

His Resurrection

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Preached on: Sunday, April 12, 2020

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Amen. Let's take our Bibles and let's go to the Gospel of Mark. We'll use this narrative as a foundation, then we're gonna go to 1 Peter 1. Mark 16 first, then to 1 Peter 1.

In this narrative of our Lord's resurrection, we read in Mark 16 beginning in verse 1,

1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him. 2 Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. 3 They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" 4 Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large. 5 Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. 6 And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him.

That's a wonderful statement, "He has risen. He is not here.

Now go over to 1 Peter, if you will, 1 Peter 1, because in 1 Peter 1, Peter gives us something of the products of his resurrection. Not everything and we can't unpack everything that's here, in fact, but much of what God has wrought for us through his Son's death and particularly his resurrection is laid out for us in 1 Peter 1, beginning in verse 3 and going through verse 5. 1 Peter 1:3,

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Actually, all week long I studied another text of Scripture and toward the end of the week shifted because as I looked at this afresh, I just wanted to preach this to the saints of God on this Easter Sunday morning. I call it "Easter's Treasures" because it's as if God is

saying, "Because My Son is risen, because He's alive, here are the gifts He can now give you, His children."

First of all, in verse 3 in our text, Peter writes, "Blessed be the God and Father." That little phrase "blessed be," matter of fact, it's only used of God in the New Testament. It's that, that Greek word is not used for man or anything else. "Blessed be God," it means "to be adored; to be praised; to be highly honored." Actually, it's two words, one means "well," and one means "speak." Speak well of God because he's done these marvelous things for us. He stands alone as the one worthy of all adoration, all praise, all glory, all honor.

We see it again in Luke 1:68 where the Bible says, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people." 2 Corinthians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort." Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." Now I know what maybe some of you Bible scholars are thinking out there. You say, "Wait a minute, didn't Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount say, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.'" Yes, but it's a totally different original Greek word. It has a totally different meaning. It actually means happy or well-off, or you're doing right, you're in a good place. Blessed are you if you mourn over your sins. Blessed are you if you hunger and thirst for righteousness. And so on and so forth. In other words, you're right where you ought to be. But when it talks about God being blessed, it means he is worthy of praise and adoration and honor for what he has accomplished.

"Blessed be the God and Father," Peter says, "of our Lord Jesus Christ." It's to the honor, praise and glory of God the Father that we are saved. Let me say that again: your salvation is wonderful for you beyond compare, but your salvation is primarily for God. It is unto his honor, it is unto his praise, and it is unto his glory. It is God's purpose that came out of his date, deep love for us that we are saved. He purposed our salvation. He planned our salvation through his infinite wisdom in, in sending his Son for us. Then he provided our salvation in sending his Son actually to the cross to die, be buried and rise again. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." He's to be honored. He's to be praised. He's to be spoken highly of and well of.

When we talk about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, let's remind ourselves that the resurrection is the ground and the foundation of our salvation. You see, our standing before God is based on his resurrection, not on God's judgment. God's judgment has passed us because God's judgment fell on Christ, and he satisfied God's wrath that was against us and that's why the Father raised him from the dead, there was nothing left to do. In the resurrection, the Father is judge and declares us not guilty. In raising Jesus, the Father accepts the victory of Jesus, our conqueror.

You know, you wonder today why are so many skeptics, matter of fact, it, it's abhorrent to think about but there'll be many many Christian churches, many in our country and

around the world... service and call it Easter Sunday worship and they actually, at least their pastors, their reverends, their rector or whoever he may be, denies the bodily literal resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. They make it into some sort of mythological lesson we're to learn from instead of an actual, literal, historical fact.

I read about, um, Samuel Morse in 1832, and he was conversing with a friend, he was something of an inventor, something of a scientist, and he talked about how the United States had electricity and now Britain and much of Europe had electricity and he thought, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could communicate across these electrical lines." Well, people laughed at him. People thought, "That's crazy. That, something like that could never happen." But he began devising machines and he began making things, and tried and failed, and tried and failed, and tried and failed, and then finally electrical wires were laid from Washington to Baltimore and after 12 years of failure and discouragement, he finally put a machine together that would tap out a code and a message was sent from Washington to Baltimore, MD. Do you know what those first words were that came across what we now know as the Morse Code today? Here's what he wrote, "What hath God wrought?" Now after that, everybody was shocked and amazed and all of a sudden communication other than Pony Express or a letter by coach or ship or something like that was now radically transformed. Now today we have these smartphones and computers and internet, to us it's nothing but in that day it was astonishing.

You see, something seems a marvel, too wondrous to believe because we can't, haven't come across it and observed it yet. That's the only reason why we think it's strange. The resurrection of the dead is hard to fathom because we haven't come across it yet. When God established the new order and the dead are all raised and the righteous will be raised unto eternal life in the eternal state with him, then it will not be odd and strange and unusual at all.

The Bible says here in 1 Peter that God did these wondrous things for his children. There's bountiful blessings in these verses. He talks about great mercy, new life, having a living hope, having an eternal inheritance that will not pass away, and being protected by the power of God. But here's the one thing that I think the text brings out clearly: these things depend upon or, and are inseparably connected to one cornerstone truth that we see in verse 3, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. If he is not risen, we do not have great mercy, new life, a living hope, an eternal inheritance, or can be protected by the power of God.

The resurrection is not just an amazing fact from the life of Christ, though it is that. It is a biblical historical fact and it has wondrous spiritual, tangible realities for all of those who believe on Christ. The resurrection is the hinge on which the door of salvation opens to man. Without the resurrection, there are none of these wondrous blessings Peter outlines for us in this text. If Christ be not raised from the dead, the fabric of the Gospel unravels and falls to the ground as a useless tangle of thread. The resurrection is the keystone in the arch of our salvation. Christ's resurrection is the tree from which the fruit of salvation is borne.

Think about it for a moment. If one man gives his life for another, it's a noble feat of great love and devotion, however, what's done is done. Once you've given your life, you have nothing more to give. Once you've died, your capacity to help another ends. A dead man cannot speak to you, and a dead man cannot speak on your behalf, a dead man cannot labor to your benefit, they cannot serve your interest. They're dead. So it is with Christ. If he gave himself on the cross and if he died and if he remained in the grave, he can do us no more good. A dead Savior is a non-Savior. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians who were having some false teaching and some confusion about the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19, he says, "Listen, if Christ be not raised, I want you to understand, our preaching is in vain. If Christ is not raised, you're still in your sin. If Christ is not raised, your faith in Him is in vain. And if Christ is not raised, then Christians are of all men most to be pitied." Everything depends upon it. Oh, but here is the wisdom and the power of God. Christ not only died for us, he rose for us. He didn't just die for us, Christ rose for us. It was for us. And in our series we've called it the unrelenting love of God. Love drove him to the grave and love brought him back up out of the grave. He died for us. He rose for us. He lives forever for us.

Now let's note in our text the treasures, not all of them, there's more in the Scriptures, but from this text the treasures that Christ gives us. You know, through our, in our precious Lord's journey through his death and the resurrection, he has mined out precious gems that are of the most exquisite beauty and immense value, and he gives them to us of his own pleasure and free will, and he gives them to us without cost. He rose and lives for the specific purpose of granting these treasures to his children and to glorify his own name.

Now let's list them together just straight out of the text. 1. Let's note rivers of mercy. We wouldn't know rivers of mercy if he had not risen from the dead. And verse 3 he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy." The word "great" there could be translated "abundant." Now was I, and I was, when I was in graduate school we had Thayer's Lexicon of the Greek Language and Thayer's says this verse translated "great" can have one of these ideas or all three of them. Here's what Thayer's says: intensity, size and continuation. I believe it's all three. You see, mercy means God looked down on us and he felt a desire to help the most desperate and the most needy. God had an intensity in his heart to, to have mercy and to help us because we were helpless. An intensity, also he says it can mean size. It means it's just a great giant amount. And also it means continuation, it never ends.

When I was a high school boy, I was, um, I grew up in town but I was really a country boy. I worked on farms and I worked for a man that had 300 head of cattle, and all summer long we hauled hay, those old square bales of hay, and some of those August days, it was blistering hot in that hay field, 90+ degrees, humidity the same, and we would just be covered with dust and dirt. Every time you'd throw a hay bale up, it'd just be all over you and we were so parched and so dry and so hot, if we got off work before sunset, very often we'd find one of those crackling, crisp, cold creeks in Lawrence County, TN, and I remember one in particular had a waterfall, about an 8 foot waterfall that had a ledge you could walk out there and just stand under it and just the water would just deluge all over us. We'd just stand there to and pound the dirt off of us, and all day

long we would think about how good that will feel after this searing, scorching, dry, parched labor in the hay fields.

Well, that's the way I picture God's mercy. You just, you stand under an intense flowing river of mercy. God's mercy is as big as God and that's the way he feels toward his children. Why? Because he's living. A dead Savior cannot show mercy but a living Savior certainly can. We're in the flow of rivers of mercy. Dear sinner, dear depraved one, dear one who is of a nature of, of sin before a holy God, listen to me, he's a God who has rivers of mercy for you through the death and resurrection of his Son Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul in Romans 9:23 says we are "vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory." He said, "I've marked you out that you'd be a vessel." I can have the idea of a ship just loaded down with cargo. He said, "I'm just gonna load you down with mercy because I destined something for you. It's not the grave. It's not hell. It's not punishment. It's not being a castaway. I have loaded you down with My mercy because I want you with Me in glory." Why? Because of his unrelenting love for his children and because he lives and can bestow mercy.

Let's look at the second treasure that Peter says is ours because he is resurrected and he lives, and that is new life. New life. Look at there in verse 3, "Blessed be," to be praised and honored and adored and, and thought great of, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again," has caused us. I believe the New American Standard translators are right, it is God's initiative and it is God's act to birth us into the kingdom of God.

Now the first time you were born, that is to your natural mom, you were born dead to God and you were born dead in sin. We came forth from the womb and we did not know God and we came forth from the womb guilty in sin before God. Again, Ephesians 2 says we are by nature the children of wrath. Ephesians 2 also says we are dead in transgressions and in sin. Because of sin brought in by father Adam in the garden of Eden, we all inherit this miserable estate. We are all hopelessly enslaved to this body of sin, hopeless and helpless. I mean, you can drag this sinful dead body before God and that's got biological life, but God views us as spiritually dead.

So you can drag this dead body, this condemned body into religion, you can dress it up with ritual and with ceremony and with rites and with formalities, we can drag this dead body to external laws and works, we can put on a show for a season, but alas the burden is just too heavy. This natural sinfully dead condition we are in is woefully and wholly incapable of any true goodness before God, so we end up worse than when we began, for in trying to please God in the power of these fallen sinfully dead bodies, we're even more guilty than when we started. Matthew 12:43-45, Jesus gives the analogy of if one demon goes out of a man, he ends up getting seven more demons and coming back in and the man's latter state is worst than his first. It's the picture of self-cleansing. It's the picture of self-religion. If you in your strength and in your power purpose to clean yourself up and make yourself righteous before God, you might throw out something but what's gonna

happen, he's gonna bring seven demons back in and your last state is worst than your first.

What a state we're in. You know what we need? We need a miracle from outside of ourselves. We need the impartation of new life and that's what this text says, because he lives, he can impart life. Here's the wisdom and the power of God, Christ lives and he lives that he might impart life to his children. That's what Jesus meant when he told Nicodemus, "Nicodemus, you must be born again," or you could say born from above, born by a power outside of yourselves. It's a spiritual new life. New life comes in and when the new life comes in, we begin to see things in a new way. Sin is new to us. We're grieved about it more deeply and we see it as darker and, and more woefully offensive to God and, and all of a sudden many things begin to change. Repentance becomes real to us. We don't want to be like we were and we want to be different than we were before. Faith rises in our hearts because of the new birth. A love for God is germinated in our souls and an honoring and treasuring of his Son Jesus Christ, all these are the things that begin to flourish when we receive the impartation of new life. Dear friend, have you been born again? Christ gives life, new life.

Well, not only do we have these treasures but, thirdly, a third treasure is a living hope. We have a living hope. Look how he says it in verse 3 there, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope." Now I will acknowledge that these truths are interconnected and overlapping but they also can be dissected apart to look at the glories of each one, which is what I'm trying to do.

A living hope. You know, men have always looked for hope. They've always looked for hop. Before Christ came, men looked for hope, but do you know what it was? It wasn't a living hope, it was a dead hope. Men looked to religion, they looked to law keeping, they looked to performing good works, they looked to cleaning up their morality, they looked to this spiritual advisor or this spiritual teacher, trying to find a way to have a clear conscience that they stand accepted before this Triune holy God.

Hebrews 9:14, "how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" You see, everything – listen to me – everything outside of simple reliance and faith in Jesus Christ is a dead work. Everything. Everything's a dead work except relying and trusting in Christ and Christ alone to save me. And a dead work or dead works, I should say, service a dead hope. Dead men performing dead works produce dead results.

Now we see an illustration in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, a corpse, a dead body would make you undefiled or make you defiled, make you unclean. If you were around a dead body, then you had to go through certain washings and a time of separation before you were considered spiritually clean again. What was God saying to us? This was a picture for us. It illustrated a greater spiritual truth. It was a picture that our efforts in our natural man, our natural body, or of a dead body, and they're considered defiled

before God. All works of the body before God are defiled. Dead men performing dead works produce dead results.

Oh, but here's where the wisdom and the power of God comes in. When we place our faith in Jesus Christ, now here's what that means, that means we turn from all confidence, all hope in any other thing, any other ritual, any other performance, any other work, any other merit we might perform, joining a church, being baptized, whatever it is, when we place our faith in Christ, we turn from all other hopes and we turn to Jesus Christ. We transfer our faith to him. You see, everybody's placing faith in something. Sometimes you're hear in our culture today people of faith, well, that means nothing to me, everybody's a person of faith in some way, shape or fashion. They have faith in themselves, they have faith in science. Atheists have faith, but it's who is the object of your faith. That's what he's saying. That's what he's saying.

When you do that, then you have – listen – a living hope. Why? Because he's resurrected and he's a living Savior. He's a living Savior. Your, your faith is in someone who conquered the grave and is alive forevermore. That's what Peter says here, it's, it's a living hope. Now hope here in the, in the Christian sense doesn't mean maybe so or might be so, it means an absolute confident assurance. It's a living hope. My hope is in him, the ever living, ever loving, ever merciful, ever powerful Savior. It is a living hope. The songwriter wrote, "I serve a living Savior. He's in the world today. I know that he is living whatever men may say."

Well, a fourth treasure because he's resurrected is an eternal inheritance. Look at it there in verse 4. An eternal inheritance, "to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved for you in heaven." An eternal inheritance. Now first of all, Peter says it is an imperishable. It's kinda hard for me to verbalize because there's a lot of nuances to that, but I love what one, ah, theologian said, he said it has not one germ of decay in it. Your inheritance that the living Savior, the resurrected Christ has reserved for you has not one tiny germ of decay or corruption therein. It can't ever perish. It can't ever defile. It can't ever weaken. It can't ever rot.

Then he says not only is it imperishable in verse 4, he says it's undefiled. That just has the idea of no stain, everything about it is perfect. It's kinda like a, a title deed to a piece of property. If you buy a piece of property they'll give you a title deed and you have these lawyers to research the deed and make sure there's not one little thing in there that could say, "Well, you don't really own it, somebody 100 years ago had a lien against that property so it's got a stain on it, it's gotta, it's gotta blemished effect on it." No, no, no, no, not, our title deed – listen – to our eternal inheritance is free and clear.

You know, we inherit a lot of things in this life and these things can be a blessing or a curse. You might inherit a good name, you might inherit a bad name, you might inherit great wealth, you might inherit great death, and sometimes you think you're gonna get an inheritance and it doesn't pan out. I've had two church members contact me, I didn't contact them, contact me and say, "Pastor, I, I want to leave this to the church," and, um, it's a lot of money, a very, a great amount of money. I didn't lose any sleep over it. I just

said, "Praise the Lord for your kindness and thoughtfulness to support God's church," and in both cases before they died and other influences came in and we saw nothing out of one of them and a little bit out of the second one. Now it wasn't these dear folks' fault, it's just the way things unfolded. God's in charge of it all. But here's what I'm saying, you just don't know about an inheritance down here. You think you may have one but you may not but whether or not you inherit something or do not inherit something, whatever you do inherit will not last.

Our fortunes will soon be gone, our fame good or evil will soon be gone. These things perish and fade away, however, he, Christ, lives and has caused us to be born again, born into God's family which means I'm a son and as a son it means I'm an heir. Hebrews 1:2 says that Jesus is heir of all things. And Romans 8:17 says that we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ. The riches of eternity are infinite in quality and in quantity and not only in quality and in quantity but in pleasure producing joy. There's an unlimited pleasure for you waiting for you in your inheritance. Powerful.

And in them, as Peter says here, there's no germ of corruption, there's nothing capable of decay. We will inherit a perfect treasure that will produce perfect pleasures, increasingly so for all eternity. That's what a risen Savior could give you, an eternal inheritance. It's all through the Christ who ever lives that we have this inheritance. He rose from the dead, he ascended to the right hand of God, that is the place of power and authority, and when he arrived there, he signed our name onto the title deed of the new creation and we're inheriting it all. It's fully and already ours and we will possess it soon enough. All the treasures we have because he is living.

One final one in verse 5, protecting power, "who are protected by the power of God." The word "protected" here is the word that means "a garrison, a guard." God himself says, "I've guarded you, I'm protecting you, I myself." You say, "Pastor, I don't know. I struggle and I fail and I'm weak and I'm ashamed and I'm embarrassed and I'm unfit." Yes, you are but you cannot shake his power to protect you. Protected by the power of God. God has a garrison of omnipotence protecting you so you'll get your eternal inheritance. That's what a living Savior can do. That's what a resurrected Lord can accomplish. Oh, praise his name.

Our inheritance is reserved, the Bible says, it's the idea of kept for us in heaven. In heaven, we have a guard but you know what? We have a guard in this world. Jesus guards us in this world. His power protects us from all of our enemies. Now we're living in a difficult day, we're living in a strange time and this, ah, ah, this covid19 virus, but listen to me, Jesus has a garrison of omnipotence around your life. His power saves us and his longsuffering – are you listening – saves us from us. You can't even damn your soul. You can't even condemn your soul. You can't even run shipwreck and lose what he's protecting.

Brother Bill Stafford used to preach for us years ago, he's in heaven, and he used to say, "I'm so saved it's pitiful." Well, we are. We are. This garrison of might that seals us and protects us.

Listen to John 6:37-39. Jesus said, "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day."

"Pastor, can a man lose his salvation?" Only if Jesus loses his power. "If you're given to Me," that means you've believed on Jesus, Jesus said, "I keep every one of them and will raise them up on the last day."

The power of a resurrected Savior. You see, listen, the point is not that I obtain salvation, the point is he gained my salvation. He gained it. When he died, he gained it. When the Father raised him, the Father said, "He gained it." He sealed it and you're protected now forevermore by the omnipotent garrison of God to seal you and keep you for eternity. He died for my sins and was raised for my justification.

This living Savior has placed me under rivers of mercy. This living Savior has given me new life. This risen Savior has given me a living hope. This living Savior has given me an eternal inheritance. And this living Savior protects me by his power.

Now there's two words we need to look at in closing. Look at in verse 5, we "are protected by the power of God," here they are, "through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." In other words, there is the culmination of your salvation ready to be revealed. It's out there somewhere. You are saved, sealed forever. You are being saved, but you are going to be saved too. That's what he's saying. But those two words, it's through faith. You see, faith says it's finished. I put all my confidence and my trust in him. Not in me. Not in my works. Not in cleaning up my life. I place my confidence in him. Think about it. When Jesus died on the cross, he's hanging there and suffering agony, the earth has been darkened because the transaction was between God the Father and God the Son, and by the way, you and your religion weren't in there. God was doing this and all of a sudden right before Jesus gave his Spirit, gave the life up that he had and returned his Spirit to the Father, he cried out and said, "It is finished! I've become sin in man's place. I've become cursed of God for sinners in man's place. I've become a castaway for them in man's place. I've effectually taken what they deserved. It is finished!" Then he was buried. Saturday passed and early Sunday morning, God the Father said, "Arise, My love." And when the Father raised him, what was the Father in effect saying? "It is finished! He satisfied all the demands of holy wrath against the children. He's accomplished their redemption. He's finished the salvation. It is finished! I'm proving that I agree and I'm satisfied by raising Him from the dead." Raised for our justification the Bible says.

The Bible says Jesus cried, "It is finished!" The Father in effect raises him and says, "It is finished!" But what about you? Is it finished for you? Are you still in the strain? Are you still standing under the guilt? Are you still standing before God in condemnation? Is it finished for you? Two words in our text: through faith. Oh, would you, dear friend, cry to God this moment and say, "O God, I want it to be finished. I cast my hope, my trust in Jesus Christ." Some of you teenagers out there listening, this day, this Easter Sunday, tell

the Lord, "Lord, I'm finished. I put no hope in anything or anyone else but You." Can you say it is finished?