

This is what Paul wants more than anything else in this life: To know the living, the resurrected Christ, and to know the power associated with that resurrection. Furthermore, if He is not raised from the dead, then He has no power today. He is dead. His words might have some influence -- but He Himself has no power. This is why the resurrection is so central to Christians: Christianity is not a religion based on abstract principles. Christianity is a relationship with a living Savior, a Savior we can know, a Savior Who infuses our life and empowers us, Who transforms us into His likeness. Paul's desire is "to know . . . the power of His resurrection." Note that Paul does not ask God for more power. Instead, he asks God that he might know the resurrection power he already has. All Christians have this power; all Christians have access to this incomparably great power, this resurrection power. Our task is to tap into it.

"Essential Biblical Beliefs "

Let's conclude by looking at some essential biblical beliefs that have their foundation in the resurrection of Jesus.

- 1. The Resurrection Proves Jesus Was Exactly Who And What He Said He Was.** The disciples saw the fact that God had raised Jesus from the dead to eternal life as God's seal of approval—God's backing of everything Jesus said. In addition, His resurrection fulfilled the prophecies about His resurrection.
- 2. The Resurrection Proves The Primacy Of Jesus' Teachings.** Jesus is the only one God has raised from the dead in this way. Therefore, what He said is true and is the foundation for everything we believe (Ephesians 2:20). Everything else must be judged by the standard of Jesus' words.
- 3. The Resurrection Guarantees That God Can Raise Us From The Dead To Immortal Life.** The fact that He was raised out from among the dead means that though He is raised to life, the dead still remain dead. Some commentaries have recognized that since Scripture promises that the dead will be raised to life, Jesus' unique resurrection out from among the other dead proves there is more than one resurrection.
- 4. The Resurrection Makes Jesus The Actual, Living, Active Head Of The Church.** Jesus Christ is the living, active, day-to-day decision maker for His Church. This was true in the past; it is true today; and it will remain true on into the future.
- 5. The Resurrection Guarantees Jesus' Return.** Every promise for the future is predicated upon Jesus' return, but if He had not been raised from the dead, all promises of His Rulership in His Kingdom would be meaningless. He promised He would return, that He wanted His followers to be with Him, that His reward would be with Him when He returns. None of these would be possible unless He was resurrected. Let us never forget the incredible importance of Jesus Christ's resurrection. It is the anchor of every hope we have and ultimately the anchor of hope for all mankind (Hebrews 6:17-20).



The great spiritual song Were you There? asks this question: Were you there when He rose up from the dead? That is a thought-provoking question. Of course, it seems impossible. We, living 2,000 years later, wish we had been there. To have witnessed the resurrection would have been the greatest privilege imaginable, to

physically see the risen Christ and feel His embrace.

"But While We Weren't There Then, The Fact Is: We Are There Now"

Believers claim Jesus literally rose from the dead physically. Without the risen Savior, there is no Christian faith. As the Apostle Paul said: "And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14). For every Christian, the resurrection is not only real, but relevant. The reality of the resurrection is central and critical to everything we believe. The evidence is compelling. Jesus rose. But beyond the fact that Jesus came out of the grave, you must answer the questions: Why does it matter? And what does this mean to me personally?

"The Importance Of The Resurrection And How It Affects Us Today"



For one, the resurrection matters today because we can live forgiven lives. Every person lives with the consequences of sin. We all experience brokenness, shame and guilt because sin destroys

everything and everyone in its path. Romans 6:23 says: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." The resurrection means I can be unchained from the bondage of sin and delivered from its power. The first words Jesus stated from the cross are words of forgiveness. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). He lived, died and rose again so that we can be forgiven. His blood cleanses from sin and the risen Redeemer now guarantees that He has conquered sin, death and hell. Because of the resurrection, we know God has accepted the Savior's sacrifice and we are forgiven. If Jesus is still in the grave, we are still in our sins. But because He lives, we can live forgiven and free!

"A Dead Savior Can Forgive No One"



A dead Savior can forgive no one. But our Lord did not die a meaningless death. The resurrection proves that He has the authority to forgive sin, and now we know we are forgiven. Every sin and all the shame are forever gone because they are buried in an empty tomb! Jesus carried our sins to the cross and then the grave. The burial of Jesus is a part of the Gospel: "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the

raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Our sin is forever buried in the grave of God's forgetfulness. He remembers our sin no more. Why? Because Jesus is alive. The lyrics from Wilbur Chapman's hymn "One Day When Heaven Was Filled With Praises" captures this wonderful truth:

"Living, He Loved Me
Dying, He Saved Me
Buried, He Carried My Sins Far Away
Rising, He Justified Freely Forever
One Day He's Coming
Oh Glorious Day, Oh Glorious Day!"



"The Power Of His Resurrection"



"His Divinity
Inhabits Our Humanity"

The resurrection also assures us that Jesus can transform our lives every day. We live empowered by the presence of Jesus to live changed lives. We not only are forgiven, but we are filled with the mighty power

of God Who raised Jesus from the dead. Paul called this "The Power Of The Resurrection." Jesus is no longer someone we know about, He is someone we know. "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death" (Philippians 3:10). The most life-changing truth I have learned as a Christian is the "Saving Life Of Christ." We are not only saved by His death but also by His life—meaning the risen Lord lives in us by His Holy Spirit. His divinity inhabits our humanity.

I can live the Christian life not in my own strength, but in the strength of a risen Savior. We can plug into power every day—Galatians 2:20 power. " I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me."

"Some Question Whether People Can Really Change "



We're being told that people are stuck in a lifestyle and can never be different—that once a person's personality and behavior are set, it is impossible to change. If I believed that, I would close my Bible and never mention Jesus again.

He has changed mine and millions and millions of others through the generations. He transforms the hateful and the angry into loving, caring people. He changes the selfish into generous givers and the immoral into men and women of character. The resurrection raises us from the death of sin to a life of righteousness. The Bible says in Romans 1:4 that Jesus is shown to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead. The mighty power that raised Jesus from the dead is the same resurrection power that lives in us today. So the resurrection means we are forgiven and transformed by the power of the Living Lord. Sin and death have no power over us. We can overcome every temptation and endure every trial because of the resurrection.

"The Risen Christ Lives In Us Day By Day "



The risen Christ lives in us day by day, enabling us to walk in victorious faith and obedience. This is not behavior modification. It is the living, transforming power of Jesus! We have a new life in Christ. The resurrection matters today because we now have a living hope. The Scripture says: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His

great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). There is a purpose for which Christ rose from the dead, and there is a power made available to us through His resurrection. We need to know both the purpose and the power for us to enjoy maximally our relationship with God with the accompanying benefits in this world and in the world to come. "I want to know Christ. I want to know the power of His resurrection." This is Paul's primary desire.