

**The Church Alive – An Awakening (Part 3c)**  
**Acts 2:22-36**

**22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know — 23 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. 24 "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.**

We have been working our way through Peter's sermon; this pointed look at the person and work of Jesus Christ. Thus far, in looking at verses 22 and 23, we have considered two points of Peter's four-point outline. In verse 22, we saw Peter reminding his hearers of the life of Christ while He walked this earth; a life that could be characterized by miracles, wonders and signs that only can be explained as being of God. These pointed to Jesus as being God incarnate, God with us; the promised Messiah.

Then, in verse 23 Peter expositis the death of Christ, noting that what evil men intended for harm, God purposed and planned for the good, for the salvation of those who would believe upon Jesus. This morning we pick up our study of Peter's sermon, looking now at the third point of his outline, Christ's resurrection from the dead; in verses 24-32. This will be followed by the fourth and final point, Christ's glorification in heaven in verses 33-36. As we begin, I would have you note that the bulk of this sermon centers on the fact and meaning of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

We have chronicled this before, but let me remind you how prominent, how foundational, how central is the truth that Jesus has risen from the dead to the preaching and message of the early church. You may want to mark or note these in your Bible:

**Acts 3:14-15**

**14 But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses.**

**Acts 4:10**

**10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead — by this name this man stands here before you in good health.**

**Acts 10:39-41**

**39 We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. 40 God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, 41 not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.**

"...about all that Jesus began to do and teach" (Acts 1:3).

### **Acts 17:30-31**

**30 Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."**

The point is this; everything that we believe about Jesus; every submission to Him as Lord; every hope in Him as Savior is linked to and proved as true by this one glorious truth; He is risen from the dead.

In Nashville, Tennessee stands a full size replica of the Parthenon; that ancient Greek Temple. Although this structure contains many noteworthy features, one of its most impressive characteristics is the two enormous bronze doors which stand some 30 feet high and each weighing in at seven and a half tons (that is 15,000 lbs). These colossal doors swing on only one huge hinge, one hinge that provides them with a system of counter balances making it possible for even a child to swing these gargantuan doors. These doors literally depend upon its one huge hinge. Without that hinge, the door would be transformed into a useless mass of metal. However, because of this hinge, what would otherwise be an enormous useless mass of metal becomes a purposeful and magnificent door.

In a sense, Christianity is like these immense doors. The validity of Christianity is made possible by just one huge hinge, that hinge being what we know as the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Without the resurrection; without the truth that Jesus is risen from the dead, Christianity degrades into nothing more than a curious movement of history, a social club, and a philosophical Band-Aid for living short and meaningless lives.

However, with the reality of the resurrection ripping into human history, life and meaning is poured into Christianity. Through the resurrection, Jesus is proved and proclaimed to be the SON OF GOD with power (Romans 1:4) rather than just another victim of the ancient past. The death of Jesus on that ignoble Roman cross is transformed into a sacrificial gift securing salvation for all who come to believe that Jesus is Lord and Savior. This is the Jesus Peter proclaims in his first sermon. This is the Jesus Peter wants his hearers to know! And this is the Jesus each one of us must know and make known as well. Because Jesus is risen from the dead, the idea of eternal life is no longer a wishful fairy tale but a living hope and an expectation that give our lives meaning and conviction whereby we can say with Romans 6:8, **"Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him..."**

So let us look at what Peter has to tell his hearers about the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and consider how this one truth should not only be at the heart of everything we tell others about Jesus, but is also to give us hope and motivation for living daily for Him who died and rose again.

### **III. Christ's Resurrection from the Dead (24-32)**

**24 "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. 25 "For David says of Him, 'I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS IN MY PRESENCE; FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN. 26 'THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED; MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL LIVE IN HOPE; 27 BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES,**

"...about all that Jesus began to do and teach" (Acts 1:3).

**NOR ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY. 28 'YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE.'** 29 "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 "And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT one OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE, 31 he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY. 32 "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.

Peter appeals to the reality of the resurrection of Jesus by quoting from two Psalms, Psalms 16 and 110, written some one thousand years earlier, by none other than King David. We might wonder why Peter quotes from David. I would say that Peter does this because the Jews of his audience so revered King David and they knew it was promised to him that one of his descendents would be the future Messiah, the ultimate and final King of Israel. The Jewish expectation at the time of Jesus was that when this Messiah came to rule on earth, it would be a happy day for them, for finally, they would be out from under the oppression of foreign rulers as the Messiah would smite Israel's enemies.

And so, Peter, wanting his hearers to understand that God was doing more than just providing vengeance on Israel's enemies, but rather was dealing with all mankind's greatest enemy, sin, deals at length on the importance of the resurrection. For after spending only one verse on Christ's life and one on His death, Peter spends the next nine verses on Christ's resurrection because it is the foundational truth that He is God, and that Christ has the power to forgive sin, to make us right with our God, and to resurrect all who believe on Him. In these next nine verses, Peter declares first, what the resurrection does and second, what the resurrection proves.

## 1. What the Resurrection Does

In verse 24, Peter quickly responds to the Jews attempt to get rid of Christ. He says, **"But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power."** It was in just the previous verse that we read how the enemies of Christ sought to do away with Him. **"But God raise Him up again..."** The resurrection of Jesus Christ not only proves beyond a doubt Christ's deity – the fact that He is God, but it also affirms the guarantee that for those who commit their lives to Christ, they will experience His resurrection power both in this life and most wonderfully in the life to come. It is Jesus who transforms a life poorly lived into something that profits God's work here on earth. It is the power of the resurrection by which Jesus guarantees us eternal life with God. This is resurrection power. What is resurrection power? It is the capacity to bring life out of death, light into darkness; to take a once sin-hardened life and transform it into a Savior-loving and Savior-serving soul. This is what the resurrection does.

And by way of proof, let us note how the resurrection changed one of the apostles. Just some nine weeks prior to this sermon, Peter was not preaching Jesus. In fact, Peter was afraid for his life and, to that end, had denied Christ, running for cover. But here in Acts 2, what do we see? We see him boldly, with poise and determination, proclaiming, asserting and associating himself with Jesus. He had experienced resurrection power. He was by no means a perfect man.

“...about all that Jesus began to do and teach” (Acts 1:3).

He was not a finished product of God’s working in his life. However, he was most assuredly a changed man, preaching in the midst of those whom he had previously and rightly feared would kill him as a follower of Christ.

And you know of another man, who might well have been in this very crowd, who had a sin-hardened heart against Christ and His followers; an extremely zealous young Pharisee named Saul, who would become known in the days ahead to be a blood-thirsty killer of Christians. But even this man would be transformed by the power of the resurrection.

What does the power of the resurrection do? It “progressively” transforms a heart; it brings a person “along” in his or her faith and trust of Jesus. I have heard it said that there is no such thing as a microwave transformation of a Christian’s life. We know from Scripture that when we trust Christ we are born again; we are made a new creation; but as both Peter’s and Paul’s life and word express, we are to **“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”** (2 Peter 3:18). It is a process. For after Paul’s own encounter and transformation by Christ on the road to Damascus, do you know how much time passed before Paul went on his first missionary journey? While Paul did immediately begin to speak of Christ once he was saved, it was not with all the fame and luster that would come later. We are told that Paul spent three years in Arabia, learning from the Lord (Galatians 1:17-18) and then from Acts 9 to Acts 13 where we read of the first missionary journey and the remarkable beginning of the work of Paul, some 13 years had passed. Paul was saved around 34 AD, made his first visit to Jerusalem some three years later in 37 AD and did not go on his first missionary journey until 47 AD. Why so long? Was it because Paul needed seminary training? No, for we know that he had one of the keenest theological minds in the world before he met Christ. After spending those three years in Arabia, Paul had a ten-year stretch that was not for the purpose of gaining more knowledge; but for Paul to gain experience in walking with and trusting in Jesus. It would be during these ten years that God would work on Paul, preparing him for greater service.

What did Paul do for ten years while in Tarsus? He quietly served the Lord and progressed in his faith. According to his own words in 2 Corinthians 11:30-12:12, it was during this ten year stay in Tarsus that Paul struggled with a **“weakness”** (11:30) or **“a thorn in the flesh”** (12:7). Whatever this weakness was, God was teaching Paul not to trust himself or his own wisdom, but to look to the grace and empowering of God. And Paul learned this lesson through the process as we read his testimony in 2 Corinthians 12:9

***And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.***

Paul, like Peter, had experienced the power of Christ resurrection through a process. This reminds us that we too are in process. Sometimes we quietly serve Jesus and in that service God prepares us for greater works. But do not knock the process. Like Peter and Paul, you and I can and are used by God, not because of our great spirituality, but in spite of our weaknesses. And this is “resurrection power.” I say to you that the Christian life is at one and the same time both a “training,” as we see that God did not allow Paul’s ten years in Tarsus to be wasted, but also a meaningful “ministry.” God uses us to accomplish His purposes even though we are still works in progress. This is what the resurrection does.

## 2. What the Resurrection Proves

But what does the resurrection prove? In verses 25-28, Peter quotes from Psalm 16:8-11, using King David as the star witness for proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

Let us remember that as David penned the words of Psalm 16, he was first writing in reference to himself. When he said, **“my flesh will live in hope,”** David is not speaking simply of his physical flesh living in hope while he is alive on earth, but that as he has life, he has assurance that should he die, he will be raised again in the future, just like the Holy One, who is Jesus, mentioned in verse 27. The idea behind the statement to not **“undergo decay”** is a reference that Christ’s body would not be in the tomb long enough to show signs of decay, because He would be resurrected to life. For David, this was an assurance of his own resurrection, and that his own soul would not be abandoned or left to reside in Hades, the place where the Old Testament saints believed dead people to reside. Again, to quote from Romans 6:8, **“Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him...”** This was David’s affirmation and this was Peter’s proclamation; that the Christ would rise from the dead and give us all the hope of eternal life.

And so, having quoted David, Peter goes on to state in 2:29; **“Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.”** This tomb was literally just a few hundred yards away from where they were standing. They all knew this fact. And Peter’s point became clear; that these words could not be referring to David, but rather to the Holy One, whom Peter has identified as Jesus. And so then, in verses 30-32, stating against the promise of God to David from 2 Samuel 7, Peter states that the resurrection proves that Jesus is the Messiah, the promised descendent of David, and the one that they had nailed to the cross. But it is, in the words of verse 32, **“This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.”** This is Christ’s resurrection from the dead and all that it means. But Peter is not finished as he gives his final point...

## IV. Christ’s Glorification in Heaven (2:33-36)

33 *“Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. 34 “For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, “SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, 35 UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.”’ 36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ — this Jesus whom you crucified.”*

As Peter wraps up his sermon, he points next to present position of Jesus as exalted, or glorified in heaven. We read in verse 33, **“Therefore [Jesus] having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.”**

Peter has come full circle, explaining all that had taken place here on the day of Pentecost. His grand summary is that Jesus had been resurrected and had sent His Spirit, just as promised. The outpouring of the Spirit was given to permanently indwell and empower believers for service. This work of the Spirit had been proven through the sign of the prophetic speaking of 120 disciples of Christ, **“which you both see and hear.”** However, wanting to be clear, Peter quotes from yet another Psalm of David, Psalm 110:1, to show that David was not

“...about all that Jesus began to do and teach” (Acts 1:3).

speaking merely of himself, but of Jesus. We read in verses 34-35, **“For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he [David] himself says: ‘The LORD [in Hebrew, “Yahweh” - the personal covenant name for God] said to my Lord [in Hebrews “adonai” – meaning master or of someone greater than the speaker; and here in context is speaks of Jesus], “Sit at My right hand, 35 until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.””** So God the Father (Yahweh) said to David’s master (Adonai – the Lord Jesus) “sit at My right hand...” How important is this for not only Peter’s audience, but for us to grasp? Do you know that this one verse, Psalm 110:1, is repeated or referred to indirectly thirty-five times in the New Testament as a reference to Jesus Christ? (just a few of them – Matthew 22:42-45; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42-43; 22:69; Acts 2:33-34; 7:55; Romans 8:34; 1 Corinthians 15:25-26; Ephesians 1:20; 22; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 13; 8:1; 10:12-13; 1 Peter 3:22).

It is as if Peter is building up to this grand finale, pointing everyone to Jesus and so he states in verse 36, **“Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”**

Let me recap the essence of what Peter has said here, “God has made Jesus the ruler and judge over all humanity. And what did you do with Him? You had Him murdered!” Peter had expounded on the passages from David’s pen that directly relate to the resurrection and ascension of the Messiah. Peter had drawn the net around his Jewish listeners saying,

*You crucified Him, but God crowned Him.  
You entombed Him, but God enthroned Him.  
You cast Him out, but God caught Him up.  
You executed Him, but God exalted Him.*

That is the truth, whether you like it or not. And beloved, this is spoken to us as well. And so it is for each one of us; for because of our sin, we are guilty of having Jesus murdered. And so the question to the Jews at that time and to us today is this “What do you do with Jesus?” Do you flat out reject Him? Do you walk away and ignore Him, like the vast majority did on that day and continue to do today so that they may live on in sin and hatred of God?

Or will you submit to Jesus as Master and Savior? You must choose and what you choose right now has lasting, eternal consequences. Do not be flippant with the question, “What do you do with Jesus?” “Who is Jesus to you? May I ask you to consider honestly this question, “To what degree do you feel confident that you will spend eternity in heaven with Christ? And if so, on what basis do you have such an assurance? Have you or others seen in your life the transforming work of Christ’s resurrection power? Let us pray that we be constant monuments of such a power, to the glory of God and to the assurance of salvation to our souls.

## *Soli Deo Gloria*

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