

Yateley Baptist Church, Easter Sunday 12 April 2020

Call to Worship and Opening Prayer

Reading: John 20:1-18, ESV

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” ³So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going towards the tomb. ⁴Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples went back to their homes.

¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. ¹²And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. ¹³They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” ¹⁴Having said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” ¹⁶Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.

Hymn: Praise 2! 31

See, what a morning, gloriously bright
With the dawning of hope in Jerusalem
Folded the grave-clothes, tomb filled with light
As the angels announce, 'Christ is risen'
See God's salvation plan
Wrought in love, borne in pain, paid in sacrifice
Fulfilled in Christ, the man
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead

2 See Mary weeping, 'Where is He laid?'
As in sorrow she turns from the empty tomb
Hears a voice speaking, calling her name
It's the Master, the Lord raised to life again
The voice that spans the years
Speaking life, stirring hope, bringing peace to us
Will sound till He appears
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead

Stuart Townend & Keith Getty

3 One with the Father, Ancient of Days
Through the Spirit who clothes faith with
certainty
Honour and blessing, glory and praise
To the King crowned with pow'r and authority
And we are raised with Him
Death is dead, love has won, Christ has
conquered
And we shall reign with Him
For He lives: Christ is risen from the dead

Prayer

Hymn: Praise! 455

Christ is risen! Hallelujah!
Risen, our victorious Head!
Sing his praises! Hallelujah!
Christ is risen from the dead.
Gratefully our hearts adore Him
as his light once more appears,
bowing down in joy before Him,
rising up from griefs and tears:

Christ is risen! Hallelujah!
Risen, our victorious Head!
Sing his praises! Hallelujah!
Christ is risen from the dead.

J S B Monsell (1811-1875)

2 Christ is risen! All the sadness
Of his earthly life is gone;
through the open gates of gladness
he returns, the living One.
Death and hell before him bending,
See him rise, the victor now!
Angels, all His way attending,
wonder at his wounded brow:

3 Christ is risen! We shall never
Into hell's dark regions fall;
We are Christ's – in him for ever
we have triumphed over all.
All the doubting and dejection
of our fearful hearts have ceased;
on his day of resurrection
let us rise and keep the feast:

Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:12-20, ESV

¹² Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁵ We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Hymn: Praise 2! 7

In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My comforter, my all in all
Here, in the love of Christ, I stand

2 In Christ alone, who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones he came to save
'Til on that cross, as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin, on him, was laid
Here, in the death of Christ, I live

3 There in the ground, his body lay
Light of the world, by darkness, slain
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave, he rose again
And as he stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am his and he is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

4 No guilt in life, no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man
Could ever pluck me from his hand
'Til he returns or calls me home
Here, in the power of Christ, I stand

Stuart Townend & Keith Getty

Sermon: 1 Corinthians 15:12-20 – Why Did Jesus Rise, and Why Does it Matter?

“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.” (1 Corinthians 15:17)

“If Christ has not been raised... you are still in your sins.” v17

History tells us Jesus lived; experience tells us that people die.

C.F. Evans, a contemporary writer, has said, "To a greater extent than it is anything else, Christianity is a religion of the resurrection. More than anything else, we count on the reality of the resurrection. It is attacked. It is denied. It is ridiculed. It is ignored. It is explained away constantly, because it is the vital point in Christian faith that holds up everything else; and, naturally, the enemy hits at that reality."

“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?” v12

Consequence 1: Jesus is Still Dead

Christ Himself has not been raised. V13

If Jesus didn't rise, then everything that Christians believe and do is a waste of time – everyone who has ever lived as a Christian has wasted the one life they have.

If Jesus is still dead, we have no hope in life or in death.

Can we really please a perfect God? Do we really deserve to enter a perfect heaven if we haven't lived a perfect life?

Consequence 2: Preaching is Pointless

And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless. V14

The good news of Christ stands and falls on the resurrection.

If the resurrection of Jesus didn't happen, then giving people hope through it is just plain evil.

"Salvation is found in no one else [only in Jesus], for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." Acts 4 v 12

If Jesus didn't rise, He didn't do as He promised, so there is no atonement, no redemption, no justification, and no nothing. We're dead in our trespasses and sins.

Consequence 3: Your Faith is Useless

If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. V14

If Christ is dead, it follows that He can't save us and we're believing something that is a pretence.

There is no Christian faith.

Those who have given their lives for the faith have wasted them. How tragic!

Consequence 4: We Can't Trust The Apostles

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." V15

Those who wrote the Gospels and Paul in particular have all claimed that they have seen the risen Jesus. If Jesus isn't risen, we cannot trust anything that they have written.

Either the bible's all true, or none of its trustworthy.

Consequence 5: You Are Still In Your Sins

“If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.” V17

If Christ is not raised, the bonds of sin remain unbroken. You are on the road to hell and there is nothing that you, or anyone else can do about it.

There can be no forgiveness, until the penalty is paid.

So if Christ didn't rise, the Father didn't approve and we will die in our sins.

Consequence 6: Nobody Has Gone To Heaven

“Those who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.” V18

The resurrection is the basis of all Christian hope – without it, we have nothing, and everything we hold so dear, as believers is built on a lie.

Consequence 7: We should be pitied

“If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.” V19

We, as Christians, have one hope in this life – if Christ isn't risen, we've ended up being utter fools.

If it is false, then we should be scorned, derided, looked down on for our stupidity for believing such lies.

But... Christ Did Rise From The Dead!

“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” V20

Christ has indeed been raised from the dead! All of the concerns brought up if Christ is still dead are no concern at all – in fact, the glorious opposite of each and every one of them is true.

Christ is alive and reigning, that He is at the right hand of the Father, even now, interceding on our behalf.

Jesus is alive, the word of God speaks with power and authority.

There is nothing more important or precious than having a personal trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is alive, as the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep, you too will rise if your faith is in Him.

We can take the promises from His word and the comforts and we can apply them to our lives, knowing that He is able to fulfil them, as the living, reigning, Messiah.

“Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord, will be saved” Acts 2 v 21

“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1)

God the Father proved that the sacrifice Christ made was acceptable and pleasing. He is our substitute.

He is the firstfruits and one day, we shall be like Him, for we will see Him as He is.

When He rose, He proved that He has power over death, power to save those who trust in Him as their Saviour and Lord.

Are the benefits of His resurrection yours?

Hymn: Praise! 462

I know that my Redeemer lives:

what joy this great assurance gives!

He lives, he lives, who once was dead,

he lives, my ever-living head.

2 He lives, triumphant from the grave;

he lives, eternally to save;

he lives to bless me with his love,

he lives to plead for me above.

3 He lives, my kind, wise, constant friend,

he lives and loves me to the end;

he lives, and while he lives I'll sing,

'Jesus, my Prophet, Priest, and King.'

4 He lives and grants me daily breath;

he lives and I shall conquer death:

he lives my dwelling to prepare;

he lives to bring me safely there.

5 He lives, all glory to his name!

He lives, unchangeably the same!

What joy this great assurance gives:

I know that my Redeemer lives!

Samuel Medley (1738-1799)

Closing Prayer