The Glory of Easter

I Corinthians 15:1-10

April 4, 2015

What’s on my heart this Easter Sunday is this. Does it really matter if you believe in the physical, literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead? Do you think it’s true that some Bible doctrines are just *knowledge* and factual when you’ve got others that are practical and affect your day by day life? Haven’t you noticed over the years that some Bible doctrines seem to be more head knowledge and then there are those that really stretch your personal faith at home or in your relationships? So, let me begin Resurrection Sunday with this. Jesus made it so simple when He said “The truth will make you free.” And in His High Priestly prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane He prayed “Thy word is truth.”

Sometimes life presses in on you so much and you’ve got so much to do that you miss out on the understanding of a Bible passage or a doctrine. I don’t want you to miss out on the practical value of the greatest event of all time; the day that Jesus rose from the dead.

So today’s topic is this “Resurrection Glory.” Shall we pray?

The two most fundamental and foundational doctrines in all of history are the Cross of Christ and the bodily resurrection of Jesus.

And here’s why I’m asking you to consider whether it’s practical to believe in something as important as the Resurrection. If this is the absolute truth and Jesus *really* did rise from the dead, then this has to be the most wonderful thing that has ever occurred; ever. And, if that’s the case, then it *has* to have enormous implications in the way you live your life.

What I mean is this. The thing that really changes your life is what you really believe. What you believe makes you what you are. And, believing the simple fact of the Resurrection of Jesus, converts you completely. There is nothing quite like the Resurrection to make you aware of God’s power and His glory.

Let me show you this in just a few words from Scripture. Please open your Bible with me to Ephesians 3:20. And look at the words of the Apostle Paul here. Ephesians 3:20 *“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,…”*

What power works in you? Is it possible that it’s the same power that raised Jesus from the dead? Look with me at the glory of the resurrection. Go back to Ephesians 1:17. *“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: (18) the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

*(19) And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, (20) Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,…”*

Can you see the glory of His resurrection power? Isn’t that resurrection power the same power that is working in you as a child of God?

Now look with me at Colossians 3:1. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. (2) Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”

You see, the same power that raised Jesus has raised you along with Christ. And why? So that you can set your affection of things above and not on things on the earth.

Now, I could simply say to you this morning “I believe it and that settles it.” And I know for a fact that you are there. You believe it and that settles it.

Yet, there’s more; much more. You see, the Resurrection of Jesus totally transformed the Apostles, especially when on that first resurrection morning they didn’t believe it at all. So, please know this. The Resurrection of Jesus is not a mere religious doctrine that comes to the forefront on Easter Sunday. Instead, it’s among the most affecting doctrines in all the Bible.

And, by the way, what day do you meet with God’s people to worship? Isn’t it Sunday, the very day that Jesus rose from the dead?

So, with this aspect of the doctrine of the resurrection, please go with me to the story of Jesus’ resurrection. It’s found at Luke chapter twenty-four. All four of the Gospel writers tell the story of the Resurrection. And one by one they include details that simply show things at they saw them. Here they are, writing about the most important event that ever occurred. And, they just tell the story.

Here’s what I’d like to do with this passage. I’d like to read it from this viewpoint. I’d like you to read it with me as though you were just reading an account, given by someone just wanted to tell the story. As I read it, look for the connecting word “and” and you’ll be able to see that it’s just a wonderful, believable, true glorious story. And look for the glory of the Resurrection; verse one.

Luke 24:1 “Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. (2) And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. (3) And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

(4) And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: (5) And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

(6) He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, (7) Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. (8) And they remembered his words,

(9) And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. (10) It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

(11) “And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. (12) Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

(13) And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs (7.5 miles). (14) And they talked together of all these things which had happened. (15) And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.”

Anyone who reads the story as I just read it can easily see that the record is clear. It’s just the facts as they occurred. It’s concise. It’s filled with ordinary details. Luke doesn’t exaggerate it. There’s no sense of a modern day “This is the most astounding thing ever happened in all of history. Amazing! Can you believe it? This Jewish Prophet rose from the dead. Phenomenal! Fantastic! Unbelievable! But it happened.”

Instead of embellishment, Luke writes a record; a factual account of what occurred. That’s what the whole Book of Luke is; a record of what occurred when Jesus was here. And you and I read about a glory, a resurrection glory; simply a glorious event just like everyone else who’s read this story for thousands of years.

And what is it besides the simplicity of the record that speaks to you and me on this matter of the Resurrection of Jesus? Here are just a few practical implications of this amazing event.

First, the Resurrection is proof for the glory in the existence of one, true, and living God. Now, I’m sure that when Luke wrote his Gospel he wasn’t intentionally out to prove God’s existence. But we’re living in a day saturated with unbelief, often even in the face of verifiable facts.

Folks, there is nothing more convincing than the truth. Think about yourself when you tell a friend or a family member a story about what recently happened to you. You want them to believe it. But, generally you don’t care if they believe it. Even if they don’t believe you, it’s still true. And you just convey it with your personality.

Now when it comes to the Resurrection, only the LORD could conceive of and then execute a resurrection from the dead. God chose to become a human being. He chose to live among us, to eat what we eat, to wear what we wear, to sleep like we sleep, etc. And then, He died. But, He died with a chosen purpose. He died with a promise on His lips. He said to His Apostles that He would rise from the dead in just three days. You see, only God could conceive of that. And only God could say that and then only God could accomplish it.

Everyone knows that death is the cessation of physical life. Your heart stops beating. Your lungs stop drawing in breath. And without oxygen, it’s the end. Everyone who has ever done CPR on a person that has stopped breathing knows that CPR can revive some people; but not everyone. And those who can’t be revived are gone.

Now, if, after thirty minutes of CPR, if everyone in the room agrees that the person has died; if after everyone leaves the body to simply lay there; were that body to come back to physical life, everyone everywhere would say one thing “It’s a miracle; there’s no other explanation for it.” It’s a physical impossibility. There’s no other explanation for it other than that God raised the person back to life.

Some of you may have read or heard the story of John Smith. Here it is. Doctors are truly baffled how 14-year-old John Smith is still alive today and almost fully recovered after [drowning](http://www.examiner.com/topic/drowning) in an icy lake, rendering him clinically dead for 45 minutes. Smith and two friends fell through the ice of a lake in suburban St. Louis. One friend made it back to the shore and the other clung onto the ice until rescuers arrived, but Smith sunk to the icy bottom of the lake, according to[NBC News](http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/missouri-teen-submerged-icy-lake-15-minutes-makes-miracle-recovery-n300841) on Feb. 6, 2015; just two months ago.

OMIT The teen was pulled from the rocky lake bottom after being submerged for 15 minutes and the first responders tried to revive him to no avail. The CPR continued all the way to the hospital where doctors continued the life-saving technique after the non-responsive boy arrived. The scramble to get Smith’s pulse and breathing back didn’t work and the doctors sent for Smith’s mother to come into the room where they were working on her son.

The doctors were ready to explain to the boy’s mother that he had been clinically dead for 45 minutes and that there was no hope. Something strange happened that seemed to change everything the doctors knew from medical school.

Joyce Smith entered the trauma room praying loud, very loud. She was asking the Holy Spirit to let her son live. Within a matter of “a minute or two,” the child’s heart started to beat. The doctors were still concerned that they were not out of the woods as of yet as Smith’s core body temperature was at 88 degrees.

It was a [miracle](http://www.examiner.com/topic/miracle), as the boy not only survived, but his brain activity returned to normal. The doctors cannot explain why this young man didn’t have brain damage.

Dr. Jeremy Garrett, who was one of the doctors to treat Smith, is calling this a “bona fide miracle.” The doctors remain baffled as to how the teen’s brain functions were preserved.

[The Canada Journal](http://canadajournal.net/world/missouri-teen-falls-icy-pond-makes-miracle-recovery-22683-2015/) reports that Dr. Kent Sutterer, who was the attending physician when Smith first arrived at the hospital, offered his expertise on how this child remains alive. Sutterer said “His heart was jump-started by the Holy Spirit listening to the request of his praying mother.”

Smith is expected to make a full recovery. He is going through some physical therapy for his hands, but once he is done with that, he is expected be back to normal health.

[Found on [www.examiner.com](http://www.examiner.com) “Missouri teen 'miracle recovery': Boy drowns, 'Holy Spirit' jumps-start heart” by Roz Zurko].

People are still amazed and astounded by this *miracle*. And I am sure you are as well. But what’s even more wonderful about this story is this. It’s true. And the ones who tell the story just simply recount it. They tell the story as they know it. And if no one in the entire world believes it, so what. It’s still true. That’s the same thing we find in the Bible.

Do you remember the story of Jesus and His Apostles arriving at the gate of the city of Nain just as a funeral was taking place? An only son of a widow had died. He was being carried to the cemetery to be buried in his gravesite. Jesus walks up to the casket, touches it, and everyone stops and stands still. Jesus speaks one word to the young man; “Arise.”

He sits up and starts to talk and he is returned to his grieving mother. Do you know what the people immediately did? Here’s what Luke seven sixteen says “…they glorified God.”

There is another example of resurrection glory.

What else could they say? What else could they do? All anybody can do in the face of resurrection is quote “glorify God.” So you see, the Resurrection of Jesus proves the existence of God.

And in the case of Jesus, a lot of people saw Him nailed to the Cross. They watched Him die. Then, after being taken down from the cross, these same people watched Him as He was carried and placed in a tomb.

And three days later, Jesus comes back to life. He rises from the dead. Mark 16:6 says “And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. (7) But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.”

The only explanation is the hand and the power of God. So, without a doubt, the Resurrection of Jesus proves God’s existence.

First, the Resurrection of Jesus proves God’s existence.

Second, the Resurrection of Jesus provides the best and the only answer to death and dying.

One of the most important questions that each one of us, at some time has to come to grips with is this. What about death and dying? What happens after death? Is there such a thing as a physical, bodily resurrection? We all agree that dying a fact of life. Everyone without exception will close his eyes one day in death.

Now, the question, of course, is this. Where can you possibly find comfort and hope and strength in the face of death? The best answer, folks, is found in this resurrection glory. There are thousands of psychologists, philosophers, religious teachers, medical experts by the millions who have attempted to explain death and dying. But explanations don’t satisfy.

The one fact that gives you hope in the face of death is the resurrection. Because Jesus rose from the dead you can find assurance. You can have peace. And you can have hope. That hope comes from the fact that Someone has completely defeated death. And that Person is the Son of God. Jesus rose from the dead so that we don’t have to lose hope in the face of death and dying.

You see, the resurrection isn’t a doctrine that God wants to be simply studied by theologians. It isn’t something that needs to be argued about. Rather, it’s a reality in which you experience the death of death. Something really good comes after dying; unless, of course, you reject the truth of God’s word.

Death can by sin. It entered the human race when Adam and Eve chose to disobey. And the death of that same death occurred at the moment Jesus rose on that first Glorious Easter Sunday.

“As in Adam we all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (I Corinthians 15:22).

The resurrection glory is God’s final word on the subject of sin and death. God had to become man. And why? “Since by man came death, by man [the man Christ Jesus] came also the resurrection of the dead” (I Corinthians 15:21).

God’s purpose in the Resurrection was to put an end to death. And that’s where you find hope in the face of death and dying.

Have you ever noticed in your Bible reading how often the LORD connects hope with the resurrection? Look at just a few verses with me.

Acts 23:6 *“But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.*

Acts 26:6 *“And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: (7) Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. (8) Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?”*

I Peter 1:3 *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,…”*

You see, of all the things you have considered in your life thus far in this matter of death and dying, where is it that you have found your hope? The LORD has so designed it that you can’t find hope anywhere but in the truth of the resurrection.

Listen to Jesus when He says these words. John 11:25 *“… I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:…”* This is the resurrection glory.

Do you remember when and where Jesus was when He spoke these words? It was at the tomb of a man named Lazarus.

Folks, Someone has conquered death. And the way He did it was to raise Himself from the dead.

As you can see, this is the Resurrection Glory.

First, the Resurrection proves the existence of God.

Second, the Resurrection is the one and only answer to death and dying.

Now third, the Resurrection assures me that God loves me and that I can know Him in a personal way.

Why else would the LORD go through the things He did before and during the crucifixion if it was just for His own benefit? He did it for you and me.

He made it personal. In His death, burial, and resurrection the LORD Jesus made it abundantly clear that He absolutely loves us. And why go through all this? So that we could come to know Him personally and discover that this is what life is really all about – coming to know God and having a personal relationship with Him. That’s what this is all about.

Will you believe what the Bible teaches about Jesus and His life, His death, His burial and His resurrection? Will you believe that He did it so that you can know Him personally? Will you believe that Someone has conquered death and His name is Jesus?

One thing that has often amazed me about people who argue against the truths of Christianity is this. I think they must argue because they truly want to be personally convinced that what they believe is really true. Why else would they go to such great lengths to prove the Bible is not true or prove that Jesus never rose from the dead?

In every case it tells a whole lot about you when you are so adamant in your unbelief. Why do you think The Society of Infidels at Yale University would invite an Atheist to speak to them on this subject?

You might remember me telling you about this. Back in October 26, 2000, a lecture was given at Yale University by the atheist philosopher and writer Dr. Richard Carrier. Since then, the lecture has been update and edited. And you can read the entire lecture with Dr. Carrier’s revisions that he did in the year 2006. The original title of the lecture was “Why I Don’t Buy The Resurrection.” [The entire lecture is found on www.infidels.org]

Here are Dr. Richard Carrier’s reasons for rejecting the Resurrection of Jesus.

1. There is no trust-worthy evidence of a physical resurrection because it’s one of the most poorly attested of historical events.

2. There are no reliable witnesses. The people who heard the story were uneducated and believed in superstition.

3. The Gospels simply embellish the story over time.

4. Jesus rose spiritually not bodily.

Well, folks, we’ve got as much physical evidence as we could possibly have in the Scripture.

Secondly, we’ve hundreds of eye-witnesses.

Third, how in the whole world does Dr. Carrier know that they embellished the story? Does that mean that the Gospel writers lied whenever they provided details?”

And fourth, how are you going to argue against someone who simply believes that Jesus rose spiritually and not bodily?

And again, here’s my question, “Why go to such great lengths to reject the resurrection of Jesus?” How can you or anyone else be benefited by arguing against history, the Bible, and millions of people who are trusting their eternal destiny to this one event?

Now, folks, the reason I share with you the arguments and words of Dr. Carrier for rejecting the resurrection is this. If you can satisfy yourself that Jesus did not rise from the dead, then three things must be true for you.

1. Jesus is not alive today.

2. Jesus can’t be known personally.

3. Neither Jesus nor anyone else has conquered death.

But, if Jesus *has* conquered death as it says in the Bible; if Jesus is alive today and He is; if Jesus can be known personally, then, it’s no longer an argument of your mind, but a question of your heart and will.

Let me close today with the testimony of the most successful lawyer who ever lived. You may have heard is story. Here it is. His name is Sir Lionel Luckhoo. Sir Lionel was also a political statesman and a diplomat and an ambassador serving the countries of Guyana and Barbados and a mayor and a Supreme Court Judge and he was knighted by Great Britain in 1966. According to the Guinness Book of Records (1990), Lionel Luckhoo is the most successful lawyer who ever lived. He argued no less than four hundred murder cases and never lost one. If he lost one, it was overturned on appeal.

Now, Sir Lionel, the man who was the most successful lawyer ever was given a challenge. “Take your legal mind and defend or debunk the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. He did. He studied the evidence both in Scripture and throughout history. He read what the greatest minds had written on the subject. And here’s his conclusion “I have spent more than 42 years as a defense trial lawyer appearing in many parts of the world and am still in active practice. I have been fortunate to secure a number of successes in jury trials and I say, unequivocally, that the evidence for the Resurrection is so overwhelming that it compels complete acceptance by proof which leaves no room for doubt.” (Sir Lionel Luckhoo)

Just for your information, Sir Lionel did become a Believer in Jesus Christ and has written a number of books in defense of the Bible and the teachings of Jesus. He even wrote a book called The Question Answered: Did Jesus Rise From The Dead?’

Sir Lionel died at the age of 83 in 1997. Guaranteed, Sir Lionel is patiently awaiting the Second Coming of Jesus and his resurrection from the grave.

Do you see the Resurrection Glory? It’s the simple and glorious fact that Jesus Christ, the Son of God rose triumphantly from the grave after paying the penalty for your sin.

Will you repent today and receive His forgiveness and know the truth in your heart that I Corinthians 15:21 “Since by man came death, by man [Jesus] came also the resurrection of the dead” (22) As in Adam we all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

To repent means to change your mind about God, Christ, faith, sin and salvation.

To believe means to simply trust Jesus Christ alone for your eternal security.

Here is a simply prayer. We call it “The Salvation Prayer.” “LORD, I admit that I am a sinner and in need of your grace. I believe that You sent Your Son to the Cross to die for me. Please forgive me of all my sins and make me Your child. Thank you.” Shall we pray?

Now please find with me Hymn # \_\_\_\_\_ “ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”