

Power of a risen Christ (Quality: Good)

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Date: 26 April 1976

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- [0 : 00] The first epistle to the Corinthians chapter 15, with the Lord's help we will speak from verse 14.
- First epistle to the Corinthians chapter 15, verse 14. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain.
- And your face is also vain. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your face is also vain.
- Everything depended upon the risen Savior. And apart from this, Paul saw complete loss and failure.
- All his toil, labor, all his exercise, all his preaching, and everything associated with worship, but vanity.
- [1 : 17] It hung upon a rotten thread. It was fixed upon a false foundation. And it would all come to naught if Christ be not risen.
- And he speaks like this because he had experienced that Christ is risen. And because Christ met him.
- His resurrection glory, when he called him at Damascus Gate. When he wrote such an effectual change in him, that could be nothing else but divine power.
- And having experienced the resurrection power of Christ, he was able to declare with all authority that it was a truth, and that Christ was risen from the dead.
- That he had ascended the right hand of his Father for an infinite purpose. And that purpose was to exercise resurrection power.
- [2 : 36] That power was to exercise resurrection power. That power was to be concentrated in the quickening of the people for whom he died. That his holy eye would such them out.
- The appointed time would come when he would call them. That he would carry on his holy work in spite of all resistance.
- That he would finally ingather them to his eternal kingdom, to his everlasting praise and his glory.
- But, the apostle met with those who said there was no resurrection. They did so in the time of Christ, you will remember.
- The Sadducees say there is no resurrection. And this is common evil and wickedness today.
- [3 : 51] It is very, very current. Nature hasn't changed at all from the time of the apostle or even the time of Adam.
- And the thought of eternity. A resurrection. A time when this corruptible was put on incorruption.
- When we shall be changed. When we shall be changed. When we shall be changed. When we shall be changed. When we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. And not slip away unobserved in the crowd.

When individually we must and shall receive our individual condemnation.

or else our individual acceptance, the thought of this paralyzes the human mind.

[5 : 08] The only way of escape is to deny it. And this it does. And does it with pleasure, though without certainty.

It's always that possibility. And nature is one of those mighty powers which teaches the ungodly.

Though they will not admit it, they dare not admit that there is a creator, yet they dare not deny that there is one who revives nature and keeps it alive.

And when a particular period for nature to run her course through spring and summer has come, then comes the season of dark winter.

And although men will go so far as to admit to this, as they obviously must, it still does not bring with it that knowledge which is spoken of by the Apostle as great.

[6 : 29] there is an entirely separate, different work altogether in the resurrection of the whole resurrection unto eternal life.

The words that I speak unto you, said Jesus, they are eternal. The well of water that the poor woman at the well heard about was referred to as being a well of water springing up unto eternal life.

And this word eternal stands both for eternal banishment and eternal blessings. It cannot be diminished in either case.

You wouldn't want it to as regards eternal bliss. But you may well want it to as regards eternal banishment, but there will be no alteration.

There cannot be. So that the resurrection of Christ was a thing which the Apostle once denied. though he was not a sadducist, though he was learned, and a Hebrew of the Hebrews, he did not understand the resurrection of Christ at the right hand of his Father where he sat to redeem his people until the time came for the Lord to call him by his grace.

[8 : 13] And then he learned the meaning of this word called. And he uses it in most of his epistles more than once.

Called to be saved. Nothing less. Nothing less. It is the whole truth.

You may shy from it, and it's right that you should. It wouldn't do for you to take that holy name upon your lips without sweet evidence in your spirit, and that is why you're kept back from presumptuous sins.

But with all this, the fact remains that this calling, resurrected Savior, is one end and one end only.

They're called to be saints. And this must be born in mind. Though, only in mind, because none would acclaim themselves such.

[9 : 33] And if they do, they would not have a true ring about them. whatever the circumstances, even in this epistle to Corinth, this first one, where there were so many things wrong, the apostle uses this same word, and he says, they were called to be saints.

They were divided. The enemy got into their midst. Some were called Zealots and so on. There was lust, intent, difficulties of various natures.

Still called to be saints. Still delivered out of it with vehemence in the case of the one taken in sin. Repent.

This does not put a premium upon sin by any means. shows the deep, dark paths which many have to walk through under the proving influences of a risen Christ, that he alone can bring them out of it.

He gives testimony, therefore, to the grace of God that he had received, and that this grace of God brought peculiar effect upon him, it was not in vain.

[11 : 14] The same word is in the text only with a different meaning, in a different setting. The grace God bestowed upon him was not in vain.

It was not without its purpose. And he says, I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

This was the sweet connection between a risen Christ and his own soul and his answer to those who denied the resurrection.

If this be so, therefore, in ancient times, we must expect to encounter it today as we do. And we have a shrewd suspicion that the thousands of cremations that are so common today cover that great hope that it will be the end.

That by burning the body and crushing the bones there cannot possibly be a resurrection. I say we have a shrewd suspicion. And how many resolve to this?

[12 : 41] And how many leave instructions in their will that it should be so? To you, to all for thought, stand me one day before the great God of all the earth may appall you.

that if so be Christ has made known resurrection power in your heart, you will know something of it.

You may be looking for great things, but you can't look in your garden and you won't hear much noise going on. Thank you. You will not hear any noise going on.

Stop and think about it. Is this the resurgence of life in nature? Can it be done quietly?

Can it be done effectively and efficiently and quietly? And this gives the lie to the devil who says that if the work of grace had been done in your heart, it would have been with a much louder voice and much clearer.

[14 : 16] And you listen and say, yes, I believe it will. And you're caught in this snare. And yet, even this snare does not stop that rising power within your heart.

That secret something which you cannot suppress and which is the cause of good deal of agitation.

And you have to look far to find others who are similarly concerned. And this is not theory, but fact.

And it has ever been so. But it's resurrection power. Now, this resurrection power is transmitted, one of its most generally used and known channels through what this text calls preaching.

preaching. And Paul knew this. Preaching was not common in Paul's day, not nearly so common as it is today.

[15 : 43] Preaching is no news to you. You're not at all surprised to hear the word preaching. but you see, there was no thing as preaching until Christ came.

Then his particular preaching to his particular people, and then the anointing of the apostles and the disciples at Pentecost to go into all the world and preach.

That preaching extended as it was intended to extend to worldwide capacity. And thus preaching us now in these latter times become exceedingly common.

Not to use it in its wrong sense, but to use it in its proper sense. And it is this that God has used.

Now it is called the foolishness of preaching by the very man who says this. No one else would ever have used this word had not the Lord given it to the apostle Paul.

[17 : 04] It would be a rather harsh word to use if it were not from heaven. It means the simplicity of preaching.

And it has pleased God to use this means. This is the channel through which this resurrection power will flow.

Not exceptionally, but generally. It is this which is the containment of the precious power that enters into the heart.

So that this preaching of the gospel has proved itself to be the evidence of a resurrected Savior.

And he is at the right hand of his Father. now, it says, for if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain?

[18 : 23] Now, there are two things in this text. One concerns me, and the other concerns you. The preaching concerns me. Your faith concerns you.

But it is said that both are vain except Christ be risen. It is possible after good many years in the ministry to view this word vain in its proper context.

The great cry so often is, who hath believed their report? To whom was the arm of the Lord revealed? right back in the dark ages of the past, in Jeremiah's time, he questioned the reality of his being a pastor.

He could see no fruit. He felt it was in vain. as for me, I have not hastened, says he, from being a pastor to follow me.

He had to meet tremendous odds, difficulties. He had to cry out, woe, my eyes run down as rivers of water fall.

[20 : 00] He had to witness divine judgments, and surely there was no such thing then as the formation or gathering together with church.

But from those dark ages, the great question has always been current, with very few exceptions, where is the effect of my preaching?

Where is the result of it? That is my side of it. As I now come to the end of my journey, this great question is constantly with me.

Where is the fruit of it? Not so much here, of course, but among my own people. Where is the resurrection power of Christ in the hearts of the people?

Is it preaching in vain? Is not an active Christ in it? Not resurrection power in it?

[21 : 18] Is there not a work of grace in it? Are there not those who benefit it? What is the answer for this?

We do not know which shall prosper. That's the answer. This or that, or whether both, should be a light book.

God is pleased to work in the churches and the hearts of individuals has its fruit and effect in due time, but is not always known by the preacher himself.

it is with a parent too. They may not live to see their child called by grace.

Many haven't, but they being the subject the child has, many of that parent's prayers, they've never lived to see the result of it.

[22 : 36] what is this purpose then of the Lord Jesus to preach it? It is to quicken call in a secret, gracious, and effectual way, and a way of great variety.

There are diversities of operations, as well as diversities of gifts, you yourself know how different preachers are.

It would be safe to say that of all the preachers you know, there are not two alike. And of all the texts you have heard preach, you have never heard two servants alike.

Now why is this? Because of the diversity of gifts, and the diversity of operations. Give six ministers the same text to preach from, if such could be lawful, which it couldn't be, and sit and listen to them preach six servants at one sitting, and you would have six different servants, as you know well enough.

and its remarkable diversity of operations finds its echo in the hearers.

[24 : 10] They're not too alike. work. The wife differs from her husband, and vice versa.

The child differs from the parents. The two deacons differ. The three deacons differ. They vastly differ.

The glory of this work, therefore, is the outcome of the power of the mind of Christ in raising up whomsoever he will to whatsoever purpose and place he has designed.

so that preaching is not vain. This chapel witnesses there, look at these names round the walls, and look in the churchyard here opposite.

Look at the different works of grace. When you're laid in your tomb and me in mine, they'll be different, and we shall be the same, I trust. but there will be such a diversity of operation in bringing this about.

[25 : 34] And yet, it will all be leading to one end, the calling. The next word the apostle uses in this epistle, sanctified in Christ Jesus, separated, was the same power is needed to separate.

And this is where things begin to show themselves as regards the preaching, that the preaching is not vain. Now, this is a time of rejoicing, when the first bud or green blade appears that preaching is not in vain.

what is this? If it is not a power which you cannot suppress, the possessor cannot suppress, has no desire to, and yet feels controlled by it.

Willing is the word the Lord uses to speak of his people. you can't say you were always willing, can you? You can look back with a very short glance, perhaps some of you, to the time when you weren't willing.

You need no one to repeat it, or say, well, think again, you know well enough that you were made willing in a different way from another, through a different means, that there was a resurgence, a knife, a chain.

[27 : 37] Christ is risen. And this sanctification was under Christ. You see, it didn't separate you under the world, it separated you from it.

The work may still be going on, I doubt not for what it is. But this separation and sanctification and washing and cleansing by the word comes through preaching.

Now it is a noteworthy thing, and well understood in Zion that such a character does not mind being washed.

That is, the word of God cutting them pretty close. They do not mind being searched. Human nature says, you mustn't hurt the feelings of your hearers.

You mustn't hurt your young people's feelings. No one wants to, no one tries to. Nothing but, I trust, the warmest affection for our young people, as well as older ones, of course.

[28 : 59] But, if the word of God washes you, in the spiritual sense of it, you're going home uncomfortable, unhappy.

You're going home grieved. You're going home having something discovered that you hadn't known of. You're going to see yourself a little more clearly.

The word of God is going to wash you, sanctify them through thy word, said Jesus in his last prayer. Thy word is truth.

And this sanctification is explained by Jesus when he says, he that doeth truth cometh to the night. How many times do you come into that chapel door asking the Lord to search you, to shine the light into your heart?

How many times do you pray that you might be really taken hold of and blessed, not as you think you need, but as God knows you need?

[30 : 16] How many times? It is so in the life of those who desire to be washed, cleansed. this is what draws out the word of God from the preacher.

Now this living desire in the heart is the evidence, the resurrection of Christ. Because nothing save this could do it.

No one could talk to you beforehand, you could pick up no book to read which would stir you up to this desire.

Only divine resurrection can bring you to the house of God with a thirsty spirit and an earnest desire and a crying out for some cleansing.

Wash me truly from my sins, cleanse me from mine iniquities. This is sanctification through the preaching.

[31 : 32] So you do not expect, do you, flattery, and you do not expect fair words. In fact, you would be offended to have come as far as this if you were flattered from the forfeit, wouldn't you? you would take it not from God but from the devil? You don't want flattery, do you? No, you see how this works.

This is the effect of cleansing. Not like the sow return to a wallowing in the mire. You want to keep as far away from the mire as you can.

And if anyone should entice you toward it, you would run rather than be drawn to it. This is an inward power which some of you know.

And you can give testimony to it and have done. Now the preaching of the gospel unfolds the purpose of the Lord Jesus at the right hand of his Father to gather these people together.

[32 : 46] not always but it was his purpose to establish churches. This is clear from the old passages of the gospels and the epistles in particular and the first and second of revelation revelation that these characters they were brought together and that so far and only so far they got on together.

there were those that crept in among them which Paul foretold by prophecy who should not spare the flock.

There are some very dark pictures in the first and second of revelation of the churches but the Lord Jesus was in the midst as he told you in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

And this is God's church upon earth in all ages. It consists of chaff and wheat wheat and tares and the gospel is a sieve.

The preaching of the gospel shakes. It hurts. It divides. It manifests. It brings comfort to one, raises up hope, brings them to their knees and pleading for more.

[34 : 29] It gives them to them a sweet hope that the Lord is dealing with them. It is they know something which is insuppressible within their heart heart.

And they love other people who feel the same. As soon as heart meets heart and affection meets affection, in the bond of the gospel there is a welding together, a union, a oneness.

heart and it would be the greatest folly to even think that there is a perfect church in this sense upon earth.

Just as there were those who denied the resurrection, so there are those who look for a perfect church, that is, a perfect assembly.

And in their nature's darkness and their blindness, they say, well, I couldn't have anything to do with those people.

[35 : 47] they've got divisions. They're not all of one mind. There's so and so, and there's this or that. But if they went home and read their Bible, they would find that the church of God that is called out is called out by divine grace.

And if they had disgrace in their hearts, which is to be feared, they haven't. For a critical carping spirit is no evidence of grace.

If they're not good enough for you, there is some ground for thinking that you do not know your own heart.

And you would certainly not call yourself, as Paul did, less than the least. and you certainly would never feel that sweet, humbling sensation of being less than the least.

you make up and criticize, but you know not the resurrection power of Christ if you know not what it is to esteem another better than yourself.

[37 : 17] No. It is this which flows from the sacred written glory Christ. So the people are gathered together, they are kept together, the love and union subsists, unbroken, and when it is broken by death, the memory of the just is blessed.

Sweetly blessed. You'll never forget it. They're still with you in their blessed memory. Sacred, sanctified memory of the people of God come from the resurrected Christ, written at the right hand of the Father.

In fact, Paul calls them the whole family. Now your family, my family, are scattered.

if I went to your home now where you had a family once round your table, I might only find one if that of your children.

If you came to my home, you wouldn't find any of them. They're still the same family. Oh, yes. Absence doesn't break the bond.

[38 : 40] Paul says here very sweetly, and what a word of comfort it is in verse 6, that some are fallen asleep. Yes, they have, haven't they?

But how did they fall asleep? Who kept them to the end, preserved them? They are fallen asleep. And only to awaken, they are fallen asleep.

But he says the whole family in heaven and earth one family, mark you, not two, any more than your children scattered to the four corners of the earth, it might be.

They still remain members of your family. So these who are thus called by the resurrection power, the Lord Jesus Christ are the same in heaven as upon earth, one family.

Now, this is followed by, and your faith is also vain if Christ be not risen. to expect the preacher to preach.

[40 : 04] It would be a sad day for him and for you if he stood up in your pulpit and said, well, I can't preach today. You would be shocked to expect him to preach.

He does, for the Lord's health. he may not know what he's going to preach about when he steps inside the chapel door, even as I do today, when I came over yonder hill, what I was going to speak about.

No. The preacher expects you to listen in faith, to receive the word in an honest heart, to receive it in resurrecting power, the face of God's elect.

So that, assuming it, of course, at all times to be the truth, always with that, then it must be emanating, as it dies from the throne of God, from the risen Savior, that is that life-giving power, it is called savor, well, it's called dew, it brings you down to little things, you know, there's savor in salt, isn't there?

water, life, in dew, isn't there? You only need a drop, and a grain, and faith is usually likened to a grain of faith.

[42 : 13] now this flows from the right hand of the Father, and look at the people that heard it and received in faith, these Corinthians did, who were sanctified and called, but look how that faith was tried, see here the very opening up of the apostles' words here in this text, are because there were those who denied the resurrection.

How often in Scripture, how often in the time that our Lord was here, there came those to him with awkward questions. they sought to catch him in his words.

They asked him whether it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar, and there were some many other things, both of moral and of a spiritual nature.

They sought to condemn him because he healed on the Sabbath. They sought to stone him because he forgave sin. the very opposition of the devil, which it is, is the means in God's hands of spreading the truth and giving occasion for God's servants to proclaim against a known error.

And so it is with the completing of the work. God's death. The Lord doesn't bring the body of his people down to the grave to be burnt to ashes, not deliberately.

[44 : 11] there is precious dust. There is dust unknown.

There is that which in the almighty power of God will be given up by the sea, death.

We are only children, we are infants, when it comes to our ability to consider these things.

death. But in that great day, there will be, as Daniel foretold, those that shall arise to everlasting righteousness, and those to everlasting condemnation.

And it will be an inescapable day. And the gospel, then, is to declare this, this incredible truth to the human mind, is to be mixed with faith.

[45 : 26] And a God-given faith from a resurrected Savior, if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain. Indeed it is.

And what of mercy to be brought tonight. And although we see such little effects and results of it, and those who many sit stupefied under the gospel, and although there are those who, after years of hearing the gospel, are impervious to it, and go so far as to say so, if not to walk so, God.

Why is it? Is it a thought on the part of the preacher? Or is it that the resurrection power of Christ was never manifested in their hearts?

That grace did not reign? Finally, the apostle comes to the end, that for he hath put all things under his feet.

This is the preaching of the gospel. This is for the acceptance of faith. In these dark days, what is the hope of the believer if it is not this?

[46 : 58] That all things are under his feet. Though we see not yet all things under him, as the first of Hebrews tells us, they are under him, and they will remain under him, and not one of them will overcome him.

To ask, they may be tremendous foes, as much as were the Assyrians to Hesekiah, but the Lord put a hook in their nose, led them back, and has done many times since.

At the end, in verse 28, and when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

The majesty of the Father, the co-equal Son, the co-equal Holy Spirit, revealed to us in this great kingdom, whereby it will be seen that not a hoof has been left behind, not one has been lost, not one of the sleeping dust has failed to be raised, so that should men say to you there is no resurrection, do not regard it as something that you can dismiss, regard it as coming from the Lord to search you, do you believe them, that there is a resurrection, that Christ is at the right hand of his Father, that he's sending out his gospel through his servants, raising them up, that he's calling his children and giving them that grain of faith to receive the word with meekness, to profit by it, to grow by it, to bring them at last to that everlasting kingdom, where they shall be eternally secure.

If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised, and if Christ be not raised, your faith is raised, they are yet in your sins.

[49 : 38] The answer is conclusive, isn't it, conclusive, that Christ is, but now is, says the apostles, Christ risen from the dead.

And as you gather from Sabbath to Sabbath, as you prove this, so will you Christ it all to one holy source, the Lord Jesus, at the right hand of his Father.

Bless him forevermore. Amen.