

Opening Words – Let us shout this truth in the halls of every church and from our rooftops for the world to hear, what Jesus did on the cross was sufficient to destroy the barrier that kept mankind separated from God’s love and eternal purpose, and His resurrection proves it.

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On Good Friday, Christians from around the world gather to remember that fateful day when the political and religious rulers nailed Jesus to a cross and left him there to die.

At the church where I last pastored, we met in the evening on Good Friday. It was one of my favorite services. One year we had a play about Christ’s final week and the events leading to his death on the cross. On another year, I preached about great martyrs in history and how they faced martyrdom with courage, but when we looked at Jesus he strangely quailed in the face of death. This showed that his death was unlike any other death for he was to bear the sins of all humanity.

I have always enjoyed these services as we have contemplated the price He paid for us, and I have enjoyed them for another reason: we know the happy ending. We know that after Good Friday comes resurrection Sunday and that we are not just commemorating the example of a good man who faced suffering with courage, but we are remembering that Jesus rose from the dead three days later.

Let me share with you now the fifth meaning of the resurrection.

5. The resurrection of Jesus proves that what Jesus did on the cross was sufficient to destroy the sin that kept mankind separated from God’s love and eternal purpose.

“It is finished,” Jesus said on the cross. His suffering? Yes, but much more – the suffering of the world was finished. The suffering that sin brought was finished because His death was the payment for the debt of the world’s sin.

“It is finished,” Jesus said, or more accurately in the Greek, “It has been completed.” The perfect life, the perfect humility, the perfect submission even to the point of death, and therefore, the perfect offering in behalf of guilty sinners had been offered so that the work to obtain eternal salvation was now completed. Paul put it this way in Romans 4:25 “He who was delivered over because of our transgressions was raised because of our justification.”

Did you catch the wording of that verse? He was delivered over – to the cross – *because of* our transgressions but He was raised *because of our justification*. Because His work on the cross was sufficient to pay the price for our sins, God could raise Him from the dead. No more suffering

was needed. No more sacrifice needed to be made. The work of Christ was enough for a just God to justify the ungodly.

More than once, I have come across Christians who have thought that when Jesus died, He went to Hell and suffered in Hell for us, but nothing could be further from the truth for two reasons. First, Jesus told the thief on the cross, “Today you will be with me in paradise,” and Jesus’ last words were “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” Paradise and the hands of God were the destination of Jesus’ spirit when he died.

But there is a second reason we must reject the teaching that when Jesus died He went to Hell and suffered there and it is this: His suffering on the cross was enough to pay for our sins. Nothing more had to be done to obtain our forgiveness and justification before God. “It is finished,” he said. “It has been completed.” And the resurrection of Jesus proves that nothing more must be done for, as Paul says in Romans 4:25, He was raised because of justification had been achieved because the payment for sin had been made.

Paul put it this way in Romans 6:8-10

⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. ¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

Did you catch that phrase in verse 10, He died to sin once for all. Once for all – one time for all people in all times.

The writer of Hebrews also used this “once-for-all” terminology.

In Hebrews 7:27 he says, “[Christ] does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did *once for all* when He offered up Himself.”

In 9:12 he says, “And not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place *once for all*, having obtained eternal redemption.”

And in 10:10, “By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*.”

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God's love and eternal purpose, and His resurrection proves it. Death is no longer master over him. The payment has been made, He has been raised, and He lives at the right hand of God to rule the nations and to rule your life and mine if we will let Him.

So, yes, Jesus' death was different from all other deaths. The Greek philosopher Socrates faced it with joy. The martyrs of Jewish history faced it with courage. The martyrs of Christian history have faced it with faith, but Jesus faced it with great anguish and sorrow because He would be the payment for our sins.

But Jesus looked ahead to the joy that was on the other side of the cross, and as the writer of Hebrews says in 12:2, "for the joy that was before Him He endured the cross." And what was that joy? That the suffering would be over and that the way would be open for you and me to find complete forgiveness and justification before God.

One of the lessons God continues to teach me is about my justification. When I was a younger Christian and would fail I would go into deep discouragement. I wanted so much to please God but, being a fallen human, I would still fail and would seek God so earnestly wondering how He could continue to accept me.

Now that I am a more seasoned Christian, I still fail – I wish I could say otherwise, but with Paul in Philippians 3:12 I say, "I have not yet attained nor become perfect." But now having learned more of the word of God and as one who has thought deeply on Christ and His work on the cross, I no longer face my failure with weeks-long paralyzing anguish. I am not saying I am indifferent to my sin or that I am not disappointed. I am deeply disappointed, but I have learned to look to Christ and to accept my righteous standing with God through Jesus Christ. I have died to the penalty of sin. I am no longer a condemned criminal before God. I am now a son of God. I am justified. I have right standing with God because of what Christ has done for me. He was delivered over because of my transgressions, but his death was enough to pay for my sins and he was raised because of my justification with God.

Friends, as I have learned this great truth, I have learned to walk out of discouragement as I have chosen to trust in this great truth – that because of Christ's resurrection I am justified before God and can come confidently to the throne of grace.

You know what else I have learned? I have learned that God really likes it when we do this! God really likes it when we use the name of Jesus. God really likes it when we make much of what Jesus has done for us. God really likes it when we exalt the work of Christ on the cross. And do you why He likes it so much? He likes it because He wants to make much of the work of His Son. He wants us to value the work of Christ on the cross. Christ died to set us free but when we don't walk in freedom we are not valuing Christ's most precious gift to us.

Paul said this in Romans 8:32 - He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

God has already done the hard part in giving us His Son. Now that that has been done, He is ready to give us all things in Christ and He wants us to lift our heads and see His Son at His right hand and to realize He is there for us.

Romans 5:10-11 says, “For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹ And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. “

This is resurrection vision. It is seeing that what Jesus did on the cross was sufficient to destroy the barrier that kept us separated from God’s love and eternal purpose.