

Christ is risen! [Risen indeed!] The resurrection of Jesus from the dead changes everything. If this world had not been redeemed by God, then no matter what was learned or discovered or thought or accomplished here on earth, it would all end in death. But the resurrection means *the death of death*. Death is no longer the unstoppable, inevitable, universal, end of existence for everyone and everything. Death is dead, because Christ overcame death by rising again. Because Christ is alive, and since His new life fills everything, the heavens and earth will not be eternally destroyed, but renewed, and filled with God's people in their new resurrection bodies. Because Jesus is making all things new, everything that happens here on earth matters for eternity.

But in the glorious sweep of that all-encompassing good news, it's easy to be overwhelmed. The claim that *the resurrection changes everything* is so big that it's almost *too* big for our minds to make sense of. It's like hearing about billions of dollars, or that the earth is 93 million miles away from the sun. For most of us, those numbers are impressive, but meaningless. They're just too big.

But I don't want the great truth that the resurrection changes everything to become a meaningless slogan for you, and so this morning, we're going to take that grand universal truth, and show how it applies in seven particular areas. What difference does the resurrection make for your life right now? What does it mean for the way you live and move and have your being, now that death is dead?

Here are seven truths for us:

1. The first has to do with ***faith***: Now that death is dead, ***believe in Jesus***. Believe that He is the Son of God. Believe that He has atoned for sin and overcome the devil. Believe every Word that comes from His mouth. Listen to how Paul begins his letter to the Romans: "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, ...set apart for the gospel of God...concerning his Son, who **...was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord**". The resurrection is making a declaration about Jesus: by rising from the dead, His identity as the Son of God is confirmed beyond the shadow of a doubt. Ever since Jesus rose from the dead, there is no longer any excuse *not* to believe.
 - a. And in John 20:8, we see the resurrection having this effect on John himself. When Peter and John hear from Mary that the tomb is empty, they run to the tomb, and as soon as John goes in and sees that it's empty, he *believes*. Here is the ultimate answer to the question: "Why should I believe in Jesus?" "Because He rose from the dead, just like He said." This is what the resurrection means for you and for the world: now that death is dead, believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

2. The second point relates to **fear**: Now that death is dead, **don't fear death!** Hebrews 2 says that the fear of death is a kind of slavery that keeps people trapped their whole lives. They can't fully enjoy anything in life because of the threat of death that could take it all away in an instant. Maybe you've felt that fear, the dread of uncertainty about what really happens at death, or where you will go when you die. If you know that fear, then the resurrection offers you good news: Your great enemy, that horrible slavemaster that kept you in his chains of fear, fought Jesus Christ to the death, and lost. As 1 Cor. 15 says, death is swallowed up in victory. Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord! The reason Jesus came, according to Heb. 2, was so that he could destroy the one who had the power of death, the devil, setting free those who were enslaved by that fear, and that's exactly what happened when Jesus walked out of the tomb that Sunday morning.
 - a. And so now, not only do Christians *not need* to fear death, Christians *may not* fear death! It's not a matter of permission, it's a matter of command. If you still fear death, then you've found a place where you don't believe in Jesus. Now, hear me: if you, as a Christian, still do find yourself fearing death, the worst thing you can do is hide that fact because now you are worried that the pastor will think you are a bad Christian. Fear loves to hide; it hates the light. So if you are still afraid, come talk to me, talk to a trusted Christian friend. Bring your fear into the light, and let Jesus overcome it. Now that death is dead, don't fear death anymore.
3. The third gift that the resurrection gives has to do with **grief**: Now that death is dead, **don't grieve hopelessly**. Listen to 1 Thess. 4:13-14: "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep."
 - a. Jesus wants us to encourage one another with these words, because Christians still grieve. We all know grief, and for some of you, that grief is very fresh and raw and painful. And grief is a gift to you from God, giving you emotions and feelings and weeping and tears so that your love has a way to deal with loss. Grief is a gift. And so God doesn't tell you not to grieve. Weeping is *good*. Mourning is *right*. But in the middle of your grief, God gives you another gift: the gift of hope. Hope that your hot tears and aching heart are not how love always ends. Love does not always end in grief; love ends in joy, because Jesus rose from the dead and because He will raise all who trust in Him.

- b. But since you still have grief right now, since the fullness of joy hasn't broken over the world *yet*, God gives us *hope* until He makes all things new. Hope that death is not the end. Hope that you will see your loved ones again, healthy, strong, and happy, perfected in the presence of God. That hope is not *sentiment* or *wishful thinking*; that hope is a *reality*, because Jesus rose from the dead. So now that death is dead, do not grieve as those who have no hope.
4. Fourth, Jesus' resurrection gives you a job to do: Now that death is dead, "I shall not die, but I shall live, *and recount the deeds of the Lord.*" That's Psalm 118:17, and that's your job. Since you now share in undying life, tell everyone what God has done! A big part of the reason for your life is to bear witness to Jesus' resurrection and the hope you have because of it. Your mouth gets resurrected for a reason! Use it! Our reading from Acts 10 told us this: we've been chosen as witnesses, commanded to preach to the people and testify about Jesus! In particular, we testify about two things: one, that Jesus is the one who will judge the living and the dead, and two, by faith in Jesus, we are forgiven so that we can survive that judgment. Judgment is coming, but you can be forgiven. How do we know that? Because of the resurrection. Now that death is dead, bear witness for Jesus!
5. Fifth, the resurrection and sin do not play well together. Now that death is dead, ***stop sinning!*** I'll let Romans 6 do the talking here: "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."
 - a. Because you are united to Christ, you share in His life. You joined Him in death through baptism, and you've been raised with Him to new life. But this means that you are *alive*, so stop doing dead person stuff! Sin is for dead people, but you're alive. Never think for a moment that Jesus died so that it wouldn't matter what you did; so that you could live however you wanted to. No, Jesus died and overcame death so that you could stop piling up death for yourself. Now that death is dead, you are dead to sin, and alive to God.

6. The sixth application of the resurrection comes from Col. 3:1-2: “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.”
- a. The resurrection changes your mindset, your thought patterns. Stop worrying about what you will eat, what you will drink, what you will wear, how you will pay that bill, whether your latest health crisis will kill you. Maybe you’ve *met* someone like this, maybe you *are* someone like this; someone whose life is consumed by momentary concerns about things here on earth. We call it *stress*, and unless whatever you’re worrying about has the power to put Jesus back in the grave, then the resurrection means that you have better things to think about! Stress is a signal that you’ve forgotten Christ’s resurrection and yours. Next time you feel stressed out, remember this: now that death is dead, ***set your mind on things above***.
7. Seventh and finally, now that death is dead, ***rejoice and be glad!*** Psalm 118:24 gets put on posters all the time: “this is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”, as if every day were “this is the day”. But what day is Psalm 118 talking about? It’s talking about the day where just a few verses earlier the psalmist said: “I shall not die, but shall live.” ***Resurrection day*** is the day the Lord has made for us to rejoice and be glad in, and as long as it’s the resurrection you’re rejoicing in, yes, by all means, rejoice every day! Be genuinely, really, truly *happy* that Jesus rose! And do what happy people do – sing, dance, eat, drink, laugh, rejoice!
- a. Rejoice that death is dead! Rejoice that Jesus is alive! Be glad that your enemy is defeated, and your Savior is risen! Rejoice that your faith is founded on fact! Be glad that fear is gone! Rejoice that tears of grief tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning! Be glad to testify that forgiveness is found in Jesus! Rejoice that sin no longer has dominion over you! Be glad to set your mind on things above! Now that death is dead, rejoice and be glad, because Christ is risen! [He is risen indeed!]
- *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.*

Let us pray: “With joy we praise you, gracious God, for you have created heaven and earth, made us in Your image, and kept covenant with us— even when we fell into sin. We give you thanks for Jesus Christ, our Lord, who by his glorious resurrection overcame the power of sin and gave us new life. Therefore we join our voices with all the saints and angels and the whole creation to proclaim the glory of your name. Glory be to the loving Father! Glory be to the Risen Son! Glory be to the Spirit of Life, now and forever, **Amen!**”¹

¹ Adapted from *The Worship Sourcebook*, 2nd edition, N.8.2.4, pg. 658.