

The Cross of Christ – Part 16

Well, not to give a summary, but just to refresh your mind where we've been. We started where God told us to begin—in the beginning God; the outworking then of the Holiness of God; to know the sin of man; to face the judgment; the reality of Hell, unless we come through the cross of Christ, in which case, we come to the reality of Heaven. All that was what I call the journey to the cross. In the cross, then, we prepared to land. We looked at the Garden of Gethsemane experience, the God man in the Garden; the sweet suffering; the targeted tears; forgiving of ignorance; paradise promised to the thief; then the darkness; why hast Thou forsaken Me; then woman, behold your son; I thirst; it is finished; Father into Thy hands I commit my spirit; and last time, we finished up looking at the Trinity and the interplay of the persons of the Godhead at the cross. And today, we move on to the exclamation point—that is to say the resurrection.

Next one. Now for outline purposes, I put this in a mnemonic that helps you remember some of it because the six categories here under the resurrection all begin the letter “P.” The first is the package. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is simply part of the package. We can distinguish, but not separate the various aspects of Jesus. Had He not humbled Himself and left the glory of Heaven, He wouldn't have been our Savior. Had He not come in the form of a man, He couldn't have gone to the cross to pay the price for our sins. Had He sinned even one time, He would have been dismissed from being our Savior. Had He not fulfilled Old Testament prophecies, He would not have been the Messiah. Likewise, if Jesus had not been resurrected after the crucifixion, the cross would have no meaning. That's why this is the exclamation point at the end. Now the core Scriptural reference is I Corinthians, chapter 15 and some of the Scriptures I refer to today will be extracted from that chapter.

The second is prophecy. Now the prophecy as related to the resurrection can be thought of in two types: Old Testament and then, those spoken by Jesus Himself. In the Old Testament, a good example is Psalm 16:10 written by David, where it says (speaking of the Messiah) – Neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. As so common is the case, the Old is in the New explained. Because just reading the Old, I wouldn't have known what to make of that. But Peter spoke in Acts 2:29-31 – 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. And so, because he (David) was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants upon his throne, he (David) looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades nor did His flesh suffer decay. Paul also addressed that same prophecy of David in Acts 13:35-39 – Therefore (he also says in another Psalm) Thou will not allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. For David after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation—that is in his earthly life, he fell asleep—that is he died. He was laid among his fathers and underwent decay. But He Whom God raised did not undergo decay. Then, the prophecies of Jesus about His own resurrection. Matthew 12:38-40 – Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him saying, teacher, we want to see a sign from You. But, He Jesus, answered and said to them, an evil and adulteress generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it, but

the sign of Jonah, the prophet. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the Earth. Again, the Old is in the New explained; because looking at Jonah's experience, we would not have foreknown what that was telling us. Then Matthew 17:22-23 Jesus said to them – The Son of man is going to be delivered into the hands of men and they will kill Him and He will be raised on the third day. John 2:18-21 – The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, what sign do You show to us seeing that You do these things? Jesus answered and said to them, destroy this temple and in three days, I will raise it up. The Jews therefore said, it took 46 years to build this temple and will You raise it up in three days? And then it adds, but Jesus was speaking of His own body. Jesus performed many signs and wonders and we marvel at all of them. But when asked by what sign they would know Him, He consistently spoke of His resurrection. So that's not a sign that we want to miss and it's not a sign that we want to underrate in our Christian experience. And remember, the role of prophecy for us as New Testament Christians (at least those that have been fulfilled). The prophets of the Old Testament and the prophecies of Jesus about the resurrection were, foreknown, foretold, for faith. Because when we see the fulfillment, we cannot help but have the flames of faith within us burn evermore brightly.

In regard to power, recall that when men discuss a miracle, they are never discussing that miracle. They are really discussing the validity of Genesis 1:1, in the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth. Because remember, if Genesis 1:1 has been swallowed, then the camel has been swallowed and there is no need to ever strain at the gnat of a lesser miracle and all miracles are lesser miracles than, in the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth. If Genesis 1:1 has been swallowed, then you will not choke on Genesis 2:7 where it says – then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground. And you will not choke on Genesis 2:22 when it says – and the Lord God fashioned into a woman, the rib which He had taken from the man. So can you see why I choose to start at Genesis 1:1? In order to see the Holiness of God, before we can even fully begin to appreciate what occurs thereafter, including the cross of Christ, which includes the resurrection. Because the validity of the resurrection is debated among all men, unless that person has accepted Genesis 1:1. But if Genesis 1:1 has not been swallowed, then the triumph over the grave will not be swallowed either. So if you have swallowed Genesis 1:1, if that is the bedrock of foundation of how you proceed in your revelation of God, you will have no difficulty understanding subsequent Scriptures like Acts 2:24 – And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for the grave to hold Him in its power. Remember, the resurrection was not a narrow victory eked out by the power of God over the force of death. It was impossible for the grave to hold Him. Well, why is that? Because this God is Holy; this God is other than; this God has no restraint upon Himself; this God is supreme over all things spiritual; this God is supreme over all things physical. So if you swallowed Genesis 1:1 and believe that it was impossible for the grave to hold Him in its power, then you can understand why Paul wrote in Acts 26:8 – why is it considered incredible among you people if God does raise the dead? In other words, the resurrection is not a stumbling block to the person who is living in the light of the Holiness of God, walking in the fear of the Lord. So the reason they stumbled over the resurrection was because

they hadn't fully swallowed Genesis 1:1. They weren't regarding God as Holy; they weren't living in the fear of the Lord; they didn't see His power as transcendent. They saw the power of death as being greater than the power of God. Simply put, they did not fear God; they did not hold Him in awe and reverence. They held the power of death in more awe and reverence than they did God. So that power is not just to be marveled at, for us as New Testament Christians, it's to be known and accessed as a bedrock revelation about our walk as Christians.

Ephesians 1:18-20 Paul says – I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of His glory, of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. Well, how does Paul validate that surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe? It goes on. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him in Heavenly places at His right hand. That's the surpassing greatness of the power of God as shown in the resurrection that is available, accessible, to us as Christians. Philippians 3:10 he says – That I may know Him, Jesus Christ, and the power of His resurrection. So the essence of God as the sovereign majestic creator King has been known since Genesis 1:1. God is transcendent and that includes His power over death which is verified for all to see by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That's part of why Jesus could make such blatant statements. John 14:6 – I am the way, the truth, and the life. John 11:25 – I am the resurrection and the life. So if you believe in Me, you're not just living in some vague hope, I am the resurrection. If you know Me, you know the resurrection power that I bring within Me. And that applies to spiritual resurrection when we go from dead to life spiritually as born again Christians. And then later will apply to the physical resurrection, of course.

Then He offers us proof through the resurrection. He's given us many witnesses to testify to the reality of the resurrection. We have the Word of God. Acts 2:32 Peter reports – That this Jesus, God raised up again to which we are all witnesses. Acts 3:14-15 Peter again says – But you disowned the Holy and righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you (that is Barabbas) and put to death the Prince of life, the one Whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses; a fact to which we are witnesses. Then he writes (Paul does) in I Corinthians 15:4-8 – And that He Jesus was buried and raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve, then to more than 500 brethren at one time, then to James, then to all the apostles and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me. So most of those events I just referred to can be gotten in broken fashion in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. But they're summarized in these Scriptures that I'm quoting here. And I chose to use the summary Scriptures in the interest of time.

But in addition to the written testimony of the eye witnesses account of the resurrection, we have the additional testimony, of course, of the changed lives of the disciples. Remember, that at the cross, all the disciples left Him. Matthew 26:56 it says – Then all the disciples left Him and fled. In that same chapter Peter denied Him three times when repeatedly questioned about his association with Jesus. Why? Because of the threat of

death if he acknowledged that relationship. So the disciples at that time, when the crunch time came, were somewhat less than heroic individuals. But, remember, that was just prior to the cross. But after the cross, after the resurrection, they were eye witnesses of Him after the resurrection. And from that point on, they were transformed individuals. There was no hiding, there was no denial; there was total transformation. They not only confessed Him, they publicly confessed Him. They did so boldly, even when whipped, even when threatened with loss of life and later even when put to death. Paul had the similar course. Remember, he wasn't one of the original twelve, but he had a personal encounter with the resurrected Christ on the Damascus road. Then he went, as you well know, from being the greatest persecutor of the church to probably the greatest advocate of Jesus Christ, wrote half the New Testament. And we all know that men do not live and die that way based on myths, based on possibilities, based on lies, schemes, hoaxes and so on. They would only do that living in the light of having seen the resurrected Christ.

So that's why this is the sign of signs and that the sign of signs is our proof and that's validated specifically by Paul in Acts 17:30-31 – Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all men everywhere should repent. Does that leave anybody out? No. That all men should repent. Why? Because He, God, has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom He has appointed. And what is the proof? Paul says, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead. So, if we believe that the Word of God is the infallible truth, and the Scripture tells us that this is the proof that God has provided—that Jesus is Who He said He was, and gives us proof then for our future course.

That gets us to the next category. Promises: II Corinthians 1:20 – For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him, Jesus, they are yes. So the promises of God can be all summed up in Jesus. So we have promises of God about our own resurrection, but they flow out of His resurrection. Romans 8:11 – But if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He Who raised Christ Jesus from the dead, will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit Who indwells you. So, the Spirit of God that raised Jesus from the dead indwells us and will, likewise, raise us from the dead. That's a promise of God. I Corinthians 6:14 – Now God has not only raised the Lord, it doesn't stop there. He's the First Fruit; but will also raise us up through His power. I Corinthians 15:42-44 – So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body; it is raised an imperishable body; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body. II Corinthians 4:14 – Knowing that He Who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus. And then the Scripture that describes the rapture—I Thessalonians 4:14-18 contains – for if we believe that Jesus died and we believe that Jesus rose again, even so God will bring with Him, those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. I Peter 1:3 – blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope. Well, we're born again to a living hope. Well, what's the evidence for that, what's the justification, the rationale for that? Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Except Jesus be resurrected, we have no living hope.

Then the purposes; there are several. To deliver us from the fear of death. Hebrews 2:14-15 – Since then the children (that’s us) share in flesh and blood, He Himself (Jesus) likewise also partook of the same (flesh and blood) that through death (not to death) through death, He might render powerless him who had the power of death (that is the devil). It might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. People who are not believers in Jesus Christ will have the fear of death; but once you have a revelation of the Holiness of God, have the revelation of His power over death itself, have the revelation that Jesus is Who He said He was and came out of that grave as the First Fruit, and have the promise of God flowing out of that, that we indeed will be resurrected, you cannot have the fear of death. You might have passing thoughts, but those thoughts are captured by the truth of God, the Word of God, how God views reality. I Corinthians 15:54-55 – But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written. Death is swallowed up in victory. Oh death, where is your victory; oh death, where is your sting? And that’s where we live as New Testament Christians. We don’t worry about being swallowed up in death because we’re living in the blessed hope that we will swallow up death itself, you see, through Jesus Christ.

So the second purpose—to prove that Jesus was Who He said He was as we mentioned earlier. Acts 17:31 – Having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead. Romans 1:4 – Jesus, Who was declared the Son of God with power. How? By the resurrection from the dead. Then, that we know who to trust. II Corinthians 1:9 – That we should not trust in ourselves but in God, Who raises the dead. See, our faith, remember, we’re going to be God determined or self determined. We’re going to live in the Spirit or live in the flesh, walk by how God views reality or walk by what we say about how God views reality. And it comes down to who are you trusting. Are you trusting your analysis? Are you trusting your interpretation? Are you trusting your mind or just trusting the unvarnished, unpolished Word of God? That we should not trust in ourselves, but in God Who raises the dead. You see, for 30 years of my adult life, I was trusting in myself, trusting in my ability to head off adversity, trusting in my ability to hold off death, trusting in my ability to find the meaning of life through thought and so on. But no, all of that 30 years was wasted time in this regard because I was not putting my trust in the One Who raises the dead. So just like God said, Job, where were you when I created the Heavens and the Earth? Well, Buddy, when did I create the Heavens and Earth. Buddy, when did I raise somebody from the dead? You see, the answer to those is, I wasn’t there and I can’t do that, then I’m putting my trust somewhere it doesn’t belong. My trust belongs in the One Who has the power to raise the dead.

Then that we might bear fruit. Romans 7:4 – Therefore, my brethren, you were also made to die to the law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another (that is to Jesus) to Him Who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God. Because I can promise you, if you are not walking in the light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the fruit that you bear will be severely hindered. Next, that we might have the assurance of salvation. Romans 4:25 – He Who is delivered up because of our transgression and was raised because of our justification. You see, the story of Jesus didn’t end when He died for our sins. That’s wonderful and that’s true; but

it doesn't land there. It ends in something of a divine mystery as do all the things of God. But the sequence, we know. All have sinned; the wages of sin is death. But by the cross of Christ, we are justified—that is to say declared righteous. And He was raised because of our justification. Had He not been raised, we would not know that we were justified. That's the point that I'm making. In other words, God the Father determined when the debt was paid. He pronounced us as justified and the sign given that the payment was accepted is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus said on the cross, it is finished and in a way, the Father was saying in reciprocity by the resurrection, it is finished. And then out of the tomb He came, you see. So we can distinguish, but not separate the cross from the resurrection. That's why Paul would write in I Corinthians 15:13-20 – But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith in vain. Moreover, we're even found to be false witnesses of God because we witness against God that He raised Christ Whom He did not raise, if in fact, the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless, you're still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we've hoped in Christ, in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. I don't know how Scripture could say it more clearly or more powerfully than that, that you cannot stop with Jesus saying He died on the cross for our sins. Because it is validated and our justification is complete by the reciprocity of the Father bringing Him out of that grave, the sign of signs, the only sign that Jesus said He was going to give.

So we are saved by grace, through faith, in Jesus, specifically that He paid the price for our sins on the cross. But here's the point. The Jesus referred to in that sentence is the Jesus of the Bible and that Jesus came out of the grave. You can't have salvation through Jesus, except your faith in Jesus be in the right Jesus. And the right Jesus, is the Jesus of the Bible and the Jesus of the Bible came out of the tomb. So if you dismiss the resurrection, then you dismiss the Jesus of the Bible. And then your Jesus did not fulfill Old Testament prophecies, did not fulfill His own prophecies, and is just one more dead man rotting in his grave, not fulfilling that which he said he would. That's why it's not complete, except the resurrection. So you can distinguish, but not separate the cross and the resurrection. We've used the analogy before of faith and works. James 2:17 – Faith without works is dead. It is true we are saved by grace through faith; but saving faith is followed by works. Remember the thief on the cross. The work of his testimony, remember me when You come in Your Kingdom. So his faith was followed by the work of testimony under the worst of conditions. So we're saved by faith alone, but saving faith is never alone, you see.

So likewise, we're saved by grace through faith in Jesus; but faith in that Jesus includes the resurrection. That's why Paul would write in Romans 10:9 – That if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. Well, I used to struggle. Isn't it by grace through faith? Why do I need to believe in my heart that He was raised from the dead? Because belief in the resurrection of Jesus is necessary; because it's the confirmation that you're believing in the right Jesus which is the Jesus of the Bible. Because belief in any other Jesus will not

save you. Belief in a moral man will not save you. Belief in a good man, who teaches well, will not save you. Belief in a prophet will not save you. Belief in the greatest of prophets will not save you. Belief that He said He went to the cross to die for our sins will not save you. It's belief that He is Who He said He was, the Son of God; that He said, I will come out of that grave in three days; that will be your validation, that's the sign by which you will know I am Who I say I am. So if you're going to believe in that Jesus, you have to believe that He fulfilled His prophecies or He's a false prophet, you see. You have to believe that He's a moral man because He did what He said He was going to do. Otherwise He would have lied, claimed to be somebody He wasn't. All of this is wrapped up in the resurrection. So when you go through the cross, that's fine; but you've got to go through the resurrection to really be confessing the right Jesus, the Jesus of the Bible. And one major problem in the world today, and major problem even within the church I believe, is that so many are confessing the wrong Jesus. They're confessing Him for all those things that I used as categories, but not confessing Him as the Son of God Who went to the cross for our sins and then came out of the tomb validating that He is Who He said He was, you see. That's the right Jesus.

So we thank God for the cross of Jesus. But we also thank God for the resurrection of Jesus. We thank God that Jesus is not only the Son of the living God, He is the living Son of the living God and not just another dead prophet. Colossians 2:14 – the certificate of debt against us has been cancelled, having been nailed to the cross of Jesus Christ. So we need to thank God for the God man, Jesus Christ. But, now we are called to live as He lived, to walk as He walked, to talk as He talked, as the God men that we are. John 12:32 – And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to Myself. So remember, He has been lifted up on the cross—that's finished. He's been lifted out of the tomb—that's finished. He's been lifted up into Heaven, that's the ascension—that's finished. Now what is remaining to be finished is for us to lift Him up as His body on planet Earth with no hesitancy of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ including the validation and proof that God has given having raised Him from the dead.

If we really believe that, then it makes it so much easier for us to deny self, take up our cross and follow Him. Because all we're doing is fanning the flames of our revelation of Who He is, you see. So we have Jesus in us; we have His righteousness imputed to us; we have, remember, His faith in us; we have the mind of Christ, do you not know that you have the mind of Christ, that the Spirit of Christ is within you? Now we glorify Him...how? By walking in the light of all that has been finished. That's when we loose Him on planet Earth. Because at all times, every moment, every thought, you're going to be loosing one thing and binding another. So if you're operating in your own rational mind, self determined, instead of God determined, then you in a way are binding God by not loosing the power of God that is within you, you see. But if you're God determined (over here it's using God rather than ungod capturing every thought to the obedience of Jesus Christ), then you're loosing the mind of Christ, not your rational analysis. You're loosing the power of God that raised Him from the grave rather than being limited by your own carnal power, you see, on planet Earth. And that's to walk as a God man. As I mentioned last time, we are not omniscient, but when He says we have the mind of Christ, in my mind, it means we have access to omniscience. You want wisdom? You

need to ask, you see. Where does it come from? From God, Himself. Why? Because we have access to the omniscience of God by the Holy Spirit Who dwells within us. So our task as New Testament Christians, is to live in light of this Jesus, the Son of this Holy God, Who came to Earth as a man to pay the price for our sins, once having done so, went into the tomb, then three days later, raised from the tomb to be our validation, our proof, and proof beyond which we need no proof, you see. And given that proof of Who He was, how can we question what the rest of the New Testament says about who we are in Him? And then we live out of who we are in Him, you see. Not just an historical, antiquated, theologic, archeologic kind of historical thing, but the power of God within us, you see. I don't know how we could ask for more.

So thank you brothers and sisters for listening. That's the last session on the cross.