

All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 79

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the centrality of the resurrection of Jesus as the foundation of Christian faith and hope for believers.

Duration: 25:25

Scripture: Matthew 28:1

Topics: "Resurrection Power", "Gospel Truth"

Description

This sermon delves into the profound significance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, emphasizing how it is the most important event in human history. It explores the unique nature of Jesus' resurrection compared to other instances of raising from the dead, highlighting the transformation of his body and the eternal victory over death. The sermon underscores the importance of including the resurrection in the preaching of the gospel, as it is a foundational truth that gives believers hope for the future and assurance of their righteousness before God. It also challenges believers to maintain a blameless conscience in light of the hope of resurrection, reflecting a genuine belief in the power and reality of Christ's victory over death.

Transcript

We turn once again to Matthew's Gospel and Chapter 28, continuing our study in all that Jesus taught. And we were looking last, in our last study, at how the tomb of Jesus was secured by the Roman soldiers at the request of the Pharisees and the chief priests to make sure that the body of Jesus was not stolen by the disciples. God arranged for that so that there would be no doubt about the resurrection.

The sovereignty of God uses even the tactics and schemes of the enemy, of the enemies of the Gospel. Matthew 28, 1, after the Sabbath, that is the Saturday, this was the regular Sabbath. Before that, there was a special Sabbath on Friday, which was a Sabbath because of the Feast of Unleavened Bread following the Passover.

So Thursday Christ died, Friday and Saturday, three days and three nights, and Sunday morning, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. You know, they had brought spices and all. Because there was no opportunity during the Sabbath days to go and anoint the body of Jesus.

And because it was all done in a rush, when Joseph of Arimathea just wrapped it, as we read in 2759, in a clean linen cloth and put it in his tomb. Because it is getting close to sunset when the Sabbath would begin. And a severe earthquake had occurred.

And an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat on it. And his appearance was like lightning and his garment as white as snow. And the guards, there were a number of them, shook for fear of him and became like dead men.

And the angel answered and the guards and these women came looking. And they saw the angel and the angel answered and said, don't be afraid. For I know you're looking for Jesus, who has been crucified.

He's not here, for he has risen. Just as he said, come see the place where he was lying. This is the most important event in the history of man.

I don't feel that Christians have sufficiently given emphasis to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He has risen. Come and see him.

Go and quickly tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead. And he's going before you into Galilee. There you will see him.

Behold, I have told you. Go and tell others Christ has risen from the dead. Why do I say this is the most important event in human history? Jesus Christ is not the only one who was crucified.

Many thieves were crucified. Even on that day, two thieves were crucified. That was a standard method of death that the Romans employed.

Many people were crucified. Many religious leaders have been martyred and killed. How do we say Jesus is different? He could be like one of the old prophets.

Many prophets were martyred and killed. The resurrection. That's different from the raising of the dead that we read in the Old Testament of Elijah and Elisha raised some young boys from the dead.

Elisha's dead bones raised up someone who was a dead man who was thrown into that grave from the dead. This is different from those three resurrections. They were just raised from the dead.

In Jesus' lifetime, Lazarus was raised from the dead and the, Jairus' daughter was raised from the dead. The widow of Nain's son was raised from the dead. But this is different from those three.

And Peter raised Tabitha from the dead and Paul raised Eutychus from the dead. But this is different from those two. Because all those people, all these eight people I just mentioned, all died again.

They hadn't conquered death. They were raised from the dead temporarily to die again. They came out of the grave and went back to the grave, dead.

But in Jesus' case, it was a resurrection. Those people who were raised came out with their old bodies. They became sick, they became old, and they died again.

When Jesus came out of the grave, it was not in his old body. It was the same shape and appearance, but it was a resurrection body that could move from place to place and virtually disappear, move at the speed of lightning that you'd hardly see where when it came and when it went. And there was no blood in it.

It had only flesh and bones, as we considered earlier in Luke chapter 24 when he appeared before the disciples. He said to them, touch me and see, Luke 24, 39. I'm not a spirit.

A spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see me. And you read there that he could eat a piece of fish. He gave him a piece of fish, and he ate it to show them that he was a living person.

And the purpose, the reason why he chose fish was because when you eat the fish and you leave the bones behind, afterwards, after Jesus disappeared, and they wonder whether it was a dream or something, they'd see the bones of the fish and say, hey, he was really here because here are the bones. He ate the fish and went. So there was meaning in all these little, little things, you know.

And in the resurrection of Jesus, he had a body which was not limited by time and space, a body without blood, a body that could never be sick, a body that could move around without any limitation. And the Bible says that when Christ comes back, we're going to have a body like that. It says in Philippians in Chapter 3 in Verse 20 and 21, we are waiting for the Savior, Lord Jesus Christ from heaven.

He will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of his glory. Our body is going to be like his in the resurrection when Christ comes back. This is the most important event in human history because there's only one human being that ever rose from the dead and conquered death.

Christians make a lot about the birth of Jesus. Christmas is a great festival, about the death of Jesus, Good Friday. The paintings that you see, what are the most common paintings of Christ that you have seen? The nativity scene, the birth of Christ.

And the cross, the death of Christ. How many paintings have you seen of Christ coming out of the grave alive? That is more and most important. And the devil has hidden that.

He always wants people to think of a weak, helpless Christ, a little baby in a manger, a weak, helpless thing, or a person hanging on the cross, weak and helpless. But that's not the Christ. See, the cross is empty today.

The cross is empty. He's not there. And that's the meaning of an empty cross.

He's not there. He was there, but he's not there. He's risen.

And that's the message that needs to be proclaimed. The resurrection is the most important truth in the whole Bible for us to experience. God loves us as he loved Jesus.

And he manifested that love by giving his son to die on the cross and raised him from the dead, proving thereby that he was the son of God. See, this is, it says in Romans 1 that this was the proof that he was the son of God. Let me show you two things about the resurrection in Romans.

Romans chapter 1, it says, declared, Romans 1.4, declared the son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. The resurrection from the dead proved that what he said was true. And that all other religious leaders, what they said was not true because they were not raised from the dead.

They may have said no many good things. Many people say good things. You and I can say good things.

That doesn't make us the son of God. He rose from the dead. He conquered death.

You know, man's greatest enemy is death. Every man dies. Man has conquered space, but he's not conquered death.

You can extend life by, in so many ways, with treatment and medicine and all that, but finally man dies. And you cannot conquer death. But Jesus conquered death.

And further, it says in Romans 4 that he was delivered for our offenses, Romans 4.25, and raised again for our justification. So the resurrection of Christ is significant for us. That's how I know that I'm accepted before God, that Christ is now my righteousness.

I'm declared righteous before God. How do I know I'm declared righteous? How do I know my sins are forgiven? Because Christ died on the cross. How do I know I'm declared righteous, I can stand before God today? Because Christ rose from the dead and ascended up into the presence of God in a body.

When Christ died, his spirit went into paradise, like the spirits of dead believers. But the body was on earth. At the resurrection, the spirit came back into the body, and the body rose up and was transformed into a new body.

He was on earth for 40 days and then ascended to heaven. And that's why the apostles, wherever they went, they said, we are witnesses of his resurrection. And when they wanted to select someone to replace Judas, see what they said.

In Acts 1, before the day of Pentecost, Peter says that Brethren, Judas has become a guide to those who arrested Jesus, Acts 1:15, and it says how he died. And now it is necessary, verse 21, that we need someone to join us to replace Judas Iscariot, who should be, along with us, verse 22, a witness of his resurrection, not witness of his crucifixion. A witness of his resurrection.

We must speak more of the resurrection of Christ than the crucifixion. The two must be spoken of together. The gospel is Christ died for our sins and rose again, not just that Christ died for our sins.

See 1 Corinthians in chapter 15. This is the gospel. 1 Corinthians 15, verse 3, I declare to you what I received from that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, 1 Corinthians 15, 3, was buried and the third day he rose again according to the scriptures and appeared, verse 6, to 500 brethren at one time.

So that, the gospel is incomplete if you don't talk about the resurrection, if you only talk about the fact that he died on the cross. This is so important and I believe all preaching of the gospel must include the resurrection of Christ. It's fundamentally important.

And they departed quickly, it says in Matthew 28, and reported it with great joy and ran and told the disciples and Jesus met them and greeted them and they came up and took a hold of his feet and worshipped him and then Jesus said to them, don't be afraid. So always those were his words, peace be to you, don't be afraid. Those are the most common words he used even after his resurrection, peace, no fear, peace, no fear.

I hope we will take those words to heart because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, because he lives like we sing in that song, we can face tomorrow, because the one who holds tomorrow lives. There's no fear, no anxiety, and there's peace. Go and take my word to my brethren.

You see, this is a new thing that happened in the resurrection. Till then he had called the people his disciples and servants and friends. But after the resurrection, he calls those people my brothers.

Go and take word to my brethren to leave for Galilee and there they shall see me. See in John chapter 20, where we read of his meeting with Mary Magdalene, and he tells her, John 20, 17, in the middle, go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend to my father and your father, my God and your God. Never did Jesus use that expression before.

All through the gospels, throughout his earthly life, he would talk about my father, or sometimes he would talk to disciples about your father. It was always my father or your father. But after the resurrection, he combines the two for the first time, to my father and your father.

He says, we are one now, and you are my brothers. In John 15, he had told them, till now I call you servants, but now you're not my servants, you're my friends. John 15, and he says, you're my friends.

Verse 14, I don't call you slaves anymore. Verse 15, they were slaves. He said, I call you friends.

Now, he says, I call you my brothers. So, when we call a person a brother, you know what that means? It's the greatest title you can ever give to a child of God. A brother of Jesus Christ.

I always say that to people. Call me a brother. Don't call me a reverend or something like that.

Call me a brother. That's the highest title that any child of God can have, a brother of Jesus Christ. Go and tell my brothers.

I wish we'd be gripped by the significance of this title. My brothers, my father and your father, we are one. Romans 8, 29 says, those whom he foreknew, whom God foreknew, he predestined.

He determined a destination for them, that they should become like Jesus, conformed to the image of his son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. When God sent his son to the earth, we read in John 3, 16, he was the only begotten son. Now, he became the firstborn after the resurrection.

So, the resurrection is very significant. Jesus was no longer the only begotten son. Up until the resurrection, he was the only begotten son of God, but the moment he rose from the dead, he became the firstborn.

You need to see the significance of this resurrection. What is Jesus teaching us? That we are his brothers, that his father is our father, that he's our elder brother. It's an amazing relationship, and that we can have the same rights as he has if we keep the same laws.

God will do for us everything that he did for Jesus, because there's no partiality with God. What he did for his elder son, he will do for us. When I had only one son, he was my firstborn.

He was my only son, but once I had other sons, then he became my firstborn. How does an only son become a firstborn when there are other sons? That's what happened at the resurrection, also. The only begotten son became the firstborn.

We need to see this, so that we can recognize our position and our privilege as children of God. While they were on their way, Matthew 28, verse 11, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported the chief priest all that had happened. They said, hey, there was an earthquake, and an angel came and

rolled away the stone, and we were just frightened, and the body just rose up.

They didn't see the body, but they couldn't see it. And when they had assembled with the elders and counseled together, verse 12, they gave a large sum of money. Here's bribery and corruption, to the soldiers and said, you must tell people that his disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.

It's a crime for a Roman soldier to be asleep when he's on duty. No Roman soldier would dare to do that, but what could they say? How could they couldn't say that the disciples, the fishermen, came and overpowered the Roman soldiers and took the body? Nobody would believe that. And the guards said, hey, what if Pilate hears that we were asleep? He said, don't worry, we'll talk to the governor and keep you out of trouble for saying that you were asleep.

And those soldiers were happy to take the money, and they did exactly as they were instructed, that we were asleep, and the disciples came and stole the body away. Right from the beginning, there's been lying on the part of religious people. Religious people tell so many lies in order to defend their cause.

People of all religions, including nominal Christians, they tell lies. Whenever you tell a lie, you know that the father of the lie is Satan. Jesus said the devil is the father of all lies.

Jesus said, I am the truth, and you see lying right at the beginning here in the resurrection. And so, we see here that the resurrection, as I said, is the most important thing that ever happened, and this is what gives us hope. If you turn to 1 Corinthians in Chapter 15, there's a great chapter there on the resurrection.

1 Corinthians in Chapter 15, it speaks here about the importance of the resurrection. He appeared, it says after the resurrection, were six to 500 brethren. Do you know that Jesus never appeared to an unbeliever after his resurrection? He didn't have any cheap desire to go and stand before Pilate and say, hey, you killed me, here I am.

He didn't have the desire to go and stand before Annas and Caiaphas and Herod and all those people and say, you tried to kill me, here I am. Why didn't he do that? Don't we have a desire for this type of cheap publicity and to score one point over somebody? He never had any such desire. He appeared to people, but all the people he appeared to were believers.

That's very significant. He appeared to 500 brothers, but not one to not one of those unbelievers, because he didn't want any to score any cheap points over others. If they repented of their sins, they could trust him.

He told Thomas, blessed are those who have not seen and have believed. You believe, he told Thomas, because you've seen me, put your hands into my fingers. Is that the more blessed thing? What did he say about believing in him? He said in John chapter 20 to Thomas, blessed are those, John 20, 29, who have not seen me and believe, we are in that category.

We have not seen the risen Jesus, but we believe. Do you know that you're more blessed than those who actually saw the physical resurrected Jesus? That's what he said. And because he said it, I believe it.

I believe with all my heart that I'm more blessed than those people who saw the physical resurrected Jesus. Some of us would have think, boy, I would have like to have been there at the resurrection to see him coming after his resurrection. No, you're more blessed when you didn't see.

Those are the words of Jesus, and it must be true in some way. And in 1 Corinthians 15, it says that if in this life only we have hope for death, then we are of all men most miserable. No, we have hope for the future because of the resurrection of Christ.

First Christ at his coming, verse 23, we will be resurrected with him, and then comes the end. And death has already been destroyed by the resurrection of Christ. Satan's power has been destroyed.

The resurrection proved so many things that all that Jesus said was true. And it's the resurrection that proves that we've got hope for the future. If it were not for the resurrection, like it says here, we would be of all men most miserable.

And he said, that's why I'm willing to face all types of dangers because I know there's a resurrection from the dead. Let me show you another verse in Acts 24. In Acts 24, he says in verse 15, he says, I have an absolute hope that there's going to be a resurrection one day of the righteous and the wicked.

And because of this, what do I do? I keep my conscience absolutely clear before God and before men. So if you really believe there's going to be a resurrection and you're going to experience a resurrection too, the evidence of that is that you will keep your conscience absolutely clear. Otherwise, we can say I nominally believe there's going to be a resurrection.

If you really believe there's going to be a resurrection of the righteous and a resurrection of the wicked, then you will do one thing. Exactly like it says in Acts 24, 16. You will do your very best to maintain a blameless conscience before God and before men.

It's one thing to say I theoretically believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It's quite another thing to actually believe it deep down in our heart. In the head to believe, the devil knows.

If you ask the devil, do you believe Jesus rose from the dead, of course he knows it. Every demon in hell knows it and trembles at that truth. But if you believe it in your heart, you believe that there'll be a resurrection of the righteous and another resurrection of the wicked and not everybody is going to be in the resurrection of the righteous, how are you going to make sure that you're going to be in the resurrection of the righteous and not in the resurrection of the wicked? Well, there's nobody who could tell us better than Paul himself.

He says in view of this hope that there'll be a resurrection of the righteous and I want to be in that resurrection and not in the resurrection of the wicked, I do my best always to maintain a blameless conscience before God and before men. What does that mean? That means whenever Paul's conscience pricked him about anything that he felt had violated God's law or the life of Christ, he would immediately confess it and ask God to forgive it and cleanse in the blood of Christ. And if he felt he had hurt somebody, he would go immediately to that person and ask forgiveness and set it right.

If somebody had done some harm to him and he had a little unforgiving spirit in his heart, he'd immediately get rid of it and forgive that person. He'd make sure his conscience is always clean. It's like when a thorn gets into your foot, you don't wait to pull it out.

You pull it out immediately. That's how we must keep our conscience. And that's the way anyone who believes in the resurrection will keep his conscience.

As far as I'm concerned, the only way I can say I believe in the resurrection is that I keep my conscience clear. If you don't keep your conscience clear, your faith in the resurrection is only theoretical. So may God help us to live according to the things that Jesus taught.

We'll continue in our next episode.

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