Peter and John have a bit of a foot race there. And John, because he wrote it, says, "I beat Peter to the tomb." He says that they look in and realize that Jesus is not there and that He has been raised back to life. But it's not just Mary. It's not just Peter. It's not just John. As a matter of fact, all of Jerusalem would have peered into that empty tomb. Keep in mind that all of this is happening during the festival of Passover. This is a big deal because the population of Jerusalem during Passover would have swelled to 10 times its normal amount. People would have made the pilgrimage from all over the known world. They'd have come to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem. When word gets out that Jesus, the Jewish rabbi, is no longer in His tomb, that the stone's been rolled away, and that it's empty, you better believe all of Jerusalem went to that tomb and stuck their head in to see if it was true. Then, they would have gone back all over the known world to their villages and their towns, and they would have spread the word that Jesus is alive.

But don't just take Mary's word for it. Don't just take Peter and John's word for it. Don't just take the huge crowds at Passover. Don't just take their word for it. Take my word for it. I've been there. I've put my hand against the tomb. I've stepped inside. I've used my own two eyes, and I can tell you, He's not there. The tomb is empty. There's an old saying it goes like this. The stone wasn't rolled away so Jesus could get out, but rather, the stone was rolled away so that we could get in. And the empty tomb is the first witness to the resurrection. Here's the second

The Power of the Resurrection

witness. Eyewitness accounts who saw the resurrected Christ. Eyewitness accounts. And I love that even here in our text, 1 Corinthians 15, the apostle Paul is going to mention six different times that the risen Jesus appeared and was seen by people. If you have your Bible, look at verse 3. First Corinthians 15:3–6 NKJV. Paul says this,

³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas (or Peter), then by the twelve. ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.

And that's just a euphemism for some are dead, but most of them are still alive. In verses 7–8a NKJV, he says this,

⁷ After that He (Jesus) was seen by James, (James is Jesus's brother.) then by all the apostles. ⁸ Then last of all He (Jesus) was seen by me also.

Paul says, “I have seen the risen Savior.” There are six different times that Jesus appeared to people post-resurrection. I love that Paul mentions names here in our text. He says, “You don't have to believe me. You don't have to believe my account. Go talk to these guys. Most of them are still alive. Go talk to them. Hear their story.” And I love even that he mentions at one point in time, Jesus appeared to 500 people at the same time. And when we consider the amount of eyewitnesses who saw our resurrected Savior, it makes it impossible to conclude that all of these different people all had the same hallucination or were together a part of some elaborate hoax. No, my friend, the tomb is empty. He is alive.

Let me give you one more piece of evidence, one more piece of evidence. Number three, we have to consider that there was a stark change in the disciples. Listen, if Jesus is not raised from the dead, how do you explain how these disciples went from being cowardly and fickle to becoming a group of brave, bold, and outspoken leaders? Think about the night that Jesus was betrayed, the night He was arrested. They're all gathered together there in the garden at Gethsemane. They're praying together. Peter himself has said, “Lord, no matter what happens, I would never deny you.” But the guards come to arrest Jesus and the disciples scattered. The Bible says they were scattered like sheep without a shepherd. And then Peter, who had just moments ago said, “Hey, I will never deny You,” within a couple of hours has denied Jesus three separate times, saying he never knew Him. How is it, then, if Jesus is not raised, that this same group, days after the resurrection, would change? It said of the disciples in the book of Acts that they turned the world upside down. How do you hold on to a faith unless Jesus is alive? How do you change and suddenly speak with boldness and conviction unless you've seen that Jesus is alive? How do you lay down your life if the resurrection is not true? Each of these disciples bears witness to the fact that Jesus is alive. I'm telling you, the power of the resurrection raised a man from the dead.

Then, one final thing to consider before we sort of transition into the next truth that we want to talk about. Once you consider this, Jesus was not the first person to be raised back to life, was He? Throughout the Bible, Old Testament, and New Testament, you see time after time after time where someone died and were raised back to life. So, what makes Jesus being raised different? What makes it more significant that He was brought back to life? I'll tell you. Although He wasn't the first person raised back to life, He is the only one who has ever been resurrected. And that changes everything. Some of you are looking at me, all confused. Let me explain. I want to introduce you to a theological term. You may know this. You may have never heard it

The Power of the Resurrection

before. I don't know. But the term is revivification. Can we say that together? Revivification. I just think it's fair that you have to say it as well. Revivification is the idea that when somebody dies, and they get brought back to life, they're brought back to life only to die again. This is what we see in multiple stories in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Whether it's the widow at Zarephath, and her son. Whether in the New Testament, it's the widow Nain and her son. Maybe it's Jairus's daughter. Maybe even Lazarus. They died. They're raised back to life only to go on and die again, whereas resurrection is different. This is where somebody dies, and then they're brought back to life forevermore. Never to die again. You see, resurrection is death's total reversal. The only one who has ever, forever conquered death, never to die again, is our Savior Jesus. This is why believers get so excited at Easter because now we have this promise that His resurrection life resurrects us. That's what leads me to the second truth today. That the power of the resurrection raises men from the dead. Now, to be clear, I'm talking spiritually at this point. We're going to get to physical resurrection in just a moment. But if you would, let's look at verse 12 here in 1 Corinthians 15. Paul says this in verses 12–14 NKJV. He says,

¹² Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁴ And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.

²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Now, I had just dropped down into verse 20. I hope you kind of followed along with that. But Paul uses this expression, first fruits, and he attributes it to Jesus. What does that mean, Paul? He tells us in the next verses, verses 21–22 NKJV. He says, “For since by man,” and notice it's lowercase M.

²¹ For since by man came death, by Man (capitol M) also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam (which is lowercase m) all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

This is the truth of the gospel. And this is what Paul is getting at here. He's talking about the fact that just like Adam, through his sin, sin entered the world and began to infect the human race. And just like that, how death came through one man, now through the next man, through the last Adam, as Scripture will call Him, through Jesus, we all have eternal life. Through the power of the resurrection, sin and death, both spiritually and physically, lose their power over men, and now, men can be made alive. Let me say it like this. Because Jesus is risen, now His supernatural life becomes our life. It raises men from the dead, again, spiritually speaking here. And to help us kind of further comprehend and understand this, I want to read one more verse to you. This is another verse penned by the apostle Paul. I love the language that he uses. I believe it brings a greater sense of understanding to the power of the resurrection. If you have a Bible, go to Romans 8. Romans 8, you'll probably be familiar with this passage. In verses 10–11 NKJV, Paul is writing to the church in Rome. He says,

¹⁰ And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies (That word life literally translated resurrection power. He will give resurrection power to your mortal bodies) through His Spirit who dwells in you.

The Power of the Resurrection

You have to capture this. If you put your faith in Jesus, the Scripture says this: that the same power that raised Him from the dead, that same Holy Spirit that wielded that power, now comes, and He lives in you. He brings to your life a supernatural life. He brings resurrection power into your mortal body. I don't think you're getting it. Let me say it like this. The resurrection is not just a celebration. The resurrection is an experience. It's a powerful experience. It's a personal experience. This is why the Apostle Paul would later write to the church at Philippi. He'd write to the Philippian believers, and he'd say this, "That I may know Him," referring to the resurrected Jesus. "That I may know Him, be found in Him, and experience the power of His resurrection." It's not just a celebration. It's an experience. What that means is when Easter becomes more than just a once a year Sunday celebration where you wear your Sunday best and you come to church to make your mom happy, when Easter becomes more than just a story to you, and when you put your faith in Christ and His finished work on the cross and in the empty tomb, when you do that, the Bible declares that the supernatural power of God gets released into your life and that the same Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead comes to live and dwell within you. Catch this. His power is so radical. It's so supernatural. It changes you completely from the inside out. As a matter of fact, it's so supernatural that Jesus said this power is like being born again. That's why we're called born again believers because of the work of the resurrection; the power of the resurrection has changed us from the inside out. The Apostle Paul would later go on to say in 2 Corinthians 5:17 for anybody who has put their faith in Christ, they're a new creation. You've changed on the inside. The old man is gone. Everything has become new, spiritually speaking.

Listen, the Bible tells us that before the resurrection, this was our status. We were slaves to sin. We were slaves to the desire of our flesh. Literally, Ephesians 2 says we were dead in our sins and in our trespasses. But now, because of the resurrection, because the supernatural life and power of God lives in us, we're no longer slaves to sin. Our status has been changed. We're now sons and daughters. We've been made alive in Christ Jesus. The power of the resurrection spiritually raises men from the dead. And through that spiritual, supernatural resurrection power, the Bible says that now we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us. I'm telling you, the power of the resurrection brings salvation. It brings power. It raises men from the dead. And then finally, number three, this is where I close. The power of the resurrection will raise men from the dead. Now, we're talking physically. Because of Jesus' resurrection, you and I have a sure and a steadfast hope that one day, when we lay down this physical body in death, it's not going to be the end. Actually, we'll be more alive than we've ever been before. Because in that moment, we're going to step into eternal life. And just as Christ was raised, I too will be raised, and I will walk in newness of life for all of eternity. Paul addresses this here in our text. If you would, in 1 Corinthians 15, drop down to verses 51–57 NKJV. Paul says this,

⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—
⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the great hope of the believer, that death is not the end, but rather because Christ is risen. There's going to come a day where we're going to shake off mortality, and we're going to put on immortality, and we're going to get a new body, a glorified body like unto Christ, and that

The Power of the Resurrection

body is going to be impervious to things like sickness, sin, disease, decay, depression, and death. We have the promise that we're going to be made whole, that every tear is going to be wiped from our eyes, that every earthly injustice that we have suffered is going to be set right, that our brokenness is going to be restored. Never forget, here on this planet, we're just sojourners. The earth is not our home. We're citizens of a different kingdom, and deep within, we long for that city whose builder and maker is God. Never forget, according to James, this life is like a vapor. It's here. You see it for a second, then it dissipates, and it's gone. Soon and very soon, we will step into eternity, and we will see King Jesus. The power of the resurrection will raise men from the dead. And as I close, and by way of invitation, I want to just read you two more Scriptures, and then I want to offer you a question to consider. Once I offer that question, I want to make a statement, and we're going to pray and be done. Here's the first Scripture. If you have your Bible, go to John 11. John 11. Let me set the scene for you. Jesus has a group of very close friends, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and they're siblings. Lazarus gets sick, so sick that he's at the point of death. So, Mary and Martha send Jesus a note. They say, "Hey, the one You love, Lazarus, is sick. Come quick. You're the only one who can do something about this." But Jesus is delayed in His coming, and because of the delay, Lazarus dies. By the time Jesus arrives on the scene, Lazarus has been dead for a few days. We pick it up in John 11:20–27 NKJV. It says this,

²⁰ Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. ²¹ Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." ²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." (I love Jesus' response) ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. (And then He poses a question) Do you believe this?" (I love Martha's response) ²⁷ She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

Here's the question I told you I was going to ask. It's one that each of us needs to consider. It's the same one Jesus asked Martha. "Do you believe this?" Everything that we've talked about today, do you believe this? That the power of the resurrection raised a man from the dead, that it raises men from the dead, that it will raise men from the dead. Do you believe this? Do you believe the gospel? The reason I ask this is because you're running out of time to answer it. Here's the second Scripture that I want to read to you, and then we're going to be done. It's Acts 17. If you have your Bible, you can go ahead and turn to Acts 17. I'll just set the scene here. Paul is addressing a large crowd. He's up on the Areopagus there on Mars Hill in Athens. He's addressing this large crowd of unbelievers. He begins to talk about the gospel and what Jesus has done. He begins to talk about the resurrection, and this is what he says in verse 30 NKJV. It says,

³⁰ Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.

The word repent means "to turn, to turn toward God, to turn away from your sin." Why? Because God has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness. How's He going to do that? He's going to do it by the man, capital M, speaking of Jesus, by the Man whom He has ordained. He's given assurance of this to all. How? By raising Him from the dead. Here's the statement I want to leave you with, and then we're done. The time of ignorance of Jesus is over. In verse 30, Paul said it. Ignorance to the Son of God. It's no longer going to be overlooked by

The Power of the Resurrection

God, who, by the way, is not just Father, not just Creator. He's also Judge, and He's commanding all people everywhere to repent. Why? Because He set a date. He set a date on which He's going to judge all of the world, and it's not going to be some partial judgment. He's judging the world in righteousness. He's judging them according to His standards, which, by the way, is right. He's going to judge the world in all righteousness. Friend, this is not hyperbole. This is not just a pastor trying to scare you into a decision. This is a fact. It's a guarantee. As a matter of fact, Paul says the proof of that guarantee is the fact that He raised Jesus from the dead.

So, here's what this means. That no one, not you, not me, nobody can remain neutral when it comes to Jesus and His resurrection from the dead. This claim is too staggering. The implications are far too significant. The matter is far too serious for any of us to ignore it or to put it off to consider on a different day. Here is a truth, and it's a stark truth. We either reject the gospel, or we receive the gospel. It's a binary decision. Heaven or hell, sin or righteousness. Do we receive the gospel or do we reject it? To put it off to consider later is to reject the gospel. So, again, the question that demands an answer is the question I want to leave you with. Do you believe the gospel? Do you believe this? It's a question that each of us have to answer in our own heart: that Jesus died for our sins according to Scriptures, that He was buried, and that on the third day, God the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit, raised Him back to life. Do you believe this? This is the gospel. It's the proclamation of good news that something's been done for you, that what you could not do for yourself through willpower, that what you could not do for yourself through good works, Jesus has done for you. He became your sin so that you could become the righteousness of God in Him. He shed His blood on Calvary's cross for you and for me. There hanging on the cross, He paid our penalty. The wages of sin is death. He became our death so that the qualifications of God's eternal and righteous judgment would be forever satisfied. Jesus did that, and then He was buried, but He didn't stay there. On the third day, He was raised back to life, and now if you will accept it, if you will believe it, that resurrection power will change you from the inside out. You'll be born again, but again, you have to answer the question. "Do I believe this?" Why don't you bow your heads with me, and let's pray.

Father, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You for the truth of Your Word. We know heaven and earth are going to pass away one day, but Your Word's going to stand the test of time. We thank You that by the power of the Holy Spirit, You've illuminated Your Word to us today. I pray specifically for those who are in the room right now who are wrestling with this question of whether or not they believe the gospel to be true. Father, I pray that by the power of Your Holy Spirit, You would go to work in their heart right now doing what I cannot do. Holy Spirit, would You convict their hearts of sin? I can't do that, nor do I want to do that. Only You, Holy Spirit, can open their eyes to their spiritual state and convict their hearts of sin. But in the next breath, Holy Spirit, would You convince their heart that although there is a separation, that although the sin is great, there's an even greater Savior, whose name is Jesus, who died for them and was raised back to life for them. Holy Spirit, open the eyes of their heart to see this. Holy Spirit, I pray now You would give them the courage to respond by receiving this gospel. Give them the courage and the articulation to say, "Yes, Lord, I do believe. I believe Jesus is the Son of God who's come into this world to rescue and to save me." Father, for every heart that puts their faith in that, for every heart that prays a prayer like that, I thank You for applying that salvation to their life right now. Thank You for the promise in Romans 5:5 that the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by Your Holy Spirit. Thank You for doing that now in the name of Jesus. Father, I pray You would bless Your people today. Would You cause

The Power of the Resurrection

Your face to shine on them? Lord, I pray You'd be gracious to them. Lift Your countenance upon them, and that You'd give them Your peace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Copyright © Answers with Bayless Conley