

Resurrection Day Sermon (#1)
The Importance of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ
Sermon by Pastor Sylvia Chan

Resurrection Day (or Easter Sunday) is the day on which we commemorate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Two thousand years ago the Lord died on the cross on a Friday, then on the first day of the following week he was resurrected, he came back to life.

Most people in the world today, even non-Christians, are familiar with the story of the crucifixion and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore I will not repeat the whole story here; but I would like to emphasize the importance of his resurrection, and the connection between his resurrection and our lives.

The enemies try to discourage people from believing the resurrection of the Lord Jesus

According to the biblical records, after the Lord Jesus died on the cross, a rich man named Joseph of Arimathea, who was also a disciple of the Lord, went to Pilate, the governor of Judea, to ask for the Lord's body. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and placed it in his own new tomb; then he rolled a big stone in front of the entrance of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and another woman also called Mary were sitting opposite the tomb.

The next day was the Sabbath. The chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate, and told him that when Jesus was still alive, he had mentioned that after three days he would rise again. So they, that is, the chief priests and the Pharisees, proposed securing the tomb, otherwise Jesus' disciples might come to steal his body away and tell the people that he had risen from the dead. Pilate agreed and told them to have a guard stationed at the tomb and to put a seal on the stone of the tomb.

After the Sabbath, on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. Suddenly there was a violent earthquake, and an angel came down from heaven and rolled away the stone of the tomb. The angel told the two women that Jesus had risen and was not here in the tomb; and the angel told the women to go quickly to the Lord's disciples and tell them that the Lord had risen from the dead. So the two women went.

^{NIV} **Matthew 28:11 – 15** While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. ¹² When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, ¹³ telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we

were asleep.’¹⁴ If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.”

¹⁵ So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

Here it says that the chief priests and the elders immediately devised a plan, and they made up a false story to be spread among the people saying that the disciples of the Lord Jesus had come during the night and stolen his body.

Why did they make up such a false story? What was its purpose? The reason is very obvious, because they didn’t want the people to believe in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, they wanted the people to think that the resurrection of the Lord was false, that there was no resurrection!

From that time until today, for two thousand years many people from different nations have come up with different theories and stories in an attempt to prove that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is false, that there is no resurrection! Why? Why do the enemies keep dissuading people from believing in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus?

During the New Testament time there was a group of people who said that the dead would not be raised to life, which means there was no such thing as resurrection!

^{NIV} **1 Corinthians 15:12 – 15** But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

At that time a group of people in the Corinthian church said there is no resurrection of the dead, and the apostle Paul had to fight against this false teaching. Paul explained that if there was no resurrection of the dead, then not even Jesus Christ was raised either.

If Jesus Christ has not been raised to life, then all those who preached the gospel of God in the past two thousand years would have been false witnesses about God! I have been preaching the gospel in different places for many years, yet it turns out that I have been bearing false witness about God! Do you see the seriousness of that?

The importance of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ

Now we see that the resurrection of the Lord is very important, which explains why for two thousand years the enemies have always been trying to discredit it. But how important is it exactly?

^{NIV} **1 Corinthians 15:16 – 19** For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Here apostle Paul says that if the Lord Jesus Christ had not been raised from the dead, the faith of all Christians would be futile, and we would still be in our sins. If we are still in our sins, it means that we are not saved, we don't have salvation, we would be lost just like those people who don't know God, we wouldn't have eternal life, we would simply be deceiving ourselves, we would be the most pitiful people in the world. Do you see that?

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the central point of the Christian faith. That's why through two thousand years, the enemies keep looking for ways to discredit and to attack the resurrection of the Lord.

On the other hand if the Lord Jesus has truly been resurrected and is in heaven sitting at the right hand of Yahweh God, then all Christians have hope, and we can look forward to the eternal life in the kingdom of God.

Are you sure the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is real?

Are you sure that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is real? For the disciples at that time, the Lord Jesus appeared in their presence after he was resurrected, they lived with the Lord for forty days, so they had no doubts at all. Thomas, one of the eleven apostles (from the twelve original apostles, minus Judas, the one who betrayed the Lord), even though Thomas didn't believe in the beginning, yet after he saw the resurrected Jesus Christ appear in front of his eyes, all his doubts were gone.

But we don't see the resurrected Jesus Christ with our own eyes, so how can we be sure that he has been resurrected? To you, is the resurrection of the Lord true or is it just a theory, or even just a fairy tale?

Unless you are sure the Lord Jesus Christ has been resurrected, your faith has no grounds. If your faith has no grounds, you won't obey the teaching of the Lord totally, and when you run into difficulty or are being persecuted or being tempted by Satan, you will disobey the Lord or even

forsake the Lord. Apostle Peter thought that his faith was very solid. When the Lord Jesus told him that he will deny the Lord three times before the rooster crows, Peter said he was willing to die with the Lord and he would never deny the Lord. But we all know the story, that in the end he denied the Lord three times exactly as the Lord had said.

If you are not sure whether the Lord Jesus Christ has really risen from the dead, then Resurrection Day would be meaningless to you, being just one of many festivals in the year, there's nothing special about it at all!

How can we be sure the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is true?

How can we be sure that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is true, and not just a fairy tale or a theory?

Unless you yourself have experience the resurrection, you wouldn't know whether the resurrection is true or not. It is only when you have experienced the resurrection that you will know that the resurrection is true. If your own resurrection is true, then certainly the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is true!

But how can we experience the resurrection? In order to experience the resurrection, we have to die first! So does it mean that we have to die first and then we are resurrected? Exactly! That's exactly what the Bible teaches.

^{NIV} **Romans 6:2 – 4** By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

- Verse 2 says we have to die to sin. When we die to sin, we repent of all our sins and we no longer live in sin.
- Verse 3 says we are baptized into the death of Christ. Through baptism we participate in the death of Christ, which means we die with Christ in our baptism.
- Verse 4 says we are buried with Christ, then we are raised with Christ into a new life, and we start to live a new life.

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Here we see that we can experience the resurrection right now through dying to sin, then in baptism we die with Christ, and finally we are raised with Christ, we experience the resurrection and from now on we live a new life.

If you have died with Christ and are living with Christ in a new life, you would know for sure that the resurrection of Christ is true. You can go on to witness for Christ saying that, “The Lord Jesus Christ has been resurrected, I know for sure, because I have died with him, I have been buried with him, and I have been resurrected, and Jesus Christ is living with me inside my heart!” Even if the world comes up with different theories to attack the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, you won’t be shaken, because you yourself have experienced the resurrection, you know that the resurrection is true; and the life you are living now is a foretaste of the eternal life in heaven. In the future in the kingdom of God you will be granted the eternal life.

Three qualities of the resurrected life

If you are a Christian, are you living a life of resurrection? Your life of resurrection would have these three qualities:

1. You no longer live in sin

If you still live in sin, then you have not yet died to sin; and because you have not died, therefore you have not been resurrected to a new life.

2. You live to Yahweh God

If you have died to sin and have been resurrected, you will live to Yahweh God in the new life.

^{NIV} **Romans 6:10 – 11** The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Here it says that the Lord Jesus Christ died to sin, but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, if we have died to sin, we live to God.

Are you living to yourself or to Yahweh God? Are you concerned only for your own interests? Do you see your own interests as being more important than the work of Yahweh God? Are you concerned for the salvation of other people?

3. You love your brothers and sisters in the Lord

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^{NIV} **1 John 3:10** This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

If you are living a resurrected life, you will love the brothers and sisters in the Lord. If you don't love your brothers and sisters in the Lord, you are not a child of God.

^{NIV} **1 John 3:14 – 15** We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

It says here that if we love the brothers and sisters, we have passed from death to life. But if we hate a brother or a sister, we are a murderer. You can see that hatred amounts to murder, and definitely no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

Do you love your brothers and sisters in the Lord? Love in the Bible is not simply an emotion, it is not just helping other people a little bit. Love in the Bible is to love your neighbor as yourself. If you love your neighbor as yourself, you would do to him or her what you would have others do to you.

Conclusion

Now let's sum up everything. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is an amazing event, because before him there had never been a person who died and came back to life, never to die again. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is a most important historical event, and because it brings hope to human beings, death is no longer the end of our lives.

Lord Jesus died and was resurrected, and will never die again. If we follow the Lord Jesus, we can experience the resurrected life in our lives right now, and in the future we would be resurrected physically just like the Lord Jesus. Death is no longer the end for all the people, and we will have a new hope.