

Salvation Won, Death Done

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- [0 : 0 0] I may have told you before about the wee Glasgow man who was wonderfully converted and became a Christian and wanted to be baptized on the ensuing Easter Sunday.
- And his young pastor met him during the week before and said that on Sunday he would say, in the course of the service when the baptism came round, he would say, Jesus Christ is risen today.
- And then he said to the man, and you say he is risen indeed. So that was the plan. Sunday came, the baptism point came, and the young pastor said, Jesus Christ is risen today.
- There was a pause, and more of a pause had the wee man from Glasgow forgotten what he had to say, and then he said to the pastor, I am your right son, and there is no doubt about it.
- It's Easter. It's Resurrection Day, and I may have said this before too, that if Jesus did not rise in the body, all we have is a ghost for a Savior.
- [1 : 2 2] But he did, and we haven't. So let's take our red pens and underline the tablet of our hearts.
- What the angels at this tomb said, he has risen. And if there's any doubt about that, then the renovations here have been in vain.
- We have no gospel to tell in the mission field we go out to every time we go out the front door. Isn't that what it tells us?
- We are living a lie. We are telling a lie. We have nothing life and world changing to tell the world or your friend next door that's going to change and do any good for anyone more than what they have from the world already.
- Not a ghost. Raise bodily a living Savior. Nay, doot, about it. And this evening we want to consider what flows from the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.
- [2 : 3 2] And we could sing the duxology to answer that, praise God from whom all blessings flow. Specifically, we might say, what a friend we have in Jesus if we've trusted Him as our Savior to whom we may take everything in prayer.
- Blessing. I love these two lines from the prayer of a Christian from a past day. It's to do with being able to come to God as still sinners.
- Addressing God it says, I bring Jesus to thee in the arms of faith, pleading His righteousness to offset my inequities.
- What a picture of the truth that is. Seeing the living Lord Jesus who has died for sin in the arms of faith to our God and Father saying in effect, Father, here's my perfect Savior.
- Look on His perfection and accept me because of Him. Such a blessing flows from the resurrection. Your acceptance in the person of Christ who therefore needs to be and is alive from the resurrection all blessings flow.
- [4 : 0 4] But here are two specifics tonight and we'll say that they are, we'll put it this way, forgiveness one and death done, forgiveness one and death done.

Forgiveness one. What does Paul say to the Romans at the last verse of chapter four? He says Jesus Christ was delivered over death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

But then we need to ask the question hearing that, don't we? What's the tie up between the Lord's being raised and forgiveness?

Well there are at least two things. Of course we don't separate His death from His resurrection. The Savior died and rose again.

He died to take our place and pay His sins price and did so awfully, fearfully. We may not know, we cannot tell what pains He had to bear in being forsaken by His eternal Father in heaven who cannot look on evil or tolerate wrong.

[5 : 24] But God raised Him and for one thing said by doing so it is indeed finished. The price indeed is paid.

The fact that His Father, the Father raised His Son was the Father confirming that to His absolute satisfaction the work to pay for sin by Him instead of us was done and that we can now be justified right in His sight.

And of course that takes us, doesn't it, to what Paul also says, Romans 8 verse 1, in Christ there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

If we are in Christ, in Him, trusting Him as our Savior, there is now no condemnation from God. We are right with Him in His sight and is that not forgiveness?

A gloriously cleaned slate. And the other thing, note this, think about this, get the divine logic of this too.

[6 : 45] If we are forgiven, justified, made right in God's sight when we put our trust in Him or to use how the New Testament often describes that in Christ.

If we are in Christ, joined to Christ, trusting in Christ, how on earth could we do that if He hadn't risen and wasn't alive?

You can't trust a still dead Jesus. So I've raised my son who died to forgive, to confirm, to confirm it was absolutely enough to pay his price and for me to forgive you and you are and will be justified.

Right with me when you trust Him and He has to be alive so that you can do. So there is now no condemnation for those who are in Him, in the living Christ.

That is, forgiveness is one. But let's not just sit back. We may know the Him, O happy day with its chorus, when Jesus washed my sins away.

[8 : 18] And if you don't, you may remember it if you've seen one of the Sister Act films where the choir at the Catholic Convent in New York was singing it in front of the Pope.

Anyway, the second verse goes, it is done, the great transaction is done. And so it is, Jesus paid it all and we don't have to pay anything more.

But don't sit back. The gospel of what God has done has to be taken down, drawn down. The living truth of it has to be taken and experienced ourselves and by others.

And how is that done? Here's this, justification, that is, God's forgiving and declaring us right now with Himself is not only an act of God, but a spiritual experience.

It is dependent on faith. And it is realized in men and women, one by one, in the time determined by providence that they receive the gospel.

[9 : 28] In other words, when the truth of what God has done in the Lord Jesus comes to the ear of our hearts in whatever way it does and when and however it does for each of us in God's providence and timing and we receive it.

When we say, Lord, I want it, I want you, I want to know my sin is forgiven, I want to turn away from my sin and sins that made Jesus die.

Then the fresh air, the wonderful confidence that our sin is forgiven, that we have peace with God, God's at peace with us, that there is now no condemnation.

Then the forgiveness that was won at the cross becomes the spiritual experience. That is the assurance that we have of it right deep down in our hearts, not only an act of God but a spiritual experience.

Do you know, put it this way, is your heart sure that I am His and He is mine?

[10 : 52] Two things also, though, must be said. One on the way to forgiveness and the other from forgiveness.

On the way to leading to forgiveness, it is all to do with Jesus dying and dying, taking our place where we should have been.

Remember Barabbas? The murderer, Pilate, let off in place of Jesus, sentenced Jesus instead. We could well wonder if he said to himself with guilt and shame, as perhaps he watched the Lord Jesus die on the cross instead of him, we might well wonder if he said, I should have been there.

And unless that's our heart, unless I realize my sins, that are that serious to God, that that's what I deserve, separation completely from Him, then I am not going to come wanting forgiveness.

I might feel I don't need it, or maybe okay just a bit. This is true, isn't it? Why should we be interested in someone who died to take our place unless we first understood that we deserve the curse he bore?

[12 : 29] We celebrate the resurrection today in so forgiveness, but we need God to make us know that we need it.

Otherwise, we won't be interested in it or come to Jesus for it. To forgiveness.

And from forgiveness is the fact that if we've come and received it, taken the Lord Jesus and have it, are Christians, then what follows, we must forgive.

And so as a Christian, can there be any fragment of an attitude that says, I can't forgive that. They've gone too far this time.

This is something I cannot overlook. How do you expect me to forgive them when they've done that? I can't let go of my grudge against them.

[13 : 33] In fact, I won't let go of it. Here's the truth of the matter. There's never going to be any comings and goings between us again. Now we're talking about Christians, remember?

You see, it's easy to say yes in one sense, to say, oh, I know the gospel. I know what the resurrection is confirmed. I've received it to myself.

I've trusted the Lord Jesus myself. But what about the resurrection? Yes, so forgiveness. God forgiving us. But what about us then forgiving the next person?

The person in the office on Monday after what they said or did last week, or that one at school, or that parent or relative that we haven't spoken to for a long while.

You see, we don't just sit back after we have trusted the living Lord Jesus. We forgive as we have been forgiven.

[14 : 44] And which debt is bigger? The debt that we have built up against God and the accumulation of our sins which He has forgiven?

Or the debt that someone has accrued against us by that offence He or she gave us ten years ago or last week because we haven't spoken to them since?

Or not forgiven? Somewhat things someone said to you even this morning and you've been mad at them all afternoon? There's a question mark here, isn't there?

There's a challenge to think about. If we continually harbour enmity, grudges, bitterness in our hearts, we not only harm and jeopardise our relationships, but we also call into question whether we've ever truly discovered the nature of God's forgiveness at all.

But the question mark, the question mark, can we say we are Christians forgiven by God at all?

[15 : 56] Blessed assurance, yes. Resurrection, so forgiveness, forgiveness one. What about the one in the office or school or at home?

Then resurrection, so death done. If I was to ask you what is the purpose of John's gospel, why did John write about the Lord Jesus and what he did?

What would you say? Now it might be a good question for a Bible study group round the tables. But I expect you'll know the answer because John tells us about what it was, why he wrote his gospel.

In John 20 verse 31, these things are written, and by the way he wrote many more, or he could have written many, much more.

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book, my gospel. But these things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you might have life in his name.

[17 : 18] Why John wrote his gospel? And just take the times when John, in John's gospel, and they're the same in the other gospels when the Lord Jesus raised people to life again.

They had died and he worked resurrection. Remember Jairus' daughter in Mark 5, the widow of Nain's son in Luke 7, and Lazar of course in John 11.

And who else can do that? And so they point to who he is, Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God. Don't you think that follows?

Pointers signposts to who he was, is, and what he would do himself to declare without doubt, this is who I am.

All roads lead to that. All threads join and draw to that. Son of God, who would rise with death done?

[18 : 27] But we need to dig a little deeper here to find gold. Resurrection so, death done. Now we realize, of course, that we are not just talking about there being no more funerals.

Sadly, we know that's not true. Or will it be until the believer goes home or Jesus comes again and then there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain and he will wipe all tears from their eyes.

So how does resurrection mean death done? Well it's tied in so much with what we've already said, that old and familiar prophecy of Isaiah 53-6 and the Lord laying on him the iniquity of us all, which of course we know he did on his son at the cross.

Indeed we might say that the very heart of the matter on the cross was when he cried, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Forsakenness by God. Hell came to Calvary that day. The wages of sin is death. That death. The death of separation from our maker.

[19 : 47] Why would we be interested in someone who died to take our place in suffering that unless we first understood that we deserved the curse he bore, the separation from his father he experienced, the suffering he suffered, the death he died.

That was the death he died. And that was the death he was raised from. Could we say that God the Father was saying in like mode of what he said to Noah after the flood, Genesis 9 verse 11, he said, never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood.

Never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth. And here God is saying, death of being separated from me so utterly and absolutely is done.

It will never for you as a believer be again. Faith in Jesus brings you into the position of no condemnation.

It will never bring you into the position of having any condemnation again. There will be forgiveness, the closeness of a relationship with me and that will never end.

[21 : 23] And if you are a believer, that separation, that death is done. Now, of course, we shall still gather round gravesides.

Of course, there are still tears. Of course, there will be illnesses that lead to death. Of course, there will be tragic accidents and tragedies and sometimes that and huge scales.

Of course, we live in the not yet where death at every level will be done. And let me read gently an insight from Isaiah speaking of those who are taken from us, not minimizing the loss and who are God's people taken from us.

Isaiah 57:1 says, the righteous perish and no one ponders it in his heart. Devout men are taken away and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil.

Those who walk up rightly enter into peace. They find rest as they lie in death. A truth, an insight, a wonderful insight, one way to think when a friend or a loved one who loves the Lord is taken.

[23 : 04] But flowing from the resurrection and death at heart being done, no more condemnation, is it any wonder that the Bible speaks of the believer's death in soft terms, in assuring terms, in wonderful terms, in lovely terms, when it speaks of the believer's death being 2 Corinthians 5:8, away from the body and at home with the Lord.

When the repentant thief is assured that today he would be with me, says Christ in paradise. When Paul says that he desires to be with Christ, for that is far better when the Lord Jesus speaks about his Father's house or dwelling place, which is of course heaven, and what could be more wonderful than that.

Not done yet at this level, our day-to-day experience level. But every time we read them at a graveside, they remain true.

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live. Be alive with Christ, though dead from here.

And whoever lives and believes in me will never die. The life we have in Christ in being a Christian now won't ever stop.

[24 : 55] The life that's our relationship with God in Christ. And we know if we are a believer, what that means now, don't we? Well it will be transposed into another key and will be forever.

Then death will be done. Into my mind comes the picture of a fountain, its water gushing from its base up and out, and the sun catching.

This spout of water makes it shine and sparkle in the fullness of its flow. From the base of the resurrection flows life giving waters of truth just the same.

And we have given our attention just to two of them tonight. Forgiveness one and death done. But what a two.

He is no ghost our Savior who rose bodily. He lives, he lives. Christ Jesus lives today and He walks with us, talks with us along life's narrow way.

[26 : 13] There's a lovely hymn about Mary in the garden saying, much as we sang earlier on, but another hymn about Mary in the garden that first Easter morning.

And it has these two verses in it, verses four and five. Came Mary to the garden and sobbed with heart forlorn.

She thought, she heard the gardener ask, whom seek us thou this morning? She heard her own name spoken.

And then she lost her care all in his strength and beauty. The risen Lord stood fair.

And really for now with death not yet done in experience, though at the horrible heart of things it is, isn't that the Christians, what shall we call it, spiritual, holy and happy experience?

[27 : 20] He knows our name. In his presence by his Holy Spirit he's always there. And when we know that ultimately our cares can be lost too.

And when our Jordan comes we know that there will be death of death and hell escaped and he will have landed us safely on Canaan, on eternity's side.

And the kingdom of this world will have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he will reign forever.

Ghost for a Savior? Not a bit of it. God to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead.

He's our Savior. What a one and a simple but really the profoundest question out is he yours.

[28 : 31] Let us pray. Our gracious and our loving Heavenly Father for all the flowing blessings from the fact of our Savior's bodily real resurrection which we celebrate today, how we thank you.

Thank you that because he rose and paid the price of sin by his death you said, that's enough, it is finished.

And we thank you too that because he rose one day death will be fully done. But Lord we bless you that we have life in him even before that day comes and we pray that we might live in the fullness of it and serving you in it for Jesus' sake.

Amen.