



Speaker:
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The Proto Resurrection

Series: The Gospel of Mark • 57 of 57

7/18/2021 (SUN) | Bible: **Mark 16:1-16**

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, “Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?” And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away; for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. 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. 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.” And they went out quickly and fled from the sepulchre, for they trembled and were amazed. Neither said they anything to any man, for they were afraid.

The atonement has ended.

We re-enter Mark’s account today at the point where Jesus Christ has died and been buried. God’s wrath has been fully spent. His fiery anger, which should rightly have been aimed at us, instead consumed the soul of his own son.

We see now there’s not so much as a warm ember left of the fire of God’s anger which fell on Jesus. The sacrifice was sufficient for the remission of the sins of God’s people, and it was therefore acceptable to God Almighty.

Today, we’re in the final chapter of Mark’s gospel. I have just one more message to preach after today, and that will be the end of our journey.

In every passage we read together, there’s always one phrase that stands out from the rest. And among preachers there’ll often be different parts they find themselves drawn to.

I don’t imagine there’s a preacher alive who wouldn’t agree on this occasion that the most important part of this passage is that great declaration by an angel: *He is not here; he has risen!*

I've no doubt this great announcement sends shockwaves throughout the kingdom of Satan. I can only imagine the greatest horror and despair as the news reaches the ears of every devil in his service.

The precious hope they had—to cause havoc in the purposes of God—has been ruined. For some perhaps, has come the awful truth that this resurrection has forever crushed the head of their master, just as the ancient prophecies foretold.

The rest of the content of this passage is of less importance than this one truth that **Jesus is alive**.

I've given this message the title, *The Proto-Resurrection*. "Proto", as in "prototype", speaks of the first of many. Jesus's was the first true resurrection, and many of us are going to go through that same glorifying experience.

I intend now to give you some reasons for the resurrection of Christ—some results of his rising from the dead.

1. To show that Christ was God

[Jesus was] declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

Romans 1:4

The resurrection was an open declaration of the divinity of Jesus. He'd been making some incredible claims about himself throughout his life. But the one that was to cause the most unbelief was the idea he would be raised from the dead. This would be sufficient proof for anyone he was who he claimed to be.

I say he would *be* raised from the dead, suggesting it was something he was subjected to by God. But it's not as simple as that. This rising from the dead as a glorified person is ascribed to all three persons of the Trinity:

- In the first chapter of Ephesians, it's said the **Father** raised Jesus.
- In the third chapter of Peter's first letter, we're told the **Holy Spirit** raised Jesus.
- And in the tenth chapter of John's gospel, the resurrection is ascribed to **Jesus himself**.

It's when we consider the resurrection work as attributed to all three persons that we see Jesus at the very heart of the Trinity of the one God.

The act of the resurrection is a doctrinal gift to us. We should therefore treasure it and use it to protest the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity as a whole.

2. To fulfil prophecy

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Psalm 16:10

This is another example of the Psalmist penning words which would become the thoughts or prayers of Jesus Christ.

The death of Jesus was not the same as ours in every respect. **But it was a proper death.** The word *hell* in our verse simply means the grave. It's the Old Testament *Sheol*, and it's the common destination of all mankind, including believers.

The parallel structure of the verse shows that to be in the grave—hell—is to suffer corruption, decomposition. If it's true that, in their society, being in the grave four days was significant, this would be one of the reasons why Jesus was raised after **three** days.

But the main point is he wasn't left in the grave to rot; and his rescue from the grave fulfilled prophecy.

It's very clear Jesus trusted the Scriptures. If the Son of God endorses them, so should we trust our completed Bible. You should realise what a great gift you've received in owning a Bible, whether paper-based or computer-based, and you should make it a habit to delve into it often.

3. To bless Christ himself

Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth. My flesh also shall rest in hope.

Psalm 16:9

This is what precedes the verse we just read. And since that was about his resurrection, we can see that's what this present verse is about.

Throughout his life, in the midst of the sorrows he felt, there was this underlying hope. Despite all the disappointments, persecutions and dread he

experienced, deep within himself he treasured up this knowledge that when all this was over, he'd rise again.

When we read about Christ being happy, it makes us glad, doesn't it? *We* are blessed when *he* is blessed. And this should be just as much the case when we witness fellow believers being blessed by God.

But this is often not the case. Believers can become envious.

Friends, when God chooses to dispense blessings, it's usually not according to our thinking. He may save the children of parents who are less diligent in prayer. He may grant wealth to believers who hold faulty doctrine. And he may bless churches whose pastors and congregations are seen as comparatively lax in their zeal for God.

God knows what he's doing. We need to trust in that truth, not just express it as a belief. You'll find it useful to make it a habit to go immediately to God in prayer and thank him whenever you see others blessed. And in that charitable practice there'll be found blessing for you too.

And don't forget: if we're blessed by God's happiness, we should avoid the very thing which makes him *unhappy*, and that's **sin**.

4. To declare Christ's accomplishment as acceptable

And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

Luke 9:30–31

That's quite a striking statement. It's a great paradox. No one would think being killed was any kind of victory for that person. But here, Jesus being taken and killed is described as an achievement!

And it's through the resurrection the Father was able to welcome him back into his presence. Had Jesus been left in the grave, it'd be concluded the atonement was not good enough. In raising Jesus and embracing him as a son again, the Father signifies the sacrifice was acceptable.

And remember this, brethren: it's said that, in a sense, you died and were resurrected with Jesus Christ. This means *you* are accepted by God too. **And**

God can no more change his mind and cast you off than he can disown his own son.

You're acceptable to God and pleasing in his sight. So having this access in prayer to the royal courts of heaven, you shouldn't neglect to make use of it. Go to him frequently, knowing you're accepted in the beloved.

5. To allow Christ to reclaim his throne

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

John 17:5

It was necessary for the Son of God to be raised from the dead so he could ascend back to his father's side. And that's exactly where he belonged.

In coming to this earth as a man, the Son sacrificed the highest level of glory. We said last week his flesh was a kind of veil, subduing his glorious nature. He swapped the constant adoration of the angelic host to the fickle support of a few sinful men and women.

Yet he was raised, and he reclaimed his throne. This throne is of course a metaphor. It describes his position as ruler of the world. The mess we see this world is not the chaos we think it is. Jesus Christ is above it all, jointly ruling with an **exact purpose**.

Do I need to say this? The world lies in wickedness. The whole world. Governments. Media. Corporations. People!

The world lies. These lies start in school and continue throughout life. The main culprit has to be television. I watch television, like most of you I expect. But I'd counsel you to use it like alcohol and fatty foods: in moderation and with **great** caution.

And daily recall the sovereignty of the Lord, because this is the best remedy against despair.

6. To assure the world of judgement

[God] hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Acts 17:31

In the end-time judgement, we read it's Jesus Christ who will be sat in the judgement seat. Jesus in the role of judge isn't spoken of much, I find. People want to present Jesus to the world as an approachable figure. Someone who wants their friendship.

Jesus is approachable—but only by those who have a repentant heart. And he is friendly—but only to his friends, and he tells us his friends are those who he died for.

The world will happily listen to you talk about a harmless Jesus, but they'll switch off when you talk about Jesus **causing** harm, which is what he **will do** at the judgement. Whether it's arrogant atheists or those who think a belief in God is good enough, Jesus will harm them, and he will keep harming them in his hell dungeon for ever.

Are you ready, friend? You could close your eyes in sleep tonight and wake up at the judgement seat of Christ. Are you ready? Are you ready right now? Dig deep into your soul and see if you find real faith in Jesus Christ. Because if your trust is in him right now, you have nothing to fear when you stand in front of him in his courtroom.

7. To conquer death

...but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

2 Timothy 1:10

You might wonder why it says Jesus Christ abolished death. People still die. You and I are going to die. And we know the world is still spiritually dead.

It's quite a common way to speak. If someone accepts a job offer, they might come off the phone and say to their partner, *I got the job!* Yes...and no. Until your acceptance has been processed by HR and you've signed the contract, the job isn't technically yours.

It was said that Jesus destroyed Satan at Calvary. The Bible itself is quite clear Satan continued to exist afterwards. He's still around today. He's probably visited your house, and he's certainly visited our church. But his activities have been more restricted.

What it means is at Calvary, a crucial stage in the defeat of Satan was completed. Building on the fatal blow dealt at the cross, his eternal ruin will take place when he's thrown into that lake of fire with all his followers, both angelic and human.

This is how we understand Jesus abolishing death through his own death. Through the preaching of the gospel, we communicate to people the reality of eternal life to come. We can confidently tell people, if they have faith in Jesus Christ, they'll instantly become spiritually alive. We joyfully announce all those who die in Christ will be clothed in immortality at his return.

You listeners who believe already have this. Your death has been abolished. What we mean is *death will not hold you*. You'll rise again, and this should be a cause of great blessing to you now.

8. To symbolise our spiritual resurrection

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Romans 6:4

The word *baptism* has a number of meanings. The most common use of the word in the Bible is not the most important use. This is what I mean: **the real baptism we receive from God is the outpouring of his Spirit into our hearts**. You can see this usage in the first chapter of Acts.

The most common use of the word refers to the application of water to us, and this is what we normally understand when we hear someone's been baptised. Now this water baptism is simply a visible representation of that inward work of the Spirit. And it's through this work of the Holy Spirit we're said to enter into Christ's sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension.

Although this verse is normally understood to mean water baptism, I suspect it's talking about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is good news for people who haven't yet been baptised, or for practical reasons can't. On their conversion, that point when they know they have the Spirit of God, they've already taken part in the spiritual resurrection from the death of sin.

So there's this spiritual resurrection preceding our bodily resurrection. And our verse tells us that it's to a desired end: that we should walk in newness of life.

You believers are now truly alive. And it's expected that your walk through this life would reflect that. If you're doing it right, listening to what the Bible says and praying for guidance, your lifestyle will be different from what it once was.

If you're one of those who've been blessed being brought up in a Christian home, the same is expected of you. We're all expected to behave and think in ways which honour God.

9. To allow Christ to make intercession

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Romans 8:34

Jesus's resurrection allowed him to take his place at God's right hand. And one of the roles he took on was mediator. He's the only one fit to be mediator, seeing as he's God manifested bodily.

So the risen saviour stands between us and God. For one thing, he intercedes for us as we pray. He commends our prayers to his Father. This is another reason why I think we should pray to the Father and not Jesus or the Holy Spirit. Each person of the Trinity has a role when we pray. Ideally, we'll be praying *to* the father, *through* the Holy Spirit and *in the name of* Jesus. In doing this, we acknowledge prayer is a Trinitarian work and we recognise Jesus's role as intercessor.

Isn't it a great privilege, brothers and sisters, to know Jesus encourages the Father to listen to the poor prayers that come from our mouths? Whenever you stumble about, unable to string coherent sentences together in your prayers, that prayer is still sanctified and presented to the Father by Jesus as a sweet aroma!

So when you go to God in prayer, with your praises, thanksgivings, confessions of sin, and your petitions, go in the confidence that you have the Son of God as your mediator.

10. To justify the church

[Jesus] was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification.

Romans 4:25

The word *justification* also has several meanings in the Bible. Evangelicals usually understand this word in a *forensic* sense. Now let me explain that. I think it's fair to say almost everyone understands the word forensic has something to do with testing things in laboratories, as in "forensic science".

And we can use that example to show what forensic means in terms of justification. Although we might think forensic science is people testing stuff in laboratories, it's really people testing stuff in laboratories so *that their results can be used as evidence in a court of law*. Forensic, then, simply means "legal".

So we're talking about justification in the *legal* sense. What that means is God justifies us—declares us righteous—by way of a legal declaration. The evangelical understanding then is we're sinners but, by virtue of what Christ has done, we're declared to be righteous.

My own view is slightly different. I believe we were declared to be righteous **because God had first made us sanctified new creatures in Christ**.

But I don't want to dwell on that too much. The point to take from this today is it was through the resurrection of Jesus that plan of salvation continued and made our justification certain.

There's another sense of justification which is also a result of Jesus rising from the dead. When he rose, the church at that time and ever since was *vindicated*. The church trusted this Jesus was the Messiah, and his resurrection was all the evidence they'd need. The consistent accounts of Jesus's resurrection from multiple eyewitnesses showed this resurrection to be genuine, and the church was proven right.

And this applies to us too. We point back to the resurrection of Jesus as an historical event, and it's the risen and exalted Jesus which has become the foundation for the gospel itself. So be bold brethren in sharing the gospel of the risen saviour with any who will listen.

11. To pave the way for our bodily resurrection

Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus and shall present us with you.

2 Corinthians 4:14

What this verse is telling us is God is going to raise us all from the dead and if you like "escort us" to meet the resurrected Jesus.

The church is already married to Jesus Christ. We're his bride. His atoning work and resurrection united us, and *even now* it can be said we're enjoying the great marriage feast. *We already have* this married relationship with our saviour. *We're already* walking with him, talking with him and eating with him through faith.

But there remains another phase in our marriage. There is to come an even greater experience of Jesus. And a resurrected Jesus Christ is to have as his eternal companions a resurrected people. He was the forerunner, and every one of us who belong to him will surely follow him in being raised.

This was Paul's hope, and this is our hope. You'll be familiar with the line from the Book of Common Prayer's funeral service, which says we bury believers, "...in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ".

It'll do your soul good friends to keep this to heart. Try to recall it each day. And the best way to recall it is through reading about this great promise in the word and thanking God for it in prayer.

12. To live with us for ever

But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward, they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

1 Corinthians 15:20–24

- We said the resurrection showed Christ was God, and this was to give us a blessed doctrine.
- We said it fulfilled prophecy, giving us confidence in the Scriptures.
- We said it was to bless Christ himself, thereby blessing us through his happiness.
- We said it showed the atonement was acceptable to God, and we understand *we* are accepted because we're in Christ.
- We said it allowed Christ to reclaim his throne, and we're said to reign alongside him.

- We said it declares to the world a judgement, and we can be confident we'll not share the terrible fate of the rest of mankind at that time.
- We said it was to conquer death, and this is how we now have spiritual life and will enjoy immortality in the future.
- We said it symbolised our spiritual resurrection, encouraging us to walk worthily in this new life we have.
- We said it enabled Christ to become an intercessor, representing us at the throne of God.
- We said it allowed for our justification, and we've both been declared righteous and as a church been vindicated.
- We said it was effectively the proto-resurrection, and this gives us the confidence that resurrection is possible **and** will be carried out on us too.

And we finish with this. **The resurrection of Jesus as an incorruptible person shows he will live like that for ever, and he promises us we shall be with him.** All opposition will have been wiped out. What will be left is the bride of Christ in all its splendour, standing amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene.

This is where the story was always heading. Then, we'll experience an idealised form of what we have now:

- We can have *true joy* now, but **then** it'll be heightened and uninterrupted.
- We can give and receive *love* now, but **then** it'll be untainted by sin in you and others.
- We can have *communion with Jesus Christ* now, but **then** it will be face-to-face.

I can only imagine the conversations and the praise that will take place at that time!

You can travel to Jerusalem and walk the very streets that Jesus did. You may even visit the site of his actual crucifixion. And if the archaeologists are right, it's possible you can visit the tomb where our saviour was laid.

But you won't see him, of course. He was there, **but not anymore**. HE HAS RISEN! HALLELUJAH!

Amen.