

Resurrection Promises

Ephesians 1:16-23

Objective: Clarify and re-enforce understanding of the significance of Christ's resurrection.

Reading: Mark 16:1-7.

Introduction:

1. Do you believe in the resurrection? Such a hard concept. Jesus had told them what to expect many times, but somehow they had never really gotten that far in their "trust" that they could grasp the reality of Jesus being raised from the dead! Such a phenomenal concept!
2. It is not a fairy tale or story. There IS a God, and He Who spoke the world into existence, he who has given you life to begin with, can also do that and has done it!
3. It is not just an idle gesture, not just a see what I can do one time. It is a demonstration of WHO and WHAT he is, and it carries some genuine significance that ought to alter our entire lives to know it!
4. Christ risen from the dead is the basis of the Gospel message!

We should grasp the significance of Christ risen from the dead. (WHAT?)

The resurrection of Christ is the most powerful event in history. It re-directed the lives of the early Christians and ought to carry that same impact for each one of us if we grasp the significance of what it means for us. This morning, I want to focus on the significance of the resurrection of Christ for our own lives. I invite you to turn with me to Eph. 1:16-23 and see what the raising of Christ from the dead means to us. READ.

The first of the three things that result for us from Christ's resurrection is our...

I. Hope. Ephesians 1:18, ***"I pray ... that you will know what is the hope of His calling, ..."***

A. Eager expectation of something happening.

1. Do you have reason to expect good to come? To look forward to promise? To the future?
2. Such expectation, anticipation, such hope impels us as Christians, it motivates us;
 - a. To holy behavior. To turn from anything "bad" or "dirty" and do only "good" and "clean".
 - b. To Christian ethics. To go the extra mile, to turn the other cheek. To rather be wronged.
 - c. To faithfulness and service to God in this life, no matter how difficult, because what we expect!
 - d. To learn God's heart and grow in Christ-likeness.
 - e. To love – ***"We love, because He first loved us."*** And this has meaning and outcome, result, if Christ is risen!
3. God, in Christ, has "called" you for a reason – and now you respond and you follow faithfully and true because of what you have come to expect! An inheritance to come.
4. You have learned that when God instructs you to do something that would not normally be your intention, (*like not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together such as is the habit of some, being baptized for the forgiveness of sins, not engaging in sex before getting married, or even loving your enemy and praying for those who despitefully use you*), there is a good reason and there will be a good result! (That is "hope")
5. If Christ is risen, God is able to do all things. God does not fail! So, you / we, can have "hope", and can operate on the basis of such "confident expectation"! (including ...)

B. A "blessed assurance" even in the present.

1. Knowing, with confidence, that God has all things worked out and even now is working them out.
2. I may not understand or see, but can have and do have a reasonable assumption that He is totally in charge, and has good things in store.
3. An assurance that God has a reason for every tribulation He allows us to endure, even when we don't understand it ourselves. Hope is feeling this confidence that keeps us going.
4. Like a child that has a hope that when Dad, with a smile on his face and joy in his heart, turns the car away from the playground – it MUST be that we are going for ice cream first!!
5. One day, I shall stand with the King. One day, I shall be like Him and recognizable as His child. One day I will be flawless and perfect! I will overcome all sin and temptation and, myself, be godly, holy, clean, pure, in thought and deed. Freed from all guilt. Free from anything that defiles. Hope keeps me diligently working that way for I am confident He can do it!

6. Titus 3:7, ***“so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”*** This hope is our reason to persevere at present, and not only to persevere, but to move forward as God’s army, to victory over sin.
7. What helps you resist temptations in the present? Hope of better stuff to come! Expectation of help in the here and now; HOPE!

C. What is the reason for such a grand hope?

1. The resurrection of Jesus Christ! This is the hope ... ***“...which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead ...,”*** (Ephesians 1:20)
2. Because Jesus is risen - we can have such confident assurance and joyful expectation. Hope.

In addition to “hope”, the Apostle also prays that Christians (like us) would grasp the significance of their

II. Inheritance. Ephesians 1:18, ***“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,”***

A. What blessings will we possess?

1. Much more than a spot of land. Some folks have that now, even if they are not Christians.
2. When Revelation 22 speaks of arriving at the Tree of Life which produces twelve kinds of fruit and produces every month, it doesn’t sound like we will need to eat by the sweat of our brow! So, what would you do with owning land anyway when you don’t need to rely on it for food or space or income or production of anything?
3. We are to be looking forward to a heavenly inheritance; 1 Peter 1:4, ***“to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,”***
4. What does it look like and consist of, if not land? Perhaps it is friendship and relationship to God. Perhaps it is eternally life and security in heaven, in God’s presence. You will inherit “joy” and “peace” and “rest” and fellowship with the “saints” where there is no sin.
5. If you are still picturing heaven as a place where you can sit on a river-bank and fish everyday, you are really missing the point. It is so much more than that. It is intimate connection and relationship with the Creator Who IS love. You get to be with your hero. Your Creator.

B. Described as “rich glory”.

1. God MUST have something wonderful in store for us – He gave up the glory of heaven to come and get us! He loves us beyond imagination.
2. Think of who or what you love more than anything – God loves YOU immensely beyond that! What is in store for you must be incredible! How do you describe it? Light? Love? Emerald City? Fellowship in Presence of the Lord of Lords?
3. An inheritance to live and to experience – Not something to put in your pocket or loose.
4. What good, what blessing will an extra five dollars (or five thousand) be when everything is free?
5. What is “glorious”? “Glory” is not just gaudy sparkles and spangles. It is relationship.
6. Riches and glory are NOT talking about money – why would you need such? Why would you desire prestige even? In heaven you will have all you want. Contentment eternal.
7. Revelation 21:3-5, ***“And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”*** ⁵ ***And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.”***
8. Revelation 22:1-5, ***“Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.”***

C. Described as “in the saints”.

1. Acts 20:32, has the same idea; **"And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified."**
2. Those who are sanctified are "the saints". Those who have been cleansed by the blood of Christ. Those who have been set apart by God to God; for His use and purposes.
3. This is not only a future thing, it pertains to those who are walking as children of God even now! An aspect of this inheritance is to be experienced here and now in the church! In relation with souls who belong to God, in who God dwells, who are a temple to the Holy Spirit.

D. What is the reason for such a grand inheritance?

1. This is the inheritance ... **"...which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,"** (Ephesians 1:20)

Finally, the apostle prays that we would get a grasp of the

III. Power. Ephesians 1:19, **"and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might..."**

A. Do you know what power is working toward you, for you?

1. Surpassingly great power. Beyond all imagination. All power in heaven and on earth.
2. What exactly DO you TRUST? It must have to do with power. Do you KNOW there is power that you can really trust and place your hope in??!!
3. Ephesians 3:20, **"Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,"**
4. To "know" this power does not necessitate a full conception. To be suddenly, surprisingly, inexplicably thrust upward for a hundred feet might let me know there is a power at work vastly capable of anything I might need though I have no real clue of its total extreme. I may not grasp the infinite, but I can surely know by experience that it is beyond my wildest imagination and more than sufficient for any need that may arise.

B. It is described as "toward us".

1. Here is power beyond imagination – at work for you, in you, in the church.
2. Here is power to change you and to help you! To enable you to think and act like Christ. The power that can create universe out of nothing can also transform you into the very image of god in the present time! If He can raise Christ from the dead, He can also instill new life into you.
3. To give you courage and conviction. To stand faithful in all situations. To resist all of Satan's temptations and schemes. To enable you to be righteous at all times, inside and out.
4. To give you wisdom, and strength. To enable you to understand!
5. To overcome discouragement. Doubts. Temptations. Fears. What is it that you personally struggle most and most often with? Are you really entrusting yourself to this POWER that is at work toward us who believe??
6. What is there that you cannot do, that we cannot accomplish, with such power at work towards you? In you? With you? We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.
7. Is anything "hopeless" with such power at work with you?

C. What is the reason for such power?

1. This is the power ... **"...which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,"** (Ephesians 1:20)

So What?

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is NOT just and occasion for a nice holiday. Because God raised Jesus from the dead, we have; reason for hope, a glorious inheritance, and incredible power at work towards us! That's what the resurrection means to us.

Closing Prayer:

Resurrection Promises
Ephesians 1:16-23

Reading: Mark 16:1-7.

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The significance of the resurrection of Christ for our own lives.

I. Hope.

Ephesians 1:18

A. Eager expectation of something happening.

B. A “blessed assurance” even in the present.

Titus 3:7

C. What is the reason for such a grand hope?

Ephesians 1:20

II. Inheritance.

Ephesians 1:18

A. What blessings will we possess?

1 Peter 1:4

B. Described as “rich glory”.

Revelation 21:3-5 Revelation 22:1-5

C. Described as “in the saints”.

Acts 20:32

D. What is the reason for such a grand inheritance?

Ephesians 1:20

III. Power.

Ephesians 1:19

A. Do you know what power is working toward you, for you?

Ephesians 3:20

B. It is described as “toward us”.

C. What is the reason for such power?

Ephesians 1:20

So What?

Hope, glorious inheritance, and incredible power!