

Why did he Rise? FCC 4-4-21 Resurrection Sunday

Why did Jesus rise from the dead? When we talk about our salvation, or when we describe our salvation to someone, one of the basic points that we mention is that Jesus died for our sins. What we mean by that of course is that Jesus was our substitute. He endured the punishment that we deserve for our sins. That of course is 100% true. But it's only 50% of the truth. The rest of the truth is that Jesus rose from the dead. But why don't we mention that part as often? Think back for a minute- think about your conversations, think about any family devotions you do, think about Sunday school or other discipleship settings, prayer meetings, or other Christian gatherings or events, reflect even on your thought life: how many times have you thought or spoken or heard the statement 'Jesus died for my sins' compared to how many times you have thought or spoken or heard the statement 'Jesus rose from the dead'?

Why does it seem like there is a disparity there? Why does it really seem like we mention Jesus' death more often than we mention his resurrection? It's a shame, really, because the two events belong together. Honestly, what good is a dead messiah, regardless of how he died? What good is a dead messiah, regardless of what meaning we assign to his death? So why don't we mention the resurrection as often as we mention the death of Jesus? And why don't we mention the resurrection of Jesus every time we mention his death, so we keep the two events together?

Maybe there are a few reasons for this- I'll throw four at you.

Maybe it's a habit that is ingrained in the culture of the church that has roots in pre-reformation times but is still part of protestant church culture. Maybe the image of Christ on the cross is more pronounced in our minds than the empty cross. And so we automatically say 'he died for our sins' without mentioning that he rose.

Or maybe the problem isn't church culture, maybe it's secular culture. Maybe we somehow think it will be more acceptable and less

offensive to just say that Jesus died for our sins. People die every day, so to say that Jesus died is not hard to believe. At Christmas we say that Jesus was born- that fact in and of itself is not too hard to swallow because babies are born every day. On Maundy Thursday we recall that Jesus was arrested and falsely accused in a mock trial and suffered unjustly. Prisons today are full of people who would make the same claims. That's not too hard to swallow either. But people rising from the dead? That doesn't happen every day. Many people would say that it has never actually happened, ever. So maybe we fear that mentioning the resurrection will add another layer of complexity and skepticism into our evangelism, and so it's easier to just mention the death of Christ, at least at first. And maybe we aren't even aware that we approach it that way. The basic events of Christmas and Maundy Thursday and Good Friday maybe aren't quite as hard to digest, but the claim of Resurrection Sunday? That's a doozie.

Or maybe it's just laziness- maybe it's shorter and easier to just say that Jesus died for our sins. It takes more time and more breath to add information about the resurrection.

Or maybe the real cause is a big gaping hole in our personal theological understanding. Maybe we don't mention the resurrection because we don't actually know why it's important, or we don't know how to communicate why it's important. Think about this- when we say 'Jesus died' we add the phrase 'for your sins' or we add the phrase 'for my sins'. Those phrases describe what we understand to be the purpose and the meaning of his death. That's not too hard to understand, and that's not too hard to say either. But when it comes to talking about the resurrection, what do we say? What would we say? We could just say 'Jesus rose' and that would be true. And even if that's all we say, we should definitely say it.

But what would we say about it? When we say 'Jesus died' we automatically say something about it. We follow it with a prepositional phrase- 'for my sins' or 'for your sins'. It wouldn't seem right not to say something like that, because if all we say is 'Jesus died' that makes it

sound like his death is like any other person's death. You mourn it and eventually you move on and just keep some nice memories. So we have to say something about the meaning of his death, something that expresses the fact that his death has significance for us almost 2000 years later. So we say something like 'Jesus died for my sins or your sins or everyone's sins'. At a minimum, we should say that. But what if we add that 'Jesus rose'? We could say 'Jesus died for your sins and then he rose'. That would be totally true. That statement would include more of the truth about Jesus. And therefore it would be good to include that fact, that he rose. But something about that feels incomplete, doesn't it? If we were going to say 'Jesus rose for ...' or 'Jesus rose to ...' or 'Jesus rose so that ...' and try to complete our subordinate or prepositional phrase, what would we say? What words would we add?

Maybe we have to admit we don't know what words we would add. To admit that would be to admit that we don't know why Jesus rose from the dead. Or maybe we do at least sort of know why, but we have to admit that we don't know what words to use to express it. Or, we make the error of associating every aspect of our salvation with Jesus' death, and fail to recognize that some parts of our salvation are in fact directly associated with his resurrection. So why did Jesus rise from the dead, exactly? I mean, if he did, which he did, that's amazing and miraculous and for that reason alone we should make a point of saying that he rose. But why did he rise, exactly? How could we complete that sentence 'Jesus rose for...' or 'Jesus rose to...' or 'Jesus rose so that...'?

I want to share with you some Scriptures that will clarify for us why exactly Jesus rose from the dead. And from there maybe we can explore some different words that we could use to complete our phrase that would be brief and to the point, and yet open the door for the power of his resurrection to work in our hearts and lives as well as to work in the hearts and lives of those with whom we share Christ.

I'm going to share 7 facets of the meaning of the resurrection. 7 is a nice number, but I didn't originally intend to share 7. It just sort of worked out that way.

FIRST, Jesus rose because he defeated death.

1Co 15:56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

1Co 15:57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus defeated death by defeating the thing that gives death power, which is sin. He defeated sin by obeying the Law of God, by not sinning, and then sacrificing himself for sin. Death could not hold him, it could not even demand his life from him in the first place, because Jesus was sinless. Death only has power to take life when there is sin in that life. Jesus had no sin, so death had no power to take his life. Jesus laid down his life willingly so that he could experience death.

Joh 10:18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.

I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.

This charge I have received from my Father."

We know that Jesus defeated death because he rose. His rising was the natural result of him defeating death, and it's how we know he defeated death. So we can say Jesus rose because he defeated death.

SECOND, Jesus rose for our justification.

Rom 4:25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

If you are only forgiven of sins you have committed, that alone does not justify you before God; that alone does not make you right with God, because you will continue to sin. You need to actually be righteous- you have to be raised to righteousness. You can't do that, so Jesus took care of that. He was completely righteous and he gives his righteousness to you and me. So by his resurrection his righteousness is given, is imputed or credited, to you. You are raised to righteousness with him. So we could say Jesus rose so we can be justified or given his righteousness.

THIRD, Jesus rose so we can be saved. You might wonder if that's the same thing we just talked about but not exactly. Salvation includes justification but it is much much more than that.

Joh 3:3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Salvation means being completely saved from sin- both it's penalty and it's power. It means actually becoming a new person by being born again. You die to sin and rise to new life. You are a new person over whom sin no longer has power or control. You are reborn into his kingdom.

Rom 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

There you have it, plain as the nose on my face. It is not actually the death of Jesus that provides our complete salvation- it is his life, his rising from the dead. He was born out of the grave, he rose from the dead for us, so that we can be reborn- so that our sinful self can be killed and our new self can be raised to life. So we could say Jesus rose so we can be saved from sin, so we can be reborn, be a new person.

FOURTH, Jesus rose so we can be children of God.

Joh 1:12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

Joh 1:13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Who does it say has the right to become children of God? Those who believe in Jesus' name. He is Immanuel, God with us. If he had only died, he could not be called a name that means God with us, because if he had merely died, he would not have been God. If he can't defeat death, he can't be God. So his resurrection shows that he is God. To believe in his name is to believe in his death AND his resurrection. It is that complete package of his death and resurrection, and only that, that makes us able to be reborn and adopted as God's children. Belief in Jesus' name, a name only given to he who would die and rise again, is

the only requirement for being adopted by God. So we could say Jesus rose so we can be children of God.

FIFTH, Jesus rose so he could give us the HS.

Joh 16:7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father so that he could send the HS, the Helper, to us. Ascending to the Father's right hand marked the completion of his work to defeat sin, which enabled the HS to be sent out to draw all people to Christ and to dwell in every person who believes in his name. Beyond that there is a very long list of things the HS does in us and for us and through us, which is why it was so important for Jesus to send him. So we could say Jesus rose so we can have the HS.

SIXTH, Jesus rose so that we can have a new body.

Joh 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,

Joh 11:26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

For all who believe in Jesus, death is not the end, but only the beginning, only a fleeting moment of transition, from this earthly life to heavenly life. But that is still not the end. That time of spiritual life in the presence of Christ will one day become physical life.

1Co 15:21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

At God's appointed time, Christ will return, and all who believe will be resurrected, their spirits will be given new bodies, recognizable but imperishable, fit to live in the new earth that Jesus will create. His resurrection guarantees our resurrection. So we could say that Jesus rose so we can have a new body, and live in a new city on a new earth.

SEVENTH, Jesus rose because that is his nature.

Joh 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,

Joh 11:26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Notice the way Jesus describes himself- he says 'I am the resurrection and the life'. He is not saying that rising from the dead or giving life are merely tasks that he performs. Rather, these are his nature, this is who he is. He does not just have life or give life, he is the life. He does not just resurrect himself or others, he is the resurrection. He rose from the dead not to check off another item on the list of things he needed to do. He rose from the dead because resurrection is his nature. He is the life. His resurrection is the natural outpouring of that. His giving of life to us is the natural outpouring of that. You don't have to convince Jesus to give you life. He's dying to give it to you, literally, like he died and rose so he could give it to you. So we could say Jesus rose because he is life.

CONCLUSION

In Philippians 3:10 Paul uses this phrase "that I may know him and the power of his resurrection". These 7 points I have shared are just a brief summary of the power of his resurrection. If you want that resurrection power in your life, if you want to have all those things that Jesus rose from the dead to give to you, Romans 10:9 tells you how.

Rom 10:9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

The fact is, believing that Jesus was born will not save you. Believing that he was a good teacher, or even that he did miracles, will not save you. Believing that he was betrayed, arrested, tried, and flogged will not save you. Believing that he died by crucifixion, believing that alone, will not save you. But believe and confess that he is the Lord who rose from the dead, and you will be saved. Let us pray.