

Sermon outline and notes prepared by:

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## 2 Timothy 2:8 “The Relevance of the Resurrection of Christ”

Intro. At the time that Paul wrote this letter to Timothy, he was getting up in years, and he knew that the time of his departure through the doorway of death was soon approaching. He was leaving the Gospel work to Timothy, and to others. He was concerned that after his departure, some would depart from the Gospel message that had saved so many souls. In fact, a tendency already showed itself in Timothy’s day to try to get away from the simple Gospel, to something more philosophical.

There is always the danger that new preachers and church leaders would change the gospel message into something more appealing to the contemporary world. I just heard of one of the new emerging churches that is celebrating Easter with one of those ultimate fights with two men going at it in a cage. Somehow that’s supposed to help the audience appreciate the blood and suffering that Jesus went through. Friend, Jesus did not get bloodied and beaten because He got in a fight. He did just the opposite. He did not resist. He did not fight, because He came to die for our sins, not fight to hold on to His life, or try to beat someone into submission.

Well, there will always be those who want to change the message of the Church. So Paul gave this brief charge to young Timothy in v.8, “Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel.” So in obedience to this command we gather yet again on Easter Sunday to remember Jesus Christ and His resurrection from the dead. We also remember the saving Gospel that Paul preached, and we renew our commitment to proclaim that same saving Gospel.

What is the Gospel that Paul passed on the Church? Paul literally said, “Remember Jesus Christ...” Jesus is the focus of the Gospel. Any preacher or church that does not frequently proclaim Jesus is not a Gospel Church. Our text also says He was “of the seed of David.” Well, the Messiah was to be “of the seed of David,” and Paul affirmed that Jesus came to be God’s anointed Savior for His people. Indeed, the name “Jesus” means “the Lord saves” and “Christ” indicates that He is the Lord’s Messiah. How would He save us? Well there are three facts about Jesus that constitute the foundation of the gospel message. They are given by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” We must remember that He died for our sins, and rose again. He literally and truly, in a material body, came forth from the tomb. Furthermore, we come full circle when we remember that since He is of the seed of David. That not only tells of His incarnation, but also that He is coming again to take the throne of His father David. We must never forget these basic facts of the Gospel because apart from these facts, there is no Gospel. There is no good news of salvation from sin, sorrow, and death.

Yet these old Gospel truths seem a little stale to some, and the modern mind hungers for a change from the old-fashioned manna. They want to hear something new or novel. They want to hear messages they think is more relevant, like, “How To Be Happy on the Job.” So some ministers and priests deny or leave out the truth that Christ died for our sins. Some even deny the bodily resurrection of Christ. They say the story of the resurrection is just an allegory of a spiritual resurrection. They say that it really doesn’t matter whether or not Jesus literally rose from the dead in a physical body. But I’m going to show you that it does indeed matter that Jesus rose again from

the grave. Many eyewitnesses confirmed that the tomb was empty, and hundreds saw Jesus alive in a tangible body after He had been crucified. And this morning I am going to show you how the fact of the resurrection of Jesus is relevant still today. It is relevant in reference to Jesus, to His Gospel, and to believers. First of all:

## I. THE RESURRECTION IS RELEVANT IN REFERENCE TO JESUS

Try to imagine what it would mean if Jesus had not risen from the dead? Without the resurrection, we would probably have never heard of Jesus. The resurrection made all the difference in the world. For example:

A. The Resurrection Was the Proof of All His Claims – Jesus Christ made claims that no other man has made. He affirmed that He was on a mission to save lost souls. He affirmed that He was the Son of God. He affirmed that He was going to give His life a ransom for many. He claimed to have the authority to forgive sin. But He does not expect you to believe blindly. He performed many signs or miracles to prove His claims. But the greatest sign was His resurrection. In fact, when his critics questioned His authority and His claims, He said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19). We now know He was talking about the temple of His body. Later He gave this sign, “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40; cf. 16:4). After 3 days Jonah came forth from the great fish as one alive from the dead. Even so, Jesus would come forth alive from the realm of the dead. That was not the only time He claimed that He would rise from the dead. He affirmed that He would rise from the dead on at least 3 other occasions (cf. Mt. 20:19; Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34; Luke 18:33). Even His enemies acknowledged that He claimed He would rise from the dead (Mt. 27:63). That is why they asked Pilate to put seal and a guard over His tomb.

Then the day came when they crucified Jesus, and two of His disciples laid Him in that tomb. The disciples had all but forgotten His claims to rise again. All was darkness and despondency. Then, on the first Easter morning, His own appointed sign was fulfilled. God the Father raised Him from the dead, just as He said. So He was not a blasphemer when He claimed to be the Son of God. The resurrection proved all His claims. He *is* the promised Messiah. He *is* the Son of God. In fact, Romans 1:4 says He was “declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

How can we have any doubts about Jesus on this side of the resurrection? Do you not clearly see that the resurrection of Christ proves that He is all that He claimed to be? Don't you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God?

Furthermore, we also see that:

B. The Resurrection Was Proof of the Acceptance of His Sacrifice – If Christ has not risen, we have no proof that the crucifixion of Jesus differed from that of the two thieves who suffered with him. But if He did rise from the dead, then we have clear evidence that He died for our sins, and God accepted His sacrifice.

Did the Heavenly Father accept His sacrifice? Old Testament Law declared that to be acceptable, the sacrifice must be without blemish. Even so, in order to be an acceptable sacrifice for sin, Jesus had to be without blemish, that is, without sin. His enemies charged that He was a Sabbath breaker, a glutton, and a winebibber (Matthew 11:19). They said He was working in league

with Satan, and they accused Him of blasphemy. That's what man said. But God contradicted the accusations of man in a most dramatic fashion when He raised Jesus from the dead. He thus declared Him innocent of all charges. Corruption could not touch His pure body, for no original or personal sin had defiled the Holy One. If Jesus had sinned one time He would have remained dead, for "the wages of sin is death." But since Jesus rose from the dead, He was indeed the spotless Lamb of God. He was without sin. So Jesus was an acceptable sacrifice first of all because He was without blemish.

But what about His sacrificial act itself. Did God accept His death on the cross as a ransom for our sin? Did His shed blood satisfy His wrath against sin? Romans 4:25 says that Jesus Christ "was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification." Because He took our sin, and bore it by imputation, He died. Yet the Lord Jesus Christ, in rising from the dead, gave evidence that He had fully endured the penalty which was due to human guilt. Therefore you and I are clear from the claims of the law because Jesus stood in our stead, and God will not exact payment both from us and from our Substitute. And since Christ had no sin of His own, and since the Father accepted His sacrifice in our place, He raised Him from the dead. So when Jesus Christ died on the cross, He wasn't dying for His sins, but for your sins.

Have you come to the point in your life that you have placed your faith in Jesus as your Savior, who died for you on the cross? Do you believe that God accepted His sacrifice? Have you claimed the forgiveness of sin and eternal life that He made possible for you? If not, I will invite you to make that faith commitment today.

And Christian, this truth gives us great comfort and assurance when we fail the Lord and sin. When Satan comes and says, "What about your sin?" Tell him Jesus died for it, and your sin is put away. If he come a second time, and say to you, "What about your sin?" answer him, "Jesus lives, and His life is the assurance of our justification; for if He had not paid the debt, He would still be under the power of death." Oh, what assurance the resurrection of Christ gives us concerning the salvation that Christ has secured for us!

So we see that the resurrection proves the claims of Christ, it demonstrates the acceptance of the sacrifice of Christ, and furthermore:

C. The Resurrection Demonstrates the Lordship of Christ – After speaking of the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ, Peter said in Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." The risen Christ is clearly the Lord of all. Death & the grave could not hold Him. His enemies could not defeat Him. Satan cannot stop the advance of His kingdom. Soon after His resurrection He only had a few hundred faithful disciples, but the army of believers has grown to hundreds of millions to this very day. Yes, after almost 2,000 years we still give heed to the command to "Remember Jesus Christ." The risen Lord is being praised today in tens of thousands of churches in hundreds of nations.

So the resurrection of Jesus Christ demonstrates that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior who died for our sins, the Lord of all. It truly is relevant in reference to Jesus. Now the second main thought is this:

## II. THE RESURRECTION IS RELEVANT IN REFERENCE TO THE GOSPEL

This is evident from the fact that Paul says, "Jesus Christ was raised from the dead according to my gospel." He makes a direct link between the resurrection and his Gospel. Indeed,

the resurrection of Jesus Christ is an important aspect of the Gospel message. It has great bearing upon the Gospel. There is no good news without the resurrection! If Christ were still dead, what kind of good news would I have for you today? I would have none.

So notice with me how the resurrection of Christ impacts the Gospel message. First of all:

A. The Resurrection Validates the Truth of the Gospel – How do we know the Gospel message is true? What makes the message of this Book any different from the messages & claims of other religions? Clearly it is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Most other religions do not even claim that their founder rose from the dead. Those leaders are still dead. What message do they have for us if they could not defeat death, the greatest enemy of mankind? But the evidence is overwhelming that Jesus, the founder of the Christian faith, rose from the dead. That validates the Gospel message like no other fact. So you need to take seriously the claims & promises of the Gospel. Furthermore:

B. The Resurrection Is Vital to the Message of the Gospel – As I said, there is no good news apart from the resurrection. And I want to show you two specific aspects of the Gospel message that would not be possible apart from the resurrection. Because of the resurrection of Christ:

1. We Have Good News of a *Living* Savior – Jesus Christ is not dead, but clearly alive by His resurrection from the dead. Furthermore, the verb translated “risen” in v.8 is a perfect tense, indicating action that has abiding results. Jesus did not rise, only to die again, like Lazarus. He remains alive forevermore! In fact, Jesus said in Rev. 1:18, “I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.” Thus, we do not send poor souls to the crucifix, the dead image of a dead man. We have a living Savior, and is not this a glorious feature of the gospel?

This means that we share in His eternal life, and we will never be lost once we are truly saved. Heb. 7:25 says, “Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”

Furthermore, because of the resurrection of Christ:

2. We Have Good News of a *Powerful* Savior - For He who had power to rise from the dead has all power now that He is raised. Who else could raise Himself up from the dead? What power! What might! In Mt. 28:18 Jesus said following His resurrection, “All authority is given to Me in heaven and on earth.” Because of the resurrection of Jesus, I have good news to share. Jesus is indeed powerful. He who has power over death can overcome any problem you face.

Do you remember the story of the disciples when they faced a storm at sea? Just when they thought the boat was about to sink, they saw Jesus walking on the water toward them. At first they thought He was a ghost, but Jesus reassured them it was He. Then Peter asked Him to invite him to come out on the water with Him. So Jesus gave the command. Peter stepped out of the boat & on to the water, and for a moment he actually walked on water like Jesus. But then as Peter took his eyes off Jesus and saw the waves, he began to sink in fear & would have drowned. At that moment He needed a Savior who was stronger than He. He called out to the Savior, who immediately rescued him.

Friend, you need a Savior strong and mighty, and the resurrection proves the good news that such a Savior is available if you call upon His name.

So far we have seen how the resurrection is relevant in reference to Jesus, and in reference to the Gospel. Finally, let’s see the fact that:

### III. THE RESURRECTION IS RELEVANT TO THE BELIEVER

Some of what I have already shared also implies the impact of the resurrection upon us. But let's consider some other specific ways that the resurrection of Christ is relevant to us today. Notice that Paul expressly bids us to "remember" it. God told Israel to remember the Sabbath Day, and they did so on Saturday. Today we Christians are told to remember the resurrection of Christ, and we do so on Sunday, the first day of the week. On the seventh day men celebrated a finished creation, on the first day we celebrate a finished redemption & the new creation. Now, if you will remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David rose from the dead, what will follow?

A. His Victory Over Suffering Assures Us of the Same Victory - Kindly look at the chapter, and you will find the apostle there saying in v.3, "You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." And further on in vv.11-12 he says, "This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. If we endure [suffering], we shall also reign with Him...." Jesus was treated as an evildoer, and His soldiers will be treated the same way.

Ah, but here's the good news. After Jesus suffered, He rose again from the dead. Heb. 12:2 says of Jesus, "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." He proved that suffering leads to glory, and that seeming defeat leads to victory.

Are you going to suffering right now? Behold in the risen One the type and model of what you are to be! Fear not, for He conquered! Jesus said in John 16:33, "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Every believer can share in the Lord's victory over all the trials and afflictions of life. Suffering and setbacks are only temporary. Victory and eternal life will surely follow for the child of God.

B. His Resurrection Guarantees the Believer's Eternal Life & Bodily Resurrection – If Jesus carries His coming all of us are going to face death. Atheists say death is the end of your existence, but on Easter Jesus boldly proclaimed that death is not the end. He told the thief on the cross who believed, "Today, you will be with me in paradise." Jesus experienced death, and then came back to assure us that indeed, there is life after death.

Yet how does that assure us of life after death? There is a great truth that never is to be forgotten, namely, that Christ and His people are one just as Adam and all his descendants are one. If Christ has been raised from the dead, then all His people must be raised also; it is a matter of gospel necessity. He says, "Because I live, you shall live also" (Jn. 14:19).

Furthermore, the resurrection of Christ shows that it is not just our spirits that will live on after death, but even our bodies. Yet not bodies like we have now, but immortal, glorious, powerful bodies, like that of the Lord Jesus. It is evident that after His resurrection His body passed from place to place in a single moment, that it appeared and vanished at will, and was superior to the laws of matter. The risen body was incapable of pain, of hunger, thirst, and weariness during the time in which it remained here below. Of our body also it shall be said before long, "The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power" (1 Cor. 15:42-43).

So the day is coming when God will give the command to death, "Let my people go," and death shall obey that command even as the humbled Pharaoh obeyed such a command & could not hold a single Israelite in bonds. The day of deliverance will soon come.

The soul that takes firm hold on this truth will loose all fear of death. Will you lay hold of the promise of eternal life this morning?

Finally, because of the resurrection of Christ:

C. There Is Hope Even in our Hopelessness - When are things most hopeless in a man? Why when he is dead! Death is so irreversible.

When the news reached the disciples that Jesus was dead, what was the emotion they felt? I believe that perhaps without exception it was a feeling of hopelessness. Not one expected Jesus to rise from the dead, in spite of our Lord's predictions.

Even so, when a loved one dies, there is a feeling that it is all over. As long as they are alive, there is always hope that they will somehow recover. But when they take their last breath, and as their body grows cold, the finality of death is a strong feeling that overcomes us. I have preached the funerals of hundreds of people in my ministry, and not once has the grief of a family ended as a loved one rose from the coffin. And the last act symbolizing the finality of death is when we say goodbye to that loved one, just before they bury they body.

A seminary professor lost his wife when she was a young woman. She died an untimely death. He had his little preschool son with him. He went to take him to the funeral home to see the body of his mother. They had embalmed her beautifully. She was there, almost life-like. The little boy looked at his mother and the dad tried to explain to him this inexplicable thing called death and to tell the little boy that they would not see mommy again until they saw mommy in heaven.

The little boy couldn't understand death; he wasn't familiar with death. He said, "No daddy, you're wrong. Mommy is just asleep. I've seen her like that plenty of times. She's asleep. She can wake up." And then he began to say, "Wake up mommy, wake up mommy, mommy, wake up, wake up mommy." And with tears that professor put his hand on the shoulder of that little preschool boy and said, "Son, you can't wake her up, but when Jesus comes, he'll wake her up."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, apart from the resurrection of Christ, there is no hope in the face of death. But since Christ is risen, we have hope.

There is a scene in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* where he pictures Christian right under the old dragon Apollyon's foot. He was very heavy, and pressed the very breath out of him. Poor Christian lay there with the dragon's foot on his breast; but he was just able to stretch out his hand and lay hold on his sword, which, by a good providence, lay within his reach. Then he gave Apollyon a deadly thrust, which made him spread his dragon wings and fly away. The poor, crushed, and broken pilgrim, as he gave the stab to his foe, cried, "Rejoice not over me, O my enemy: though I fall, yet I shall rise again." That is the faith of every Christian believer that has faith in their risen Lord. The devil may get you down. They world may oppress you. Sickness may even bring you to death's door. But if you believe in Jesus, who was raised from the dead, you know that you shall rise up through the power of our risen Lord.

Sources: Donald Guthrie, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957); William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: I-II Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957); John MacArthur, Jr., *Advice to a Young Disciple: Study Notes on 2 Timothy 2:1-14* (Panorama City, CA: Word of Grace Communications, 1990); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible [CD-ROM]* (Ontario: Timnathserah Inc., 1996); A.T. Robertson, *New Testament Word Pictures*, Vol. IV (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1931, accessed through Online Bible); Charles H. Spurgeon, *12 Sermons on the Resurrection* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971 reprint), 141-152 [25G.45]; Warren W. Wiersbe, "*Be*" Series: *New Testament Volumes 1 & 2: Book* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1989); Kenneth S. Wuest's *Word Studies From the Greek New Testament: The Pastoral Epistles* in Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids:

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<sup>1</sup> Told by Dr. Adrian Rogers in his sermon on I Cor. 15:12-20.

Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1952). Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982).