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THE RESURRECTION
by Paris Reidhead

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Summary: The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation of our faith, and it's the power that's going to be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

Duration: 37:56 Topics: "Resurrection"
Scripture References: Genesis 9:13, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:32, Ephesians 1:17-21, Ephesians 6:11

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DESCRIPTION

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In this sermon, the preacher shares a personal story about his grandson's miraculous resurrection. Three weeks ago, his grandson was found in a fish pond, lifeless and without a heartbeat. However, the mother refused to accept the situation and cried out to God for help. Through the efforts of a doctor who administered CPR, the grandson's heartbeat was restored on the way to the hospital. This story serves as a powerful illustration of the resurrection power of God and the belief that if God can raise Jesus from the dead, he can also provide for all our needs.

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CONTENT

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Turn, if you will, to Ephesians, the first chapter. Thank you. I'm afraid to touch it.

The last time I touched it, we had a mild catastrophe. Shall we bow our hearts in prayer? And at the conclusion, you'll join me in our Lord's prayer. We lift our hearts to thee, our heavenly father, to worship thee, to adore thee, to bring to thee the adoration of our hearts.

Thou hast revealed thyself to us as the God of all grace. The gift of thy son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is so beyond anything that this

sinning,
rebellious man could ever expect. And yet thou didst love us, not
according to our worth or according to our character, but according to
thine own purpose and grace, which was in Christ Jesus before the
world
began.

We adore thee for this revelation that thou has given us of thy
eternal
purpose for thy people, not just to deliver us from the just true
condemnation that we had earned and so fully deserved, but to give us
new hearts and new lives and new spirits. One day, new bodies like
under
the body of thine own son. And then to take us into thy presence there
to share with thee forever.

Oh, how we rejoice in so great salvation. There certainly are some
among
us this morning who may only know him by hearing, by reading, by
someone
else's testimony. They've heard of the Lord Jesus with the hearing of
the ear, but they do not know him whom to know his life eternal.

And we're praying for these among us who are as one as all of us were,
and we're asking that this might be the day when they throw down the
weapons of warfare against thee. They lay down all the plans to deny
to
thee the place that thou dost deserve, and they sue for peace. On
those
terms that thou hast ever honored, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

And save me for Jesus' sake. Might it be our father that in this
service
there shall that prayer be heard from some heart here this morning.
And
father, we would pray also for loved ones and friends and those that
are
away from us on this family day.

We ask the Lord to find them where they are and stir their hearts,
move
them toward thee. We think of those whom we've sent from us to the
ends
of the earth to preach this glorious message of resurrection. And we
ask
thy presence with them, thy provision for them and thy constant care
and
protection.

And in it all, our father, grant that we may, because we've been here

today and thou art here to meet us and minister to us, we will bring honor and glory and praise unto the Lord Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray. Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

Amen. Ephesians, the first chapter is probably the most complete chapter on the subject of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I'd like to have you notice verse 15.

When Paul writing to this church at Ephesus. Declares I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers. 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.

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened that you might know what is the hope of his calling and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to toward us who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come and put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in awe. The very foundation of our faith is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was the witness of Jesus after his resurrection.

It was the witness of the apostle Paul. It was the testimony of all of the those who followed Paul in the early church. If anyone were to deny the resurrection of Christ, it would make true a remark that Vinay made many decades ago.

A new history is manufactured for us in the interest of a new theology.

Everything in the scripture verifies the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead. It's the ground of our redemption.

He was raised again for our justification, and it's the pledge of our immortality. We are said in Romans 8, 11, he that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies. So as we view the resurrection, we have to realize that it is the foundation of our faith.

But the apostle, in writing here to the church of the Ephesians, wanted them to understand something more than the historical fact. He wanted them to realize that this was the basis of their ministry, the foundation of their personal ministry for Christ. Notice that he has told these people that they are saints at Ephesus, faithful in Christ Jesus.

That's the way the epistle is introduced. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, faithful in Christ Jesus. And yet he is saying to them that there is much that they do not understand.

So in verse 15, the portion where I began the reading, he said, When I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love unto all the saints, I ceased not to give thanks for you, and I put you on my prayer list. Literally, therefore, Paul is saying that about the time we would get off of everybody else's prayer list, we'd get on to his. How often it is we hear someone say, Hey, isn't it marvelous? Harry's been saved.

Now we can start praying for Tom and Dick. Well, that is indeed marvelous that Harry's been saved. But it's not scriptural to take him off the prayer list, because the Lord Jesus said, I don't pray for the Tom and the Dick that do not know me.

I'm only praying for the Harry's here that do know me. I pray not for the world. I pray for them that thou hast given me out of the world.

And so Paul said, When I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love unto all the saints, I started to pray for you. Here they are. They've been born again.

They've passed from death to life. They're no longer dead in their trespasses and sins. They're partakers of the divine nature.

And the apostle is saying to them, I am praying for you, and I want

you
to understand that I'm praying for you. You've had marvelous things
happen to you. They've been awakened.

They've been convicted. They've been brought to repentance. They have
come out of death into life.

Oh, indeed, marvelous. But they still have just begun. They're on the
threshold.

I think the illustration that I could give that would help make it
clear
is, suppose that I've met you somewhere. I met some of you years ago
in
various places, ministry. And now I'm remembering.

It's wintertime, not spring, not summer. It's winter, dead of winter,
blizzard blowing. And I'm in your neighborhood.

And I remember, say, they live not too far from here. And they did
invite me, if I was ever in the neighborhood, to come by and see them.
I
think I'll go by.

And so you hear a car, tires screaming against the tarmac, sliding on
the ice. Say, some crazy person's out there. What? We ought to be
home.

We ought to have better sense than that. And a little while later, you
hear your doorbell ring. And you come to the door.

And there I am, snow covered and crusted. And you say, what are you
doing here? Well, you told me, if I was ever in the neighborhood, to
drop in. And I'm in the neighborhood.

And I just thought I'd drop in. You had told me you had a new house.
And
you want me to see your new house.

And so I'm here. And I shut the door. You shut the door behind me.

And say, well, come on in. And I say, oh no, this is good enough. I'm
here.

I'm no longer out in the storm. I'm out of the blizzard. I won't
freeze
to death.

This is very comfortable compared to where I've been. Well, come on
into

the rest of the house. Oh, well, it's not necessary.

I'm here. I won't freeze to death. I'm not going to perish.

I thought for a while I'd perish out there. But you've rescued me from perishing. And so now, I'll just stay here in the entranceway, if you don't mind.

Well, look, there's no chairs here. But I'll sit here on the rug or on the overshoes in the closet. And you can sit here on the rug.

And after looking at me for a little while to see whether I'd somehow had escaped from a jacket with long strings on the back. You say, what do you mean to stay here? Well, look, you told me you had a new house.

I
see you have a new house.

I'm delighted with your new house. I'm in your new house. Now, I'm satisfied with it.

I'm not going to freeze to death out there. I'm rescued because I'm here. And after a moment, I can hear you say, now, Reedhead, when I talked to you and gave you that invitation last summer, I thought you had some brains.

But I'm beginning to seriously question it. Yes, you are in my new house. You're in the entranceway.

This is house. This is part of it. It's included in the plan.

And you're in it. And if you want to stay here, that's up to you. Be my guest.

But in there, I've got a comfortable living room and a family room and a dining room and a kitchen and a bedroom. And that too is part of the house. Now, if you're satisfied with the vestibule, be my guest.

But I'm going inside. That's exactly what the Apostle is saying here. You're in.

You've come inside the house. You're forgiven. You've passed from death to life.

Old things have passed away. All things have become new. You're no longer under the just judgment of God.

You've been forgiven of your past sins. And now you're inside the

house.

But, said he, I want you to realize how much more house there is than you thought you needed when you asked God if he'd take you in.

And so I just like to have you get a little glimpse of what's in the rest of the house. So what is he saying? When I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, your love unto all the saints, I started to pray for you. What? That the eyes of your understanding would be opened.

That you might know how vast and how marvelous and how complete is the provision that God has made for them that love him. Remember what we read in 2nd Corinthians 2.9? I hath not seen or ear heard, neither has it entered into the mind of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.

So what is he praying? That the eyes of our understanding will be opened. That we're going to know three things. The hope of his calling.

That is the expectation Christ had. That if we realized we couldn't save ourselves, we'd also realize we couldn't serve him in the mere energy of our personalities. And the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, his inheritance is the saints.

And he wants us to realize that what we're doing, or what he's doing through us, is to bring to him those that are going to comprise his inheritance. You see, we witnessed at one time thinking we were trying to rescue sinners from the hands of an angry God. Until we realized that what we were doing was lifting rebels into the hands of a patient, loving God who was seeking to bring men out of death into life.

That they might be part of the inheritance of his son. And he wants us to understand the riches of the glory of his inheritance as saints. And then the third thing that becomes so effective on this resurrection Easter day.

He wants us to know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us were to believe according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. It's all well and good for us to talk about the power that raised up Christ from the dead 2,000 years ago. It's important that we should understand in the view of history and in the perspective of scripture that there was a day when the Lord Jesus Christ, cold in death, was quickened by the

overshadowing
presence of the Father.

In that life which could not die returned to that cold, still body.
And
the chains that bound him in death were burst. And he stood forth in
the
glory of his resurrection triumph.

We must understand that. We have to realize that because that's the
day
that our salvation became effective. That's the day that our
justification became effective.

That's the day when our deliverance became effective. That day when
God
raised his son from the dead. But it's extremely important that we
should understand what the apostle Paul wanted the church at Ephesus
to
understand.

He wanted the eyes of their understanding opened that they might know
what they might experientially appropriate. What? That they might know
what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe.
According to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in
Christ
when he raised him from the dead.

Not only was our justification accomplished by the resurrection. Our
redemption certified, paid in full by the resurrection of the Lord
Jesus
Christ. But the provision was made whereby we could live more than
conquerors in this world that had not changed in its attitude toward
God's son.

If you think for a minute the world is any different now than it was
when it crucified the Lord of glory. You fail to understand the world
and the prince of this world. The God of this world who governs and
rules under that same canopy of darkness and hatred and evil that's
characterized him since he first revolted against God.

No, it hasn't changed. This world is no friend of God, no friend of
Christ, no friend of Christ. No friends of ours.

For us simply to have a legal justification is marvelous. Simply to
have
redemption is marvelous. To have the imputed righteousness of Christ,
that's marvelous.

But to be here justified, forgiven, pardoned and exposed to an enemy

whose attitude toward Christ has never changed. With nothing more than a legal, in the law courts of heaven, transaction to our benefit. Do you understand? It's wonderful to be justified.

It's wonderful to be forgiven. It's wonderful to have the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. That's glorious.

But if that's all, then we're left very, very naked. We're like someone that is sent out to battle against those that are in full and complete armor as were the medieval knights. And we have nothing but a little stick in our hand, hardly even a stick, nothing.

We're left there without arms, without protection, without might. And so what is he saying? Remember what Ephesus was, won't you? It was an evil city, a city given up wholly to the worship of Diana. Immorality was the rule of life, drunkenness, debauchery, every kind of corruption marked the social fabric of that place of Ephesus.

And here is a church, like a beautiful water lily floating on the top of a fetid, putrid, poisonous swamp. And it's a beautiful lily that somehow can feed from what's beneath. And there it is, all white.

And looking at it, one would say, oh, that must be a beautiful water to produce such a white lily. No, the water's putrid, the water's poisonous. The lily is white because the God of all grace has made it possible for a white lily to draw nourishment out of a fetid pond.

And so it is that the God of all grace has permitted a church to float, as it were, on the surface of a sewage city of Ephesus. And it's white and it's beautiful and it brings glory to God. But he wants them to understand that they're not just there as a flower of his planting, but they're also there as representatives of him.

And so he is praying his Paul that the eyes of their understanding might be opened, that they might know the exceeding greatness of his power to us were to believe. According to the working of his mighty power, why said he to the church at Ephesus and through them to us, the very same

power that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead is the power that's going to be shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost. It's the very same power that's going to give you strength to live for Christ in the midst of evil.

It's the power that's going to accompany the word that you speak in the name of Christ. It's the power that's going to accompany prayers offered in the name of Christ. It's that we might know the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.

Smith Wigglesworth was an Irish plumber filled with the spirit of God. Just a humble plumber who'd learned his trade as an apprentice and whose schooling had been completed when he'd learned to read and write and cipher enough to care for a plumber's arithmetic. And he met the Lord Jesus Christ and he went into the word and he sought the Lord and God filled him with the fullness of Christ.

And one day he was on the train going to a meeting. The train was also stopping at Derby for the races. And he got into a compartment.

He was alone. It wasn't long until someone joined him with all the racing forms and then two clergymen got on and they were talking about the races. And a strange sense that God wanted to do something came upon the heart of Smith Wigglesworth.

And he said that as he looked at these, he was reminded of the word in Ephesians, the first chapter, that we might know the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. And he said, Heavenly Father, there are three, two clergymen and a racing devotee all dead in their sins. Oh God, the same power that raised up Christ is needed in this compartment.

And he got out and he walked up and down the corridor two or three times as he was praying and asking God to work a miracle. And when he went back into that compartment and took his place again, the man in the checkered, loud checkered suit looked at him and put his racing form down. And he said, Sir, you've not said a word since I came into this compartment, but just seeing you convinces me of my sin.

Do you know how to pray for a sinner? And the two clergymen, each
neither looking at the other, said, And we are, I am convinced of my
sin
as well. Could you pray for me that I might know God as I perceive
without your saying a word that you know God? And as that train
clicked
along over the tracks, three sinners prayed the publicans prayer and
opened their heart to receive Jesus Christ. Why? Because a plumber
from
Ireland dared to believe that God meant it when he said that you might
know the exceeding greatness of his power to us who are to believe,
according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in
Christ
when he raised him from the dead.

But I want you to notice something else and set him far above all
principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is
named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come. And
so
the Lord Jesus Christ is indeed been exalted and given a throne above
that throne of his enemy and we're to understand that the very power
that raised up Christ from the dead is the power that's to be released
in our lives as we are commanded by the scripture with such verses
that
say resist the devil and he'll flee from you. Why? Why will he?
Because
of your union with Christ in his death.

You'll notice which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the
dead. I in my Bibles have marked that first two words of the second
chapter, and you. And I always draw a line up into the 20th verse and
tuck it in right there, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him
and you from the dead and set him and you at his own right hand in the
heavenlies, far above all principality and power and might and
dominion
and every name that is named.

You say but how can you do that? Well, I can do it because in the
second
chapter in the fifth and the sixth verses, we are told that by grace
are
he saved. We're quickened together with Christ and raised up together
and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ. So it's on you.

He wants us to understand that as he was crucified for us and buried
for
us and quickened for us and raised for us that we were with him and in
him. And so in that sense, we are seated together in the heavenlies in
him. That's our natural habitat and the place of Christ's exaltation

is
the place of our dwelling.

Remember what he said in John 15? You abide in me, you live in me, you dwell in me, you reside in me. In the second verse, third verse of this first chapter, he's blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. But most of us aren't living in the heavenlies, we're living under the circumstances instead of seated in heavenlies above all principality and power and might and dominion, every name that is named.

That's where he's blessed us with all spiritual blessings. He wants the eyes of your understanding open this Easter day to know what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward you, toward you. And know how desperately we need that power.

How desperately we need it. Not only power in witness and power in life, but also in prayer and in intercession and so on. I suppose for my wife and I and our daughters and children, this Easter has a remarkable new quality and character to it.

Because three weeks ago, this next Tuesday, our grandson was found in a little fish pond down in Chestertown, Maryland. Taken out, body had turned blue, his heart had stopped beating, he'd stopped breathing. He'd been in the water probably as long as 20 minutes, certainly longer than 10 minutes.

And taken, but the mother saying, no, no, I do not accept this, I do not accept this, I reject this. Dear friends, administering CPR and a certain Dr. Seamans from Washington College at home, never being home, but he loved the Lord Jesus and he felt he should go home. And his house was adjoining the yard where the fish pond was.

And he was on the rescue team. And so as the ladies drove his car to the hospital, he administered CPR and on the way, he got a heartbeat again. And then after some 40 minutes, they got breathing again.

The test showed no CO₂ in the blood at all. And you can't have life

without it. But he was breathing, his heart was beating.

The helicopter came from Johns Hopkins Hospital and took him across the bay into pediatric intensive care. And it was touch and go for 48 hours because of the filthy water, it caused pneumonia. They wanted to keep infection from the brain.

The CAT scans showed absolutely no brain damage. He cried on the way across, we were told, on the helicopter. And yesterday when we visited the family, he was running around, kicking a soccer ball, playing with his brothers and sisters.

Miracle makes resurrection have a new and practical meaning, different meaning. You see, if God raised up his son from the dead, how will he not with him freely give us all things? I learned a chorus years ago, there's nothing too hard for thee, dear Lord. There's nothing too hard for thee.

With thee is all the power and love. There's nothing too hard for thee.

That's what Paul wanted the church at Ephesus to know.

He wanted the eyes of their understanding open. That they might know the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe. According to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead and set him in his own right hand in the heavenlies.

Oh friend, if he spared not his son, but delivered him up for us all, how will he not with him freely give us all things? Shall we bow in prayer? Our heavenly Father, the basis of all blessing from thee, since that morning after that first pair revolted against thee, has been the anticipation that thou wouldst one day deliver thy son up for us all. So the sun rose, and the plants grew, and the world sustained life. And thou hast promised by the rainbow never to judge the world with a flood again.

And down across the centuries, thou hast continued to sustain life. And now in these end times, thou hast raised up thy son from the dead. All that thou hast done for man, all thou hast done for mine, all the privileges of prayer, all of the provisions of nature and of grace, are

because you gave your only begotten son.

And today we ask that the eyes of our understanding will indeed be opened. That we might realize the implications of the power that raised up Christ from the dead. That it's made available, oh that the eyes of our understanding might know the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.

To that end, Father, give us courage to face all of the opportunities and needs and challenges and privileges and problems that we may have. Not to measure them by what we are, but by who he is. Not to bring our strength to the task, but to permit him to let his resurrection life flow in and through us.

That in and through it all we might bring honor and praise and glory to his name. Thank you, Father, for this Easter day and for the joy that's ours. In remembering again that Christ is risen, he is risen indeed.

Amen.

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