

The Prince of Life

by David Guzik

David Guzik's sermon emphasizes the significance of Jesus as the Prince of Life and the necessity of repentance for spiritual transformation.

Duration: 18:41

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 3:6-8, Acts 3:15, Acts 3:19

Topics: "Resurrection Power", "Faith Commitment"

Description

In this sermon, Peter preaches to a crowd after the miraculous resurrection of Jesus Christ. He emphasizes that it should not be surprising that Jesus rose from the dead because he is the prince of life. Peter explains that despite their best efforts, humans cannot overcome death, and it was impossible for the grave to hold Jesus. He encourages the crowd to believe in Jesus and invites them to make a commitment to him.

Transcript

Acts chapter 3, verse 15. Matter of fact, why don't I start at verse 14, where Peter says, But you denied the Holy One and the just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. There's few more engaging people in the whole Bible than the Apostle Peter.

And this is the man preaching the sermon here in Acts chapter 3. He and his companion John had gone to the temple to pray, and as they came to the temple, they came upon a man that they had seen maybe a hundred times before, a paralyzed man who used to beg right outside of a gate that was known as the Gate Beautiful. And as Peter saw him, he was uniquely touched by the Holy Spirit to not give the man any money. I suppose that didn't take a unique touch of the Holy Spirit, because Peter didn't have any money to give him.

But he was uniquely touched by the Holy Spirit to do something else. And what he did was he said to the man, I don't have any silver and gold for you, but what I do have, I can give to you. He said in the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk.

And Peter grabbed the man's hand and pulled him up, and instantly the Lord God healed the man, gave strength to his legs and to his feet, and the man could walk. And he went around walking and leaping and praising God, just so excited that nobody could believe such a spectacular miracle could be done. And as

the crowd gathered around, because there was a big crowd gathering to see such an amazing thing like that, Peter used the opportunity to preach a message to them.

And as he preaches the message, he says, listen, it's no surprise. You shouldn't be surprised to say that this has happened because it's not us at all. It's not our power, our work that's done this.

It's the name of Jesus. And speaking of Jesus, you crucified him. Now, that's quite a way to begin a message, isn't it? To look at the same people that crucified Jesus, maybe two or three months after his crucifixion, and to look at them square in the eye and say, you crucified him.

That wouldn't make its way into the modern textbooks of preaching today. Today, they tell us preachers that what we should do is flatter our audience, you know, tell you how great you are and how wonderful you are. But the problem is that if we were all so great and wonderful, then Jesus wouldn't need to die on a cross for us.

The great and wonderful people didn't need an atoning savior. No, it's people like us, people who are sinners, people who have failed God, because you failed God and I failed God. We're the ones who need a savior.

And when Peter says in verse 15 that they killed the prince of life, it could just as much be us. Friends, when you look back to the pages of history, don't go and blame the Romans as if it were just a few Roman soldiers responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. And please don't go and blame the Jewish leaders of Jesus's day, though they did hand them over to Pilate.

If you want to blame anybody for the death of Jesus, blame me. Then look in the mirror and blame yourself. Then blame everybody sitting around you, because it was for our sin that Jesus went to the cross.

He wasn't a victim of circumstances. He could have stopped the whole proceedings at any moment that he wanted to. But he went to the cross out of love for you and I. And if you notice, it's almost an ironic phrase that Peter uses in verse 15.

Did you catch the irony in it? He says you killed the prince of life. How do you do that? How do you take the prince of life? Not a glorious, though often neglected title for Jesus. I can't think of any songs we sing that exalt Jesus as the prince of life.

Maybe somebody would be inspired to write one, but but wouldn't that be lovely when we think of Jesus as the prince of life? By the way, some of your Bibles may say author of life. The New International Version says that the New Living Translation says that the ancient Greek word that's translated there, author or prince, it could really be translated either way. It has the idea of someone who's a ruler and a ruler because they're first in priority, either as the author or as the prince or whatever.

But it has somebody who's first in preeminence and therefore a ruler. And we see that Jesus is first in preeminence when it comes to life, he's got life like no one else. It's amazing to think that nobody could take the life of Jesus from him.

That's exactly what he told us. He said, I lay my life down of itself. Nobody takes it from me.

You couldn't kill Jesus, he had to yield up his life because he was the prince of life. And if he's the prince of life, it means not only that he has it uniquely within himself, but he has it just to us to give as well. He can give you life.

Some of you may be very mistaken this morning because you think you're alive and you're not. You say, well, wait a minute. I just pinched myself.

I know I'm alive. I can make fog on a mirror and such. And no, that's not what I'm talking about.

Because you may be very alive physically here this this morning, you may be very alive mentally, you may be very alive emotionally and such. But unless the prince of life has touched your life, you're not alive spiritually. You're spiritually dead.

And it's an amazing thing being spiritually dead, because when you're spiritually dead, you don't know exactly what it's like to be alive until you're made alive. It's foggy. It's a theory.

You can't grab hold of it completely. But this morning, the prince of life is here to bring you life. And then he can give you life abundantly.

After all, he's the prince of life. He has a lot of life to give. If somebody was the prince of fame, they'd have a lot of fame to give.

He was the prince of fortune. They had a lot of money to give you. Well, Jesus is the prince of life.

He sustains our life. He rules over our life. He's the prince of life.

And so he couldn't stay dead. It was impossible that that grave should hold him. Absolutely impossible.

We took our best shot at it. We killed the prince of life and he consented to be killed. But every effort of ours was foolish.

You get more benefit from bending your head up against the wall than trying to kill the prince of life. It just won't work. He could not remain in that tomb.

He couldn't remain shackled by death. There's no way that that could happen. Now, how do we know that we're not just talking about a fairy tale, a romantic story from the past? Look at it.

It tells you why you can know this right there in verse 15. Did you see it? And killed the prince of life whom God raised from the dead. Of which we are witnesses.

See, there's an amazing phenomenon about the fact of a testimony of a witness. And it's that the veracity or the or the validity of the testimony of a witness does not diminish over time. When the witness gives his testimony, providing that the witness is clear in his mind, providing that it's not so late after the time that he gives his testimony, that he's forgotten things.

But when a witness gives his testimony, that testimony is valid for 100 years after the event. There you are. You're walking down the street and there's a traffic accident right in front of you.

One car runs a red light and the two cars collide and you run out there and you make sure nobody's hurt. But boy, they sure are mad at each other and you keep them. You know, you hope they're not going to come to blows or you hope nobody's carrying a gun or anything like that and everything seems OK.

And the police are coming and the police question you and they want to know, well, whose fault was it? Who ran the red light? And you explain it to them all. And the policeman writes it down in his report and he takes your testimony. He takes the statement from the witness.

I tell you, you could dig up that police report a hundred years later and it would be just as true. Because you're a liable witness and you made the testimony. Friends, it doesn't matter that the apostles witnessed this and testified of it almost 2000 years ago.

Their testimony is just as true. And I'd say, well, I don't know that I don't know if that's good enough. Well, well, absolutely, it should be good enough.

Say, well, is it provable by science that Jesus rose from the dead? Remember several years ago when the Shroud of Turin was a big thing and they under the Shroud of Turin and they were going to examine it and photograph it and do all kinds of sophisticated laboratory work on it. And I'd say they did. They tested everything they could on the Shroud of Turin.

They looked at it this way and that way. X-ray is radiation. And all these different things that they could do to man, they examined it every possible way they could.

And the results were inconclusive. Some things argued for being, wow, this really could be from the time of Jesus and such. And other things argued, well, we're not so sure.

We don't know. And so the skeptic stands back and he says, well, I knew it. You know, you couldn't prove the resurrection of Jesus by science.

Oh, but is science the only way we prove things, is it now? You take that traffic accident that we just talked about there. If they try to take it to court and determine who's at fault, do you think they're going to determine it by science? Well, I suppose they could. They could go and do a metallurgy report and find out which cars collide and do a skid analysis and all the rest.

But they won't. What will they do to establish the veracity of they'll just ask for witnesses? Friends, there's scientific evidence and scientific evidence is important, but there's also legal evidence and beyond legal evidence, there's historical evidence. And there's many, many things that you can't prove by scientific evidence, but they're absolutely true and certain because they're established by legal evidence and they're established by historic evidence.

But what if somebody were to say, well, I don't believe that that traffic accident happened because I didn't see the lab report. He said, what are you talking about? I'm a witness. I saw it right in front of my eyes.

I testified in a court of law. It should be good enough. Then again, you have the historical analysis and and you take a historical event, say Washington crossing the Delaware.

You say, well, let's go prove it by science. And you go to the shores of the Delaware River and you look for DNA of George Washington somewhere around there. Well, you can't find it, can you? Well, I guess he never crossed the Delaware, did he? We can't find scientific evidence.

No, there's historical evidence. Look, it's written about. It's described.

It's affected these people. It changed the course of this matter in this history. It's absolutely provable by history.

So, friends, can I give you scientific evidence that Jesus Christ rose from the dead? No. But you believe many, many, many things. The most important things you believe in their life, you believe, apart from scientific evidence, I can give you absolutely irrefutable historical evidence and legal evidence.

That Jesus Christ rose from the dead. But beyond all that. I'll give you personal evidence.

It's changed my life. You know, Easter is a very special day for me because more than 25 years ago on Easter Sunday, I committed my life to Jesus Christ and he changed me. The changes didn't all come at once.

And as my wife and kids will tell you, they're not all completed, all but they're real. Oh, but I am a different person because of what Jesus Christ did in my life. I am absolutely satisfied that I know Jesus in my mind and in my heart.

I know it by historical revelation, confirmed by personal experience. And you can know it, too. How? Well, let Peter finish the sermon.

Go down to verse 19 in Acts chapter three. He says it very plainly there. He says.

Repent, therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. This is the response you must make. You see, this completes the equation because I could prove to you by historic evidence or legal evidence that the fact happened that Jesus rose from the dead.

I could prove to you the fact. But but it would leave the great question out there. Why? Why? So I'm sitting at home reading a book on the couch, as I like to do in the evenings, a lot from the kitchen, you can hear the whistling of the kettle on the stove.

And my wife comes to me and she says, well, why is the kettle whistling? And I can say, well, you know, honey, the combustion of the gas underneath the kettle. It transfers heat to the bottom of the kettle. And it's a really good conductor and it heats up the molecules of water within the kettle and they get racing around.

And some of them transform into into the gaseous form of water and the steam and they liquefy and it builds up. The pressure builds up within the kettle and then it forces the pressure outside of this little hole that has a special safe on it to make a whistling sound. And that's why the kettle is whistling.

Or I could just tell her because I wanted some cocoa. Now, you see, in the first answer, I told her why the kettle or what was happening when the kettle boiled. I didn't tell her why.

Friends, I could establish the fact of Jesus's resurrection, but why? Because you need a savior and you know what? If you deny the fact that you need a savior. You could agree all day long that he's risen from the dead, but what difference does it make? You would just as well say that he died in vain and rose in vain because it doesn't really make any difference to you. So what do you need to do? Repent and be converted.

Now, repentance is something that you must do. You must turn when Jesus Christ comes to your life, he wants to change your life and make it different than before. You can't have your life touched by the son of God and have it stay just the same.

It's absolutely impossible. He will change your life. I told the story of a famous gangster named Mickey Cohen, who was being witnessed to in the 50s among a group of Christians in Hollywood and around Los Angeles.

And this man, Mickey Cohen, was a very infamous gangster. Lots of rackets and gambling and prostitution and extortion and the whole thing that gangsters do. But Mickey Cohen wanted to come to Jesus and somebody told him, man, all you got to do is receive Jesus in your heart.

That's all there is to it. There's nothing more than that. And Mickey Cohen, well, who could pass that up? And so he did it.

And he asked Jesus into his heart and he just kept on doing his gangster business. And some folks came to him and said, Mr. Cohen, I have to tell you, you have to give up this gangster business. And he got very offended, extremely offended.

He said, well, listen, there's the Christian fireman over there and there's the Christian politician over there. And here's the Christian doctor over here. I'm a Christian gangster.

He said, well, well, whatever it is you've been told, it isn't the whole gospel. Repent, which means to turn and be converted. I love how he puts it.

He didn't say convert yourself. You can't convert yourself. Christianity isn't a great big call out to you.

Now, go out and turn over a new leaf. You know, come on now, pull yourself up by your bootstraps. No, it's surrender yourself to the son of God and surrender yourself to his converting power.

Now, if you have no interest in being converted, you have no interest in being saved. If you want to say, Jesus, I, I need you. I want, as he says in the rest of verse 19, I want my sins blotted out.

I want those times of refreshing from the Lord. Don't you see what you do? You come to God and you say, I repent. I want to turn from my ways and God, I need you to convert me.

I cannot convert myself. Jesus, won't you come and change my life? Now, there may be some of you this morning, and quite honestly, you, you think this is very good for some folks. But not for you, you just don't see that you need to be converted, you don't see that you need to change.

You are the one that I prayed for last night. You are the one that I prayed for, that God would show you your need. Because apart from God showing you your need, nothing can really change.

So, friends, let's conclude our time together right now. I'm going to pray. As I pray, I'm going to give an invitation for those who would like to make a commitment to Jesus Christ.

I'd like the prayer team to come on up front here this morning while I pray so that they're ready to receive those who would like to come forward for prayer when we dismiss service. Let me pray. Father, what a glorious fact it is that Jesus Christ is the Prince of Life, that nothing could keep him in that tomb.

Not the best guards of the Romans, not the best plans of the religious leaders. Lord, nothing, nothing at all could keep him in that tomb. And so, Father, at this time, I ask for a richness in the outpouring of your spirit.

And that, Lord, you would speak to hearts that need this morning to repent and be converted. Lord, won't you speak to them to come and to receive your goodness. We praise you, Lord.

And we ask for you to do this good work in our midst. In Jesus name. Amen.

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