

HE LIVES!

I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today!
 I know that He is living, whatever men may say!
 I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer,
 and just the time I need Him, He's always near!

*He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today!
 He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way!
 He lives! He lives, salvation to impart!
 You ask me how I know He lives?
 He lives within my heart!*

In all the world around me, I see His loving care;
 and though my heart grows weary, I never will despair;
 I know that He is leading through all the stormy blast;
 the day of His appearing will come at last!

Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian, lift up your voice and sing
 eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ the King!
 The Hope of all who seek Him, the Help of all who find,
 None other is so loving, so good, and kind!

This is our testimony today! Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God made Man, who died for our sins according to the Scriptures and was buried, was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures! He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today!

Here's the roadmap for the message this morning. We'll start with the Old Testament prophecies and types of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We'll see that Jesus Himself prophesied His death and resurrection. We'll see that the resurrection is a historical reality that carries theological implications. Finally, we'll close with the implications of Christ's resurrection for our daily lives.

PROPHECIES AND TYPES

Jesus Christ is the dominant focus of all Scripture. His resurrection is part of the biblical narrative from the earliest chapters of Genesis. As the sounds of the fall are echoing through the garden, Yahweh makes a promise that is wonderful to us and dreadful to Satan:

15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed [**Jesus Christ**]; He shall bruise you on the head [**a wound which brings death**], And you shall bruise him on the heel [**a serious wound, coming from a serpent, but which would be overcome by life**].” (**Genesis 3:15, 2022 LSB**)

In Acts 13, while preaching the synagogue at Psidian Antioch, the apostle Paul cites Psalm 16:10. Listen to the joyful, exultant words of King David:

7 I will bless Yahweh who has counseled me; Indeed, my mind instructs me in the night. **8** I have set Yahweh continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. **9** Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. **10 For You will not forsake my soul to Sheol; You will not give Your Holy One over to see corruption.** **11** You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever. (**Psalm 16:7–11, 2022 LSB**)

Beyond the prophecies, we also see a number of types and shadows of Christ’s resurrection. What sort of type and shadows do we see?

In Genesis 22, Yahweh commands Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, his only son. It was on the third day that Abraham went up Mount Moriah to offer Isaac.

7 Then Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” And he said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” **8** And Abraham said, “God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together. (**Genesis 22:7–8, 2022 LSB**)

Abraham built the altar, then bound his son and laid him on the altar. The knife was raised in the air, about to descend, when Yahweh calls from heaven and gives him the life of his son. Abraham saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket and offered it in praise to Yahweh-Jireh, Yahweh who provides. Hebrews 11:17-19 says,

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only son, **18** to whom it was said, “**IN ISAAC YOUR SEED SHALL BE CALLED.**” **19** **He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he also received him back. (Hebrews 11:17–19, 2022 LSB)**

I could also speak about Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob, who was betrayed by his brothers, sold into slavery, counted as dead, and given back to his father not only alive but in a position of power and glory. What’s more, Joseph forgave his brothers as Jesus forgave those who crucified Him. Joseph said to them,

20 “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to do what has happened on this day, to keep many people alive. **(Genesis 50:20, 2022 LSB)**

I could speak about Jonah the prophet, swallowed by the great fish, and as good as dead, only to be brought alive to the shore after three days.

I could speak of the hope of Israel expressed in Hosea 6:2,

1 “Come, let us return to Yahweh. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has struck us, but He will bandage us. **2** He will make us alive after two days; **He will raise us up on the third day, That we may live before Him. (Hosea 6:1–2, 2022 LSB)**

CHRIST’S PROPHECIES

Jesus Himself spoke about His own resurrection. At the outset of His ministry, He said to the Jews,

19 Jesus answered them, “Destroy this sanctuary, and **in three days I will raise it up.**” **20** The Jews then said, “It took forty-six years to build this sanctuary, and will You raise it up in three days?” **21** But He was speaking about the sanctuary of His body. **(John 2:19–21, 2022 LSB)**

Later on, He said,

26 “For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; **(John 5:26, 2022 LSB)**

The same life in the Father is in the Son; He would voluntarily submit Himself to death, but the life in

Him would never lose its power.

Of course, in the year prior to His crucifixion, Jesus began to give His disciples detailed preparations for what was to come:

21 From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, **and be raised up on the third day.** (Matthew 16:21, 2022 LSB)

22 And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; **23** and they will kill Him, **and He will be raised on the third day.**” And they were deeply grieved. (Matthew 17:22–23, 2022 LSB)

32 And they were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were fearful. And again He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him: **33** “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will deliver Him over to the Gentiles. **34** And they will mock Him and spit on Him, and flog Him and kill Him, **and three days later He will rise again.**” (Mark 10:32–34, 2022 LSB)

Let’s pause and think about this. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the dominant focus of Scripture. His suffering, death, and resurrection are found throughout the Old Testament in prophecies, types, figures, and shadows. Nothing about Jesus’ life, including His suffering, death, burial, and resurrection, came as a surprise to Him. He knew what was coming; He knew when it would happen and how; and, He carefully prepared His disciples for what was to happen.

CRUCIFIED, DEAD, AND BURIED

Just as the Old Testament prophets predicted, just as a number of Old Testament types and shadows depicted, just as Jesus Himself said, He was arrested, abused, and crucified; He died, yielding up His own life (because it could not be taken from Him) and was buried.

This is a historical reality. Jesus died on a Roman cross at Golgatha, a low hill in Jerusalem that resembles a skull. Why was He crucified? The Scriptures are clear. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (First Timothy 1:15). Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (First Corinthians 15:3). Jesus was pierced

through for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities (Isaiah 53:5). His blood was poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28). God publicly displayed His Son as a propitiatory sacrifice (Romans 3:25). The Father released us from our sins by the blood of Christ (Revelation 1:5). Christ died for the ungodly (Romans 5:6). Christ suffered for sins once for all time, being put to death in the flesh (First Peter 3:18).

Having died, Jesus was buried. Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate's permission to bury the Lord. Pilate was surprised that Jesus was already dead and sent for the centurion overseeing Jesus' execution. The centurion confirmed that Jesus was dead, so Pilate gave permission for His burial.

59 And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, **60** and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away. **(Matthew 27:59–60, 2022 LSB)**

Jesus was crucified, dead, and buried. One more thing remained in the redemption of His people.

HE IS NOT HERE . . .

The four Gospels tell the same story. As dawn was breaking, women came to the tomb to finish anointing Jesus' body, but they discovered the stone rolled away and the tomb empty! They told the disciples, who at first thought they joking. Paul gives us the history in First Corinthians 15:3-8:

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **4** and that He was buried, and that **He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures**, **5** and that He appeared to **Cephas**, then to **the twelve**. **6** After that He appeared to **more than five hundred brothers at one time**, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep. **7** After that, He appeared to **James**, then to **all the apostles**, **8** and last of all, as to one untimely born, **He appeared to me also**. **(1 Corinthians 15:3–8, 2022 LSB)**

The Gospel is not just that Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, and was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. The Gospel is that Jesus went on to appear to many over a period of 40 days. The Gospel is that the redemptive purpose of God was planned in eternity past, and has a profound impact on eternity future, but is also anchored in historical reality. When Paul wrote those words, most of the witnesses to the resurrected Jesus were still alive.

The Old Testament Scriptures promised His resurrection. They depicted His resurrection in various types and shadows. Jesus said repeatedly that He would not only rise from the dead but that He would raise Himself from the dead, solid proof of His divine nature. No one saw the moment of His resurrection; that was private, between Himself, the Father, and the Holy Spirit. But many hundreds saw the living Jesus in the weeks following the resurrection. I have to think that many more saw the empty tomb. The soldiers saw that it was empty before they reported what happened. The women saw that it was empty. Peter and John ran to the tomb and saw that it was empty. Peter went inside and saw only the linen wrappings lying on the bench. The biblical narrative moves on, but it's only reasonable to think that the other disciples also visited the tomb, or that the soldiers went back. I think the chief priests, scribes, Sadducees, Pharisees, and others must have gone to the tomb to see for themselves. Perhaps over the next few weeks, more people saw the empty tomb than saw the raised Jesus!

BECAUSE HE LIVES . . .

The resurrection of Jesus Christ brings some theological implications. The Father was glorified as Jesus accomplished all that He came to do. Romans 1:4 says that Jesus, who was always Lord, was *publicly declared* to be Lord by His resurrection. Satan, sin, and death are conquered for all time.

Now, we have to say that Jesus' resurrection is not good news for those who remain in their sins. Paul preached in Athens,

30 “Having therefore overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now commanding men that everyone everywhere should repent, **31** because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He determined, **having furnished proof to all by raising Him from the dead.” (Acts 17:30–31, 2022 LSB)**

How is Christ's resurrection proof of inevitable judgment? Look in your mind's eye at Jesus on the cross, suffering, dying, bearing the awful weight of sin, shrouded in darkness – that suffering and judgment is what every sinner deserves! And it is what every sinner will receive if they do not turn to Jesus in faith, casting their sin and guilt on Him. There, on the cross, is the emblem of God's love for His people and God's wrath toward the wicked. The same event that causes true Christians indescribable joy should cause unbelievers to shiver and tremble in fear of the judgment to come.

But there's good news for those who trust in Christ! Jesus' resurrection also safeguards our salvation. This

is because Jesus' resurrection is sure and certain evidence of God's eternal, enduring love for us. Jesus' resurrection makes salvation an eternal blessing; that's why we are born again to a *living* hope. And as surely as Jesus' death washed away all our sins, once and for all time, His resurrection assures us that we stand fully and perfectly justified before God the Father. Jesus' resurrection secures OUR resurrection!

But there's even more! Jesus' resurrection also changes the very meaning of our daily lives. Because He lives, we are called to keep seeking the things above, where He is, setting our minds on things above, not earthly things (Colossians 3:1-4). Because He lives, we have a strong motivation to live a faithful, fruitful life for God's glory (Romans 7:4). Because He lives, we have the assurance God is at peace with us today, at this very moment. Because He lives, every day, no matter what the day brings, we who are in Christ have every reason for hope and no reasons at all for despair! (Romans 8:23-25; First Peter 1:3).

Douglas Wilson writes,

When Christ came out of the grave, He walked into an old world that had at that moment been made new in principle. The world had been a universal graveyard, nothing but death everywhere, **but now here was untouchable life, walking around in it.**

So when He went to the cross, He transformed **death**. When He was laid in the grave, He sanctified all of our future **graves**. And then, when He rose from the dead, **He entered into a world made new.**

But it was not His sovereign good will to transform everything instantly by throwing a breaker or anything. Something like that will have to wait until the Second Coming.

We can put it this way, in fact – perhaps you would stand and sing it with me:

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow!

Because He lives, all fear is gone!

Because I know, I know who holds the future!

My life is worth the living, just because He lives.