

How Real Is The Resurrection To You

4/2010 Mark Beaird

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:12-28

12But 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. **16**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 to be pitied more than all men.

20But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. **21**For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. **22**For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. **23**But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. **24**Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. **25**For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. **26**The last enemy to be destroyed is death. **27**For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. **28**When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

No matter how much we seek to prove the reality of the resurrection, theologically, historically, or logically, the reality of, and the power of, the resurrection remains a personal experience.

Bruce Larson said, "The events of Easter cannot be reduced to a creed or philosophy. We are not asked to believe the doctrine of the resurrection. We are asked to meet this person raised from the dead. In faith, we move from belief in a doctrine to a knowledge of a person. Ultimate truth is a person. We met him. He is alive-"

Consider for a moment, the *realities* of believing in the resurrection.

I. WE MUST BE PERSONALLY PERSUADED OF THE REALITY OF THE RESURRECTION.

A. There were infallible proofs of the resurrection.

Acts 1:2-4 (NIV) **2** until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. **4** On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

List of Post-resurrection Appearances

To Mary Magdalene Jn 20:14-18; Mk 16:9

To the women returning from the tomb Mt 28:8-10

To Peter later in the day Lk 24:34; 1 Cor 15:5

To the disciples going to Emmaus in the evening Lk 24:13-31 To the apostles (except Thomas) Lk 24:36-45; Jn 20:19-24

To the apostles a week later (Thomas present) Jn 20:24-29

In Galilee to the seven by the Lake of Tiberias - Jn 21:1-23

In Galilee on a mountain to the apostles and 500 believers 1 Cor 15:6

At Jerusalem and Bethany again to James 1 Cor 15:7

At Olivet and the ascension Acts 1:3-12

To Paul near Damascus Acts 9:3-6; 1 Cor 15:8

To Stephen outside Jerusalem Acts 7:55

To Paul in the temple Acts 22:17-21; 23:11

To John on Patmos Rev 1:10-19

Merril F. Unger, [The New Unger's Bible Handbook](#), Revised by Gary N. Larson, Moody Press, Chicago, 1984, pp. 397-398.

B. But no matter how much proof –each must choose to believe in the face of unbelief.

18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. **19** For it is written:

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." **20** Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? **21** For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. **22** Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, **23** but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, **24** but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. **25** For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength. (NIV)

II. WE MUST BE POWERFULLY AFFECTED BY THE REALITY OF THE RESURRECTION.

A. The reality of the resurrection changes the whole direction of our life.

Like the first disciples, our greatest need is not just to see or hear about the resurrection, but to have the resurrection happen to us. **Lloyd Ogilvie says**, "The most powerful historical proof of the resurrection is the 'resurrected' disciples. Dull, defeated people became fearless, adventuresome leaders. Cowards became courageous; the timid became triumphant; the inept did the impossible.

Philippians 3:7-14: **7**But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. **8** What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. **10** I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

B. The reality of the resurrection changes the desire of our heart.

Paul continues in verse 12 “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. **13** Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, **14** I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

III. WE MUST BE PERMANITLY COMMITTED BECAUSE OF THE REALITY OF THE RESURECTION.

A. We cannot take a wait and see attitude.

B. We must always be ready to give an answer

1 Peter 3:14-16 (NIV) **14** But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened."
15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, **16** keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

Conclusion

As Vice President, George Bush represented the U.S. at the funeral of former Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. Bush was deeply moved by a silent protest carried out by Brezhnev's widow. She stood motionless by the coffin until seconds before it was closed. Then, just as the soldiers touched the lid, Brezhnev's wife performed an act of great courage and hope, a gesture that must surely rank as one of the most profound acts of civil disobedience ever committed: **She reached down and made the sign of the cross on her husband's chest.** There in the citadel of secular, atheistic power, the wife of the man who had run it all *hoped that her husband was wrong. She hoped that there was another life, and that that life was best represented by Jesus who died on the cross, and that the same Jesus might yet have mercy on her husband.* --Gary Thomas, *Christian Times*, October 3, 1994, p. 26.