



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Suffering Savior, John 20:1-10

"The Resurrection: Its Place in the Doctrine of Atonement"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the Scriptures and the light that they shed upon our paths and we thank Thee for the one who is revealed within them, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for his life and ministry, particularly for his death. And we also thank Thee that he is alive by means of the resurrection and that he now lives to minister the benefits of the sacrifice, which he has offered, consummated. And we pray tonight, as we consider some questions with reference to atonement that arise out of his resurrection, that Thou wilt guide and direct us in our thinking. Enable us as we read the Scriptures to not only understand, but also apply to our own lives and may the assurance that our Savior lives be a source of strength, a source of consolation, a source of help to us in the lives which Thou hast given us to live. We commit all who are present here to Thee and we ask, Lord, that Thou wilt bless them through the ministry of the word. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Tonight we are studying, "The Resurrection and Its Place in the Doctrine of the Atonement" and I want to turn to John chapter 20 and read the first 10 verses of this chapter as our Scripture reading. John chapter 20, verses 1 through 10,

"The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved (Bible students feel fairly certain that this is the Apostle John), and saith unto them, 'They have taken away the LORD out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him'. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lying there, and the cloth, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, who came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home".

The bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus is something peculiar to Christianity. We do not have anything like a bodily resurrection among any of the great religions of the world. For example, in Judaism, we do not know of any resurrection of its founder, if we can call Abraham the founder of Judaism. Abraham died somewhere around 1900 B.C., but no resurrection has ever been claimed for him. In fact, Abraham's tomb has been fairly carefully maintained and preserved for almost four thousand years in Hebron in Southern Palestine, now covered with a Mohammedan mosque recognized by almost all authorities on biblical history as being the genuine burial place of the great patriarch.

In the case of Buddhism, in the Sacred Volumes of Buddhism, there is no resurrection claimed for Buddha. In fact, in one of them we read that when the Buddha died it was "with that utter passing away in which nothing whatever remains behind". In Mohammedanism, no resurrection is claimed for Mohammed. Mohammed died June the

8th, 632 A.D. at the age of 61. His tomb is in Medina to this day and it is annually visited by thousands of those who belong to the Mohammedan faith.

But in the case of Christianity, this most amazing, astounding claim is made that the one who is the basis of Christianity has been resurrected from the dead. And, of course, the Christian doctrine is the doctrine of the bodily resurrection of our Lord. It is not a doctrine that claims that Jesus Christ is simply alive in his spirit, but that he has been raised in bodily form from the grave. When we repeat the Apostles' Creed, we repeat that we believe in the resurrection of the body and this has been the Christian doctrine down through the centuries.

There is a famous story about Talleyrand, the French bishop turned skeptic, who was so prominent in the affairs of the French government at the time of the Revolution. And there was a movement at the time of the Revolution to establish a new religion in place of Christianity. For the leaders thought that if they could do away with Christianity, they would do away with a great deal of the opposition to the Revolution. And someone came to Talleyrand, it is said during this time, and expressed to him a somewhat dismayed attitude toward the attempt to establish a new religion. He said they were having the greatest of difficulty establishing a new religion even though they were grounding it upon the doing of good works. And Talleyrand said, "Why that should not be such a great thing to establish a new religion". The man looked at him somewhat surprised, "What would you do?" he said. He said, "Well, it's really relatively simple, all you have to do is get yourself crucified, and then rise from the dead at the time that you have specified, and you will have no difficulty at all in establishing a new religion" and in that remark, of course, is recognized the fact that at the heart of Christianity is this doctrine of the resurrection of the body from the dead. It is the evidential source of our views concerning the acceptability of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. If we had not had a resurrection, we could not know with absolute assurance that the work that our Lord accomplished upon the cross was accepted by the Father in heaven. And so it has great

significance for the Christian faith. It is essential to Christianity. It is no use for us to talk about an Easter faith if there is no Easter fact.

Now we should, of course, approach a question such as the resurrection with an open mind if possible. I do not think that is it possible and, consequently, I think that this is something that ultimately depends upon the revelation of the Holy Spirit; the illumination of our minds which are blinded by the effects of sin. But surely, of course, we should come with as open a mind as possible. And when we come to the New Testament and read it, one of the first things we learn is that the things that most of our liberal theologians are saying about the resurrection and the things that they say about the resurrection around Easter are not true to the Scriptures.

The resurrection is not like spring. It is not like the bursting of nature with the new life of spring, which has been dormant through the winter months. Any kind of likening of the resurrection to the natural life about us at spring is false to the New Testament, false to the Old Testament, false to the story of the Bible. For if actually were to look at the bursting of new life in our plants, and shrubs, and trees in the spring, we could just as well believe in a death. For that life is headed for death just as surely as in the fall the leaves fall off of those trees, which sprout with so called new life in the spring. There is no apt illustration of the resurrection in the spring. The resurrection is something different. Every spring has its autumn, but the resurrection of Jesus Christ has no autumn.

There is a story of a little girl who had learned the multiplication table and was reciting it to her grandfather, which illustrates the need of having an open mind about something concerning which we have little information or have had no experience. She had told her grandfather she had learned the multiplication tables and so he was quizzing her and he said, "What's four times four?" And she said, "Sixteen"; "What's six times six?", "36"; "What's nine times nine?" She triumphantly said, "Eighty-one". He said, "What's thirteen times thirteen?" She looked up and said, "There is no such thing" [Laughter]. Now, of course, it was beyond her experience, but that is no sign as there is no such

thing as thirteen times thirteen. And there are at least three people in this audience that know that thirteen times thirteen is? One hundred and sixty-nine. I gave you that because I'm sure that most of you were grasping around in your mind wondering, "What in the world is thirteen times thirteen?"

Now some scientists and theologians are just like this. Just because they have no contact with anything like a resurrection, their response is instead of, "It's an unlikely thing"; "It's an impossible thing". And not only are some of our scientists at fault, our theologians also. They say the same thing. They do not say, "It's unlikely". They say, "It's impossible. We have never seen anything like that and we do not expect to see anything like that".

The biblical account, which we're going to look at, is the account in the Gospel of John and I want to, after we've tried to go through it with a little bit of care, I want to then draw some conclusions concerning the resurrection as it pertains to the doctrine of the atonement. So let's look now first at the report of the empty tomb as it came according to John through Mary Magdalene to John and Peter on that Sunday morning, very early, while it was yet dark. I think one of the things that impresses me, as I read these resurrection accounts, is the fact that they are models of the indirect and discreet way in which the Bible indicates an event that cannot really be described.

This is a perfect situation for a sensational kind of account. In fact, I would like to have read an account of the resurrection if it had been done by a person with the mentality of a Katherine Kuhlman. I would like to have seen what would have been written. I'm quite sure it would not have been anything like these accounts that we have in the New Testament. Here is the greatest miracle of the whole of the Bible and it is described in almost matter of fact language. And, of course, as you've noticed, the resurrection itself is not described because no one was there to see what happened in the resurrection itself. But it's a very low key kind of account, which seems to me to be the proper spirit in which to recount this greatest of all spiritual events and physical events.

Now John is a man who is like most Christians, he loves to give a testimony to the things that have meant something to him. So this account is really his personal testimony and the climax of it is reached in the 8th verse when we read, "And he saw, and believed". Everything in this account moves to that climactic statement, "And he saw", and I'll talk about the Greek verb when we get to it because it has some great significance, "And he saw, and believed". That's the climax.

If he were here with us tonight and we were to invite him to give us testimony concerning the resurrection, this is what he would say. He would get behind this thing that looks like a pulpit; this as you know was the desk aside which Dr. Chafer used to lead the singing at Dallas Theological Seminary through many decades. I didn't know whether you knew that this was a very historic piece of furniture here, but it is. And I'm not going to tell you how we got it from Dallas Seminary except to say we got permission to have it out here and I'm glad to see that it's still in existence. I began to think about it the other day and wonder where it was because it does have some historic significance so far as the Seminary is concerned. I can still see Dr. Chafer standing behind it with his little baton and striking the side of it on chapel on every morning to lead the opening hymn in the chapel service. And so if John stood behind this, this is the kind of testimony that he would give and he would reach the climax and he would say, "And I saw, and I believed".

Now let's look at his account and he first speaks about Mary Magdalene at the tomb, "The first day of the week cometh Ms. Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre". Now you notice here that in the Johannine account of the resurrection, it is stated that Mary Magdalene was the first at the tomb. When you turn over to the Markan account, for example, you read that the women came to the tomb. On this basis, some have thought that perhaps John has made a mistake in the record of his account of the resurrection. And so we are to regard this as an error that he centers his attention upon Mary. But even the Johannine account

acknowledges the presence of others, for we read in the second verse, "They have taken away the LORD out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him". So John's account is an account designed to lay a great deal of stress upon Mary's participation in it because she evidently took the lead. But he does not, in any way, suggest that the other women were not with Mary when she came.

Have you ever wondered, men, why it is that our Lord appeared to the women first? Have you ever wondered why, for example, it is the same Mary Magdalene who is the herald of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus? Have you ever wondered why that is so? Well, I asked my wife one time. I said, "Why do you think the women were the heralds of the resurrection?" And she said, "Well, the Lord knew that they would broadcast it", [Laughter] which seems about as good a reason as any that I can think of.

At any rate, it is the women who are the heralds of the resurrection and if that makes you men feel a little bad, well, perhaps you ought to. Because, you see, the men were very disappointed by what had happened evidently at Calvary and the events of that last weekend. They were so disappointed, so defeated, that they had gone into hiding like wounded animals and were hardly anywhere to be found. Evidently, the reason for this is that is that they had been interpreting our Lord's words as words of victory entirely. They had thought of him as a person who is to be the King, of course, for all of the Israelites who were followers, and even those who were enemies, thought that our Lord's claims involved that. But if the apostles had any idea of the spiritual significance of our Lord's ministry, it seems to have passed them largely by. At any rate, they seemed to have thought that our Lord Jesus had promised them a glorious victory and when this didn't come to pass, they became very discouraged and defeated.

Now the Lord Jesus did not make claims like Plato or Socrates. He did not claim that he was going to show them some new teaching that was greater than any of the teaching that had been given in the ages past. He was a person who made those astounding claims about being able to overcome death. He said, "I am the resurrection,

and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die". He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, except by me". He made these astounding claims of having life and death and the issues of life and death in his hands. And so when Good Friday came and the one who had made these magnificent, tremendous claims of having life and death in his hands, is himself thrown into a sepulchre as one dead, well you can see what a tremendous change has taken place in the *weltanschauung* of the apostles. Their whole life view seems to have crashed to the ground like an exploding airplane. And so they went off into hiding to think over some of these terrible things that had happened to them.

Evidently, the same was not entirely true of the women. Though we have no evidence of all that they had any belief in the resurrection, as a matter of fact, the thing that troubled them as they went out to the place where our Lord had been buried that morning was, "Who's going to move or roll away the stone when we get there?" So the whole Christian company was sunk in the dismay and discouragement and defeat of our Lord's death. So this is the spirit in which Mary goes out and this is the spirit in which the apostles were at this time. I think it's caught very well by those Emmaus disciples who said to our Lord, "We hoped that it had been he who would have redeemed Israel. This is what we hoped". And that past tense, in Luke chapter 24, enshrines an agony of disappointment and defeat. So the women move out toward the tomb and John says, "While it was yet dark".

Now I always suspect statements by the Apostle John because the Apostle John loves to make application from the physical circumstances about to spiritual things. And when he says, "When it was yet dark", I'm inclined to agree with most of the commentators that he intends us to understand this as somewhat symbolical of the whole spiritual realm before it comes to an understanding of the resurrection; for everything is dark and defeated if there is no resurrection.



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Now John says, "That when the women came, they saw the stone taken away from the sepulchre". This is a witness to the resurrection of our Lord that has never been adequately answered and I think if you are a young man and you would like to obtain a Ph.D. degree in a very simple way, all you would have to do is to write a thesis and adequately and convincingly explain away the witness of the empty tomb. Now if you could do that, you would have your professor say, "You have won this degree hands down". It has never been done.

Today the witness of the empty tomb is one of the greatest of the witnesses to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It is not enough of a witness to convince an unsaved man. That can only come through the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, our faith would not rest in God, but it would rest in men. But it is a testimony that has never been answered and I think an interesting thing in contemporary theology is this fact.

One of the leading contemporary theological lights is a man by the name Wolfhart Pannenberg. Professor Pannenberg is Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Munich in Germany and Professor Pannenberg has gathered around himself a number of young scholars, he himself is a relatively young man. And his theological position is one of the theological positions that is contending for the support of continental biblical scholars at the present time and the striking thing about it is that his position is a return to a belief in the historicity of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now Professor Pannenberg would feel quite out of place in Believers Chapel. The kind of orthodoxy that exists in Believers Chapel is not the kind of orthodoxy that he knows or accepts. But he does accept the historicity of the resurrection and the basis of it; he says is simply "That there has never been an adequate explanation of the empty tomb except the one which is grounded in the belief of the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus". So the stone is taken away from the sepulchre.

Professor Barrett has said that it seems to him that this expression implies, no doubt, a supernatural removing of the stone. They saw the stone taken away from the

sepulchre. Now Mary, when she saw that, she immediately turned and ran for the apostles. She raced back into the city, evidently from facts in the Greek text of verse 2 when we read, "She ran and she came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple".

Now this is a true reflection of the Greek text, the fact that both of these prepositions are expressed here before the two men, Peter and John, is evidence of the fact that they were living in different places in the city or at least were located at this night, this morning, at different places in the city. And so, she raced to number seven Beersheba Street, if that's where Peter lived, and she knocked on the door, it was very early in the morning, and the apostle opened the door, carefully looked out, saw that it was one of the female sex, went back and threw on his robe over his Van Heusen pajamas, [laughter] came out and asked, "What in the world is up?" And Mary said, instead of saying, "The tomb is empty", you'll notice (Now I was going to make a derogatory remark. I will not do that). I'll just simply say she made a logical and theological mistake. She had seen the open tomb and she came back and she said not that the tomb is empty, but she is already racing on to certain conclusions. So she says, "They have taken away the Lord and we don't know where they have laid him".

Now that doesn't necessarily follow from the empty tomb at all. Well, any way, the two of them say, "Well, we better get John". So they went over to number twenty-six Dan Street, where John was staying, and they knocked on the door, and the same thing happened and they repeated together, evidently, the same message to John and he said, "Wait a minute! I'll get my clothes on and we'll go out there and see what's happened and if they've disturbed the body of the Lord, we'll do something about it." And so, the two of them raced out to the tomb and Mary, from the other accounts it appears clear, she did not run with them. She went more slowly. They raced out to the sepulchre and when they arrived we read, "Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre".

Of course, this happened because John was a great deal younger than Peter. It is the same thing that would happen if Mr. Prier and I were to race out to the sepulchre. I would beat him out there, certainly [Laughter]. "And when John arrived, he came first to the sepulchre". "He stooped down (The Greek text says something like, "He bent over like this), and he looked in and saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in". The term that is used for seeing, in verse 5, is the term in Greek that means often "to glance". So he arrived first, John did, he stood out in front of the sepulchre, he stooped over to look down inside the aperture where he might see the body, he saw the grave clothes, as he glanced in, evidently concluded, another logical mistake, concluded that the body was there and didn't even bother to go in.

Well, just after he had taken his look in and now was probably thinking in his mind, "It's the women. It's the women. They didn't bother to investigate. The body is there after all!", and which brought back to him, of course, suddenly again all of the disappointment and defeat of this weekend. Now he's raced out to the sepulchre for nothing. Well, about this time comes up Peter and he's huffing and puffing and as I've often said to you, "He's the American in their crowd". And so, he's very aggressive and he's always putting his foot in his mouth. And so, instead of stopping like John did, he just rushes right down into the sepulchre. And the text says, "Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lying", and here, John uses a different word for "see". This time he doesn't use the word that means often "a glance", but he uses the Greek word from which we get the word "theorize"; it's "*theoreo*". Now that is a word that refers to a careful, reflective kind of looking, as you might expect he would do, for he has come down into the midst of the sepulchre, he's looked and there the linen clothes are lying, and the napkin wrapped around our Lord's head is over on the ledge in the rear by itself, and he stops and just looks, trying to figure out what has happened. What does this mean?

Now I think John is outside, perhaps a tear or two streaming down his face. He is disconsolately kicking some of the pebbles outside of the empty tomb and he hears Peter cry out from within the tomb, "Hey, John, come here, quick! He's gone!" And so John rushes when he hears those excited words from Peter, he too rushes right down into the sepulchre, and we read in the 8th verse, "And he saw", and here a third word, a third Greek word, this one different from the other two: "he saw"; *eiden*, "and believed".

Now this third word is a word that most frequently refers to spiritual perception. So he had come first. He had glanced in. He had seen the clothes. He had thought the body was still there. Peter had come and had taken a good look at them, but had not quite figured out the significance of them. Now John enters in and he sees them with perception. He realizes what has happened. The Holy Spirit bringing illumination to his mind, and he believed.

Well, what did he believe? Well, the text says that "the disciples went away again unto their own home". They weren't looking for any Jews or any Romans who might have desecrated the body of our Lord. It had come home to them with tremendous conviction that Jesus Christ had been raised from the dead. They were now in their own experience being brought to the place where they put the Old Testament Scriptures together with the events of our Lord's life. And they saw, in what had happened, the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophesies and, specifically, the things that our Lord Jesus had said. For, John adds, at this point before this, they had not yet come to know the Scripture, "That he must rise again from the dead".

Now that shows you how blind they were. They had been told by our Lord at least three times, probably many more, three times recorded in the Bible, that he would go to Jerusalem, he would die, he would be buried, he would be raised again, and they did not believe that. It had passed right by them. That is why we should never make the apostles models of what a man could have believed during the time of our Lord's earthly ministry. For there were ones who had much greater perception than the apostles, such

as Simeon and Anna and those disciples on the Emmaus Road who did not understand the facts of the resurrection our Lord called, "Fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had written".

Well now I want to ask a couple of questions before we look at the results of this with reference to the atonement, if John saw and believed, well I want to ask two questions. One of them, I've really already answered. But the first one is the important one, "What did he see?" What did he see that brought to him a conviction of the possibility of resurrection from the dead? Well, I think the best way to answer that question is to look at the text. We are told here what Peter saw. He, first of all, "saw the linen clothes lying", in verse 6.

Now, if we may reconstruct the situation a little bit, let's just imagine that this tomb was like some of the tombs that we know exist in Palestine today. That is, it's a tomb that is perhaps four feet high, two feet wide, the upper two of the door into which you go, then as you move down into the sepulchre there are ledges. Let's say one is on the right. It's a kind of a long ledge on which a body may be laid. And then at the rear, there is a kind of a raised place in the stone cut out in such a way that the head may lie upon the raised part and the body upon the lower part. And let's assume that is the kind of physical situation in which our Lord had been placed. Well now, when Peter and John went into that sepulchre, the text says, "that they saw the linen clothes" and the Greek text permits of this type of paraphrase, "they saw the linen clothes as they were lying there". In other words, great stress rests upon not simply the fact that those linen clothes were there, but the condition in which they were as they lay there. They saw them as they were lying there.

Now the second thing that they saw, by the way, it is unnecessary to speak of the position of these linen garments, unless there was something unusual about them. The second thing that they saw was the napkin or the cloth that was about the head of our Lord. Not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Now

that means that the napkin around our Lord's head, that was wrapped separately. The body in preparation for burial was wrapped with linen clothes and between the clothes were placed the spices, sometimes thick, gooey spices; sometimes powdery spices, but nevertheless, wrapped within that, and then a separate wrapping for the head.

And since the head is somewhat annular or circular, evidently, what John and Peter saw was the linen clothes, which had fallen flat that had been around the body, for the weight of the upper part, since the body evidently had been swiftly dematerialized, and had passed right out through those garments, the weight of the garment over the body had caused it to collapse so that they were flat. But, he specifically says that that around the head was still rolled up in a place by itself. In other words, the weight was not such that when our Lord's head left those garments there was a collapse. It actually still retained its annular shape. Now if we just had this to go by, we would, just as I say, surmise that what had happened was that our Lord's body had been swiftly dematerialized. It had passed through those garments and they were left exactly as they had been around the body of our Lord.

Now I don't know whether John thought about this or not, but it would be evident to any thinking person that if our Lord's body had been stolen away, as some of the Jews said in order to explain the empty tomb, either there would be no linen clothes, or else if the linen clothes were there, they would be left on the floor. Because it would have been impossible to rewrap the linen clothes, as they were here, in view of the fact that there were either thick, gummy spices, or the powdery spices within the folds. It would have been impossible; totally impossible. You could try for the rest of your life. You could never prevent someone from seeing you had done that. Evidently, John must have, by the Holy Spirit, been given enlightenment to see that that was the case. And when he saw the napkin about the head rolled up together in a place by itself that confirmed it all.

Now I think that this is what really happened because you'll notice in the 20th chapter, after this event, one of the things that impresses the Apostle John so much about

the resurrection body of our Lord is that he didn't have to open doors when he came into buildings. In the 19th verse, he says, "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut. (Now he comments upon it. He lays a little bit of stress on this. Why'd he have to put something so insignificant as that? Well, it's not insignificant when we're talking about resurrection bodies) "When the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, 'Peace be unto you". "It was weird", as we would say. The body just passed through these physical elements and I think that John must have thought, "Well, that is just exactly in harmony with what I saw back there in the tomb. That's what happened. That body just swiftly dematerialized and passed through those linen clothes and that napkin".

Now he's not content with doing that once. He does it again in the 26th verse. He says, "And after eight days again his disciples were inside, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, 'Peace be unto you'. In other words, it was weird again. He lays great stress on this. I'm looking forward to possessing a resurrection body. I've always thought it was a drag to open doors [Laughter]. Well, our text then says, "and he saw, and believed", and as I've said, it's evident that they believed in the resurrection, for they lost all interest in trying to speak to any Romans or any Jews about desecrating the body of the Lord Jesus.

Now I want to draw a few conclusions. Just what is the significance of the resurrection particularly as it touches the atonement? What can we say? I think the first thing that we can say is that it is the proof of the defeat of death. Our Lord Jesus Christ did not merely survive death. He overcame death and he overcame Satan in that death. In John chapter 11, verse 25, in a text that I've already cited, he said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? "I am the resurrection and the life".

Now what our Lord means by this is simply that since he possesses the resurrection life, the only life that has ever overcome death, no one else shall overcome death who does not possess that resurrection life. That is precisely what he means, "I am the resurrection because I'm the life" or "I have the life that overcomes death". Now he overcame death because in his own being, of course, he could have overcome death. It was impossible that death should hold him for death is the penalty for sin and he had no sin. But he overcame death for us for he stood as our representative, took the penalty for the sins of sinners, and bore it to the full, and because of the infinite nature of his being, he was able to offer a sacrifice that infinitely took care of sin and possessed the power within his own person to rise again from the dead having borne the judgment for men. "I am the resurrection, and the life: and he that believeth in me shall never die" because when we believe in him we are united to him and possess his life. And if you are in this audience tonight and you do not have the life of Jesus Christ, you have no hope of overcoming death. You have no hope of enjoying the resurrection of the righteous, only the resurrection of the condemned.

Now that's the first thing that is signified by resurrection. It is the proof. It is the evidence that death has been overcome by our Lord Jesus for those whom he represents. Since we were held by sin, he has borne the sin and, consequently, he has overthrown principalities and powers, making a show of them openly, triumphing over them in that cross. And Satan and sin are defeated and the resurrection is the evidence of it. As a result of this, we can trust his power and we can trust his love.

King Clovis, a barbarian king, was being told once the story of the cross and when he heard that our Lord Jesus had been placed on a cross and there he had been crucified in weakness, he said, "Ah, if my Franks and I had been there, we would have rushed up that hill of Calvary and we would have smitten those Romans and taken him down from the cross".



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Now, of course, as Christians, we believe he was there because it was the will of God and the will of the Son that he should be there. If he was there simply because Satan and men had managed to lay hands upon him, and as the disciples apparently thought, throw him against his will into the sepulchre, then that night after the crucifixion, there was great rejoicing in the underworld. And the demons and Satan were shouting in pleasure, "We've won! We've won! We've defeated the Son!" We know that has not happened and, consequently, we can trust the love of God and we can trust the power of God. He has overcome death.

Now secondly, it is the evidence that our sins are forgiven. That is stated by Paul very plainly in 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, verse 14, where he says, "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." And even more clearly in the 17th verse, where he says, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is empty (vanity or vain); you are still in your sins." In other words, if the Lord Jesus has not come from the grave, we have no assurance that our sins have been forgiven.

Now our sins are forgiven by the sufferings on the cross. That is the foundation of the atonement. He has justified us in his blood, but we would not know that if he had not come forth from the grave. So the resurrection is an evidential sign. It is God's way of saying, the Lord Jesus said, "It is paid, but I say, I have accepted it by raising him from the grave". Someone has said, "At the cross atonement was made. In the resurrection the atonement was accepted".

Now we sing hymns that are contrary to biblical doctrine. I want you to turn over to Romans chapter 4, verse 25, where Paul says this same truth, but which will illustrate what I'm going to say about hymns in just a moment. In Romans 4:25, Paul says, concerning the Lord Jesus, "That he was delivered on account of our offenses and he was raised again on account of our justification". Now your text may have "for our justification". The original text says, "He was delivered on account of our offenses". That means simply that our sins took him to the cross. He went there in order to die for the

sins of those whom God would redeem. And also, he says, "he was raised on account of our justification". In other words, when our Lord died, the penalty was paid for our sins. And so, the justification is accomplished and our Lord rises from the dead because the justification is accomplished.

The justification is not accomplished by the resurrection. It is accomplished by the death. The resurrection is the testimony that is over. That is, the payment's made. That's evident from chapter 5, verse 9, where he says, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood". By the way, you'll notice it does not say were justified by our faith here, but we are justified by his blood, for the foundation of the atonement is the blood that Christ shed. A faith that we exercise is only the means of appropriating the justification that is already accomplished in the death of our Lord.

Now there are people who have believed that we are justified in a risen Christ and there was a great controversy among a certain group of people, among Christians, about a hundred years or so ago over the doctrine, "Justification in a risen Christ". And some of these Bible teachers, they were good men, some of those Bible teachers sought to show, sought to prove from Scripture, that we were justified in the resurrection of Christ. It is through resurrection that we are justified and not through the cross (not only through the cross to be fair to them).

And even Dr. Chafer of Dallas Seminary, occasionally you'll find him making statements like that, he'll make statement to the effect that the righteousness of the Lord Jesus is imputed to us and now because we are righteous, we are declared righteous since we are united to a risen person. And being united to a risen person, we stand in relationship to him. Thus, the justification is located in the risen Christ. You don't believe anything like that, do you? Now you say you don't believe it, perhaps, because you see that I don't believe it. If you went around and studied a little bit and found that other people believed it, you might believe it.

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Well now, we have certain hymns that we sing that express this doctrine. I don't remember in Believers Chapel hearing this hymn. It may have been sung, but it's very commonly sung among evangelicals. It's a hymn that's entitled, "One Day". Now I know we have sung it around the Lord's Table here: "One Day". It has a little phrase in it that goes like this; I won't sing it for you [laughter]. But it goes, "Rising he justified, freely forever", remember it? "Rising he justified". Well, you've been singing heresy. He does not justify by rising. He justifies by dying. The rising is the testimony to the accomplishment of the justification. So the next time in Believers Chapel when we sing "One Day", what I want to hear is a great vast silence [laughter] so we can pick the heretics out [laughter] from the enlightened ones. I don't know what they're going to think when they get this tape and hear all this noise [laughter].

The point I'm trying to make is simply this, that it is by the death of our Lord that we are justified. The resurrection is evidential. Now one might ask, "Well, why did the apostles so preach the resurrection then?" In the Book of Acts it seems that they preached the resurrection, if anything, more than the death. Well, they did that because they were preachers and they were preaching to people who had put our Lord to death. And so, consequently, they were trying to show that what they did was wrong and the way to show that what they did was wrong was to show that God had raised him from the dead, in token of the fact that the Jews were wrong in crucifying them. So it was their way of saying, "You were wrong. He has been raised from the dead". Now, of course, that does not only apply to Jews, but to all Gentiles, too, who had a hand in our Lord's death.

Now the third thing, and the final thing, is that the resurrection is the pledge of judgment to come and this is the natural outcome of the atoning work of Christ. For if the atonement is a revelation of the love of God and the fact that Jesus Christ died for sinners, it is also a revelation of the judgment of God, in that it is necessary that sin be punished. And so Paul, when he preached in Athens, remember in Acts chapter 17, and verse 31, beginning at verse 29, he says,

"Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like gold, or silver, or stone, carved by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God overlooked; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he has appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; concerning which he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead".

The resurrection is the assurance given by God to all men that he will punish sin. And all sin shall ultimately have its judgment. Professor Thielicke has commented that, "In the day of our Lord's second coming, we have the second Easter. It is the second Easter of the Second Advent". And, at that time, I would locate it at a little different event, but what he's saying is true. At the time that our Lord comes to execute judgment, the eyes that did not look upon him in faith shall look upon him in obedience. The fists that were clinched against him in rebellion will be opened up in praise and worship, but forced praise and worship, the Bible says. And the knees that did not bow before him in obeisance will bow before him in forced subjugation and they shall cry out, as Paul says, "All who have rejected him, even those under the earth that he is Jehovah to the glory of God the Father".

Madalyn Murray O'Hair will worship our Lord. Harry Emerson Fosdick will worship our Lord. Those who crucified our Lord Jesus shall worship the Lord. Cain shall worship the Lord. Esau shall worship the Lord. And so on down through the years, all who have refused him and the resurrection is the pledge that this is going to come to pass. Our time is up.

It may be that you are here tonight and you have never believed in our Lord Jesus Christ. I remind you of the fact that our Lord died for sin. If you acknowledge, if you know in your heart, are willing to acknowledge that you are a sinner, the gospel is what you need. May God, the Holy Spirit, bring you to conviction and also to the place

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where you cry out in faith, "I thank Thee, Lord Jesus, for dying for sinners. I'm a sinner.

I take Thee as my Savior". Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the truth of the resurrection of the  
Lord Jesus. We thank Thee for a living Savior able to save to the uttermost and able to...

**[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]**