

Resurrection Series# 3, The Focus of Resurrection

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Recap:

The fact of the resurrection: a historical reality, attested to in the natural and supernatural, by both God and man, and stands as eternal evidence that we are righteous before God.

The Face of the resurrection: Jesus was the first-fruits of a great harvest of redeemed, restored and empowered humanity that will eternally live out the intentions and love of our Father. In his mission to appear before the Father as the first-fruits, Jesus was willing to take a moment and connect with his friend, someone who meant so much to him.

Intro: The Focus of the Resurrection

People, inventions, ideas that changed everything. :Nicholas Copernicus (1473 - 1543) theorized that the sun was at the center of the universe and that earth orbited the sun.

Almost 100 years later, Galileo took a newly invented telescope, pointed it up into the night sky and was able to observe moons orbiting Jupiter and the different phases of Venus, proving that the planets orbited the sun and not the other way around.

These observations, facts that came into focus through the observation of the planets through the lens of a telescope, literally changed the way we thought about ourselves, how we interacted with the Bible and church teachings, how we understood who we are as people, our role in the universe, and how the universe works, and how we know what we know.

This observation brought new possibilities into focus. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead literally brings a new focus to our lives and shifts our focus in three definitive ways:

1. From religion to relationship
2. From surviving to thriving
3. From the temporal to the eternal

1. Religion to Relationship.

Robert Capon

“Religion is the attempt on the part of human beings to establish a right relationship between themselves and something outside themselves, something they think to be of life shaping importance.”

This can take the form of good behaviour, a code of conduct or a personal set of ethics or life principles. When religion is our focus in life we end up living very restrictive lives, our focus becomes rules, regulations, our own performance and our evaluation of ourselves and others.

Matthew 11:28-30 (MSG)

28-30 "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

The resurrection brings as different way of living into focus.

Romans 4:25 (TPT)

"Jesus was handed over to be crucified for the forgiveness of our sins and was raised back to life to prove that he had made us right with God!"

Because Jesus was raised for our justification we don't need to spend our time, energy, efforts trying to keep the rules, convince God to bless us, or change his mind about hurting us. The resurrection declares we are right with God. Now the essence of our life is not to prove ourselves to God, but to live out a relationship with God.

John 17:2-3

"...3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

We have to stop trying to be through religion what we have already become through resurrection!

Christianity is now about wearing on the outside the image of God you already bear on the inside.

Ephesians 4:23-24

"...and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."

2. From surviving to thriving

The resurrection takes my life focus out of survival mode and into really thriving mode, but perhaps, not in the way that you think.

Romans 8:11

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

The apostle Paul prayed that we would get a real glimpse of that resurrection power, and stop living un-empowered lives.

Ephesians 1:19-20

"...and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places..,"

However, although we are empowered and know it, our focus can still be on fear based survival and life preservation rather than truly thriving if we still live lives of fear, worry, anxiety and stress.

Matthew 16:24-25

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."

If you take up your cross, you acknowledge that to participate in Jesus resurrection, you also first became a participant his death. There is no resurrection without a death.

In dying with Christ we let go of all that we thought we once needed in order to live and survive. Maybe not food and drink but things like; where you do you get life from? Where do you get your sense of identity, significance? What brings you ultimate satisfaction and a sense of completion in life?

Resurrection lets you let go of everything, knowing that on the other side you will find true and lasting life.

John 11:25-26

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Ultimately resurrection also takes our focus off of what all of humanity is scared of: death.

Hebrews 2:14-15

"...that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Death is not good. It is an enemy and is to be opposed, but in Jesus, you never really die. Resurrection liberates from the fear of death. Just as surely as Jesus came out of the tomb to a glorious existence, so too will you.

This is what caused the saints of old to be willing to lay down their lives for the sake of Christ and refusing to deny him in the face of death, knowing that they couldn't really be killed.

Resurrection shifts our focus, we are not afraid! And when the fear is gone, replaced by a rock solid conviction of our inclusion in Jesus resurrection, you can start to thrive in life, really

embrace it instead of fear it, engage in it rather than hide from it - what can man do to me? My life is in Christ and not in my stuff!

3. From the temporal to the eternal

Humanity was made with eternity in our hearts, birthed with a desire to not only live forever, but to make a contribution to life that will last forever... Jesus called it fruit that remains. We might call it legacy or longevity.

Without a hope in the resurrection, this awareness of eternity and the desire to do something that lasts turns inwards and becomes selfish, temporal and afraid. We become painfully aware of our own mortality, and we become bound by a sense of urgency. We become consumed with what we can do that we think will make the biggest difference in this life, and we make decisions that are designed to be celebrated in this life, in front of as many people as possible, with the biggest impact that we can see as possible.

When you see through the lens of resurrection you get to make decisions and contributions to life with eternal consequences in mind. In this way we:

2 Corinthians 4:18

"...fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

1 Peter 1:3-5

"...has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you..."

The judgement seat of Christ, the one we will all appear before (2 Cor. 5:10), is not a giant carrot and stick designed to make Christians behave so they won't lose their eternal reward. But what it does do is help us focus on the fact that in light of the resurrection, we have something more to live for than simply what we can see, feel, hear, taste, and touch in this life.

It will be an amazingly empowering experience where we hear Jesus' judgement over our lives, bringing eternal clarity to us. If we still have areas in our lives affected by fallen thinking we will be set free by the truth then and there, and the eternal longing we have to see the fruit of our labours will be satisfied when what was obscure and difficult to see on earth will be made clear in eternity.

Summary

Resurrection, It changes everything!

It shifts our focus away from religion towards relationship, away from mere surviving, and sets us up for a life of thriving free from the bonds of fear and small minded pursuits. Finally, resurrection shifts our focus and our priorities away from the temporal to the eternal.