

Easter Revisited

by Thaddeus Barnum

Thaddeus Barnum's sermon emphasizes the victory of Christ over death and the hope of eternal life for believers, encouraging them to confront their fears with faith.

Duration: 28:43

Scripture: Revelation 1:17

Topics: "Easter"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher addresses the fear and anxiety that many people have about death. He emphasizes that fear of death is not part of God's plan, as God is the giver of life. The preacher explains that sin entered the world through one man, leading to death, but through Jesus Christ, believers have the hope of eternal life. He encourages listeners to trust in God's grace and power, and to boast in their weaknesses so that the power of Christ may dwell in them.

Transcript

Almighty God, Almighty Father, we thank you and praise you that your grace is sufficient, that your power is made perfect in weakness, and so we will all the more gladly boast in our weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell within us. So let it be. Open your word and feed our souls.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Good morning. Oh, I'd love it if you could turn me down a little bit, that would be great.

It's so good for Erlan and for both of us to be here with you. Ever since Rob asked me to come to the pulpit today, I have been very hard-pressed with a message. It may just be for one or two of you, so the rest of you can use your iPhones and do what you do, but I think that there might be someone here today who's dealing with fear and anxiety, especially afraid to die.

It's everywhere. It's in the newspapers, it's the killings in Charleston, the killings in Chattanooga. Just this past week, our dear friend Bob Hines, who went off with his wife and family to Hendersonville in March, soon to be diagnosed with a fourth stage cancer, and then on Wednesday, our dear brother died.

I remember being seven years old and waking up at night. We had a beautiful family, a lovely family, but I was suddenly stricken as a child that I was going to wake up and my mother and my father were going to die, and I couldn't bear it. This past 10 days ago, an 11-year-old boy had to go for a CAT scan to see if the

cancer had come back.

11 years old, 11 years old, to go back and to hear. Back last November, last November when he went back, the doctor had to tell him that the cancer had returned, and he cried. They were able to surgically deal with it, and now he comes back one more time, one more CAT scan, is it back.

Many of us deal and wrestle with the anxiety and with the fears of death. Just fear and anxiety alone, but oftentimes the root cause of these things goes back to the most substantive one, the one that is the source of them all, the fountainhead of them all, the fear to die. That's why I come to the with this gospel text from John chapter 11, Lazarus has died.

Always here in the setting of the tomb, of this place where this dearly beloved one has died, and it was his good friend, and here Martha comes running out, and she says, if only you had been here, Lord, if only you had been here. And Jesus, he responds by saying, you'll find this in your text, your brother will rise again. And she says, I know, I know he will rise.

In the day of the resurrection, on that last day, I know he will rise. And he said, I am, I am the resurrection, I am the life. The problem is, as much as we believe that, when we're faced with death, when it's either the news that has come to us by a doctor or by something, or it's the news of a friend or a tragedy, so many of us are actually shaped in our soul, because growing up, someone we loved died.

And we started asking the question, why? Why? We turned to God, we heard no answer, and we turned away from God, because we felt it was unfair. And our soul got shaped by that trauma to us, and shaped in our view of God. He's a monster.

Look what he did to us. There's no answer why. And we become imperiled.

We distance ourselves from him. We go through life with the grief that forms and shapes our soul, and we go to the counselors, and all the counselors can say to us is, accept it. Death is part of life.

Accept it. They try to help us, they medicate us, they give us things for fear and anxiety. It just becomes part of the normal routines of life.

But do you accept it? My dear friends, how do you approach it? I will tell you this with utter certainty, this is not God's plan. Did you hear me? From the beginning of time, God is life. He breathed in his life-giving spirit.

He made us in the image of him who is life. This has always been his commanding the blessing of eternal life. We were made immortal.

We were made imperishable. But we are also given by being in that image back in the Garden of Eden. Do not turn away from me.

Do not rebel. Do not eat from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for certainly on the day that you eat of that, Genesis 2 17, on the day that you eat of it, you shall die. This was never his intent.

And the way that Scripture brings it out to us in Romans 5 verse 12, listen carefully to this, this is how God sees it. God sees it. Not the secular counselors, not the secular world, not the secular mind.

How God sees it. Sin entered into the world through one man and death through sin. They have always been inexorably linked.

The wages of sin is. Romans 6 23, this is our first memory verse when we were three years old. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

3 23, 6 23, the wages of sin is death. I see the memorization class has not begun. It's always been this case.

When we sin, we die. And this is what happened. Our forebears, who were given the spirit of life, the law of the spirit of life, exchanged it for the law of sin and death.

And sin and death came into our bodies, and we became from imperishable to perishable. From immortal to mortal, we passed from life unto death. And this has been always the story.

Let me give you some biblical foundations for this. The one you already know. My dear friends, this should not be news to you.

I don't care how old you are. You're going to die. No argument.

Excellent. But there's a rule about this, and I hate this rule. None of us know the day of our death.

80, 70, 9, 2. It has no partiality. The rich, the poor, the young, the old. There's nothing we can do about it.

The second point I would like to make is this. That in the Bible, death is called a place. Outside the Garden of Eden, not only did the law of sin and death come into our bodies, it came into all creation.

We have just spent five trillion dollars to go to Pluto to find out if there's life. There's not. It's a rock in space, dear friends.

I read my Bible. There's only one who is the author of life, but there is a place outside the Garden of Eden. It's called the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Here in this life, but there's also this other place that we never talk about. For Jesus holds up something in the Bible at one point, the book of Revelation chapter 1 verse 18. He shows us the keys of death and of Hades.

This place, not just in this life where we see death and corruption everywhere, but that place outside where death takes us. What's that like? That place in the next life called death, where death reigns, where Hades reigns. The keys of death and Hades.

Yes, it's called in the Scriptures a place. The third thing the Bible calls it is power, the power of death. You'll find this in Hebrews 2 14 and 15, that we need someone to render powerless him who has the power of death, that is the devil.

Someone to render powerless him who has the power of death, that behind the power of death is none other than the devil himself, and might deliver those who through fear of death have been subject to slavery all their lives. My friends, I wonder, I wonder if this is true of you. It's true of me.

Haven't you known this all of your life, the fear of death? Have you been fooling yourself? The power of death, the fear of death, who will render this one powerless? 1 Corinthians 15 calls it the stink. Where, oh

death, is your victory? Where, oh death, is your sting? It's always been this story. It always comes with the power to hold us in the slave camps of fear.

Always. And that's why fourth point is there's a law. There's always been this law of sin and death.

The way Paul describes it in 1 Corinthians 15 verse 50 is this, I declare to you brothers and sisters, the perishable cannot inherit the imperishable, nor does the mortal inherit the immortal. It doesn't happen. There's a law that goes on.

We are not able. Sin has come. It has come into our bodies.

The law of sin and death has reigned inside of us, and we will most certainly die. If you're wealthy, you can't write a check and tell it to go away. You may be able to buy some time, but you can't send it away.

The bright and the wise haven't done it. There's nobody on the face of the planet on some mountain. Ah, they discovered that yogurt and raisins, it does the trick.

Yogurts, raisins, and carrots, have them every day and you'll never die. 1895, just send it right in with a coupon. People always have their plans, don't they? But it comes to all of us.

And that's why the fifth point behind what Lisa, the Bible describes as this fear, this power, this reigning principle over us, this law of sin and death, it actually does an extraordinary thing. The scriptures suddenly personify death into a person, into an actual person. You'll find this in Revelation 6 when the four horsemen go out, and that fourth horseman, that fourth horse with the pale, sickly, ashen color, and that horse has a rider whose name is death, whom the Bible calls the last enemy.

This is the one who has tormented our people. This is the one who has, like old Goliath, he has gone out and defied the ranks of Israel. He has shouted, you are under my power.

You are under my authority. Holding us in his slave camps and no one, no one can actually wrestle, no one can deal. All that Goliath ever does with his huge stature is he scares us.

That's what he does. He scares us and he says, give me a man. Just give me a man.

If he can take me down, then fine, I'm done. I'm yours, but if he cannot, then I shall reign. Give me a man.

I love that story because there comes a man in that story, and his name is David. There comes a man in that story who says, do not let your heart tremble anymore. I shall go and fight.

Oh, if there was a Pentecostal in this church, I would have gotten a hallelujah just about then, and I'll tell you why. Because down through history and down through time, there has never been a man until we heard that cry, that beautiful sound of that cry in Bethlehem. Charles Wesley caught that cry, and he said these words, Hark the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn King, veiled in flesh the Godhead see.

Hail the incarnate deity, pleased as man with man to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel. Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings, born that man no more shall die. And the Pentecostals have come out.

You see that sound of the baby in Bethlehem? He has come, son of David, to stand and fight the fight that nobody else can fight, and to look death straight in the eyes and say first and foremost, you cannot have

me. He is born, my friends, God incarnate, born as one of us without sin. He is the Holy One, the unblemished, the unstained, the undefiled.

He is born not under the law of sin and death. He is born under the Spirit of life, by the Holy Spirit, conceived by the Holy Spirit. He does not have the bondage that you and I have.

He is not born of sin. He doesn't have it going through his body. Hear how Paul says it in 2nd Corinthians 5, he who knew no sin, he who knew no sin.

So when death comes to this son of David and roars and say I shall take you down, he says on what grounds? You have no legal grounds over me. Go away. Ah, but you say so why then did he die? Why did our Lord then suffer death? I thought you said, I thought you said he should not die.

Death has no reign over him. It does not. But from time immemorial before the foundations of the earth, let's tell about the plan of God that one day his son would come and the prophet Isaiah would come true.

The Lord would lay upon him the iniquity of us all. Your sin and my sin. Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

The pure spotless Lamb has taken from you the sin that has pervaded your soul so that you would not have to die. He who knew no sin became sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in him. We run to Good Friday where we hear the words, it is finished.

He accomplished it. He did it all. He accomplished.

But the women, they went to the tomb that morning because it's chronic inside of us. Death always wins. Nobody's ever defeated death.

They went because it's what we do. We take the spices and we anoint the body. They got to the tomb and it was still dark.

The angel of the Lord appeared. He is not here. He has risen.

Just like he said. The death that he died was the death for us all. Paul says it this way in 2nd Corinthians 5 14.

One died, therefore all died. In Hebrews 2, by the grace of God that he might taste death for everyone. The Son of David has come.

You do not need to be afraid anymore when the devil and the death and the power of death and the fear of death come and they say you have sinned. You are guilty. You are guilty for what you have done.

You can actually look death and sin and the devil in the eyes and say you are right. But there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Why? Well the Spirit of life has come and set us free from the law of sin and death.

And this became the news that went everywhere. Jesus Christ is alive. Not just he's alive but he's now he who took our sin and our death on him has now imparted life to us.

He has given that resurrected life to be inside of, yes, these mortal bodies. Still mortal. Are you with me? They're still mortal.

Do you know that? They're still decaying. Are you aware of it? Oh the Pentecostals are quiet now. This is the promise of Scripture.

Our bodies are decaying but our inner man's being renewed day by day. Why? Because Romans 8 teaches us so plainly the spirits of him who raised Jesus from the dead now indwells us. And he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to the mortal body through his spirit who indwells us.

And one day, dear Christian, if you are a Christian, if you know Christ for yourself as a Savior and Lord, one day this body will go down to the ground, dust to dust, ashes to ashes. But here comes the news. We shall not die.

It shall not have power over us. Don't you remember how Stephen died? Do you remember it in Acts chapter 7? I think he died in 7. He beheld the Son of Glory. He beheld the Prince of Glory.

Our Lord and our Savior, his body went to the ground and he was present with Jesus. And out went the apostles to tell everybody about the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ with great power. People were coming to repent of their sin, turning their sin over to Christ, and to allow this new life, this born-again life, to infill, to come inside of them.

Mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die, born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth. And out they went. Out they went to declare that Jesus Christ has been revealed and he has come and abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through this gospel.

There he is in the book of Revelation appearing to John in his glory. And he says to John, do not be afraid. I am the first and the last and the living one.

I was dead. Behold, I'm alive forevermore. And I have the keys of death and Hades.

I love that part. The devil doesn't have those keys anymore. Our Lord does.

He holds the keys today. Our Lord does. Our Lord does.

Yes, he does. Yes, he does. All the devil did, but our Lord has rendered him powerless.

Our Lord then can come to us and deliver you and me from the fear and bondage of those slave camps, so that we can hear the sound ringing in our ears. That wonderful sound, that beautiful sound. I declare to you, brothers, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Listen, I tell you a sleep, but we will all be changed in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. The perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written shall come true, death has been swallowed up in victory.

Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin. The power of sin is the law, but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Goliath, you can scare our children no more.

In the churches that we planted in Pittsburgh and Connecticut, always at the end of the service, the deacon would rise up and the deacon would say these words, let us go forth into the world rejoicing in the power of the Spirit. Hallelujah, hallelujah. Why are you Christians rejoicing in the power of the Spirit? What kind of hallmark card isn't it? All you little frivolous rejoicers, what does that mean? I'll tell you what it means.

This is right from 1st Corinthians 15:57. Thanks be to God, He's given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. He's given us the victory.

This is the message that we tell the world. You do not have to die in your sins. If you turn to Christ, you don't have to die in your sins, but you can know that victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, life to life.

And be part of that story one day when we shall hear that news that God shall wipe every tear from their eyes and there will no longer be any death. No more mourning, no more sorrow, no more crying, no more pain. The first things have passed, have passed away.

Our Lord has come. Our Lord has done this. He has given us this victory.

And yet, my friends, so many of us live day by day in the slave camps, still hearing the shouts of death coming alongside those that we love, who are slipping away from us with dementia, or slipping away through some disease, or the sudden news of an accident, or just the fear inside of us. We live and the poor secular counselors, they come and all they can do is teach us to accept these things. And they give us medication to help us with these things.

So many of the people I pastor and I counsel get so fixated on the question, why did this happen? Why? Why the suffering? Why so young? Why when I was so young? Why did this happen? I don't understand it. Why did this happen? And my job has always been the same. I don't always have answers to why, but I always have the answer to who.

My dear friend, if you're stuck in the why right now, if you're in the bondage of that fear right now, I can't help you with why you're suffering. I can only help you with who can stand with you in the suffering. In the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.

Thou art with me, my shepherd, my risen shepherd. My friends, we are different. We don't need to medicate our people.

We simply come in weakness and bow before the cross of Jesus. We come before that empty tomb and we watch him do what nobody else can do. Speak peace into that fear.

It's okay. I have dealt with this. Don't be afraid.

I will stand with you. Dear friends, please turn your life to Christ. If you're engaged in sin today, stop it.

Repent of it and let Jesus Christ come and fill you. He bore it on Calvary. Let him bear it now and run to him, for he is just who he said he is.

I am the resurrection. I am the life. If anyone believes in me, even if he dies, yet will he live.

And if anyone lives and believes in me, he shall never die. Do you believe this? Do you believe this? Our son of David has come. The name of the Lord be praised.

Goliath, you can scare us no more.

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