

The Real Way to Acknowledge the Resurrection!

Intro: Though we do not believe that Christians are commanded to observe Easter as a holy day, we do not hesitate to address what the world is talking about. For that reason I have taken the time today to talk about the resurrection of Christ—both some of its proofs and now its significance.

I fear that this particular holiday or “holy day” is very much like the others that profess to honor Christ. They involve some kind of customary mass mentality or expectation that brings people to church for a single service, but does not change the thinking or practice of the people beyond a single day.

The truth is, the resurrection of Christ should have the profoundest impact upon our lives every day when it is properly acknowledged. Let’s consider the real way to acknowledge the resurrection.

We truly acknowledge the resurrection when we:

Obey the gospel of Christ!

The resurrection of Jesus is a central truth of the gospel message.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

Consequently, it is vitally connected with every condition of forgiveness.

It is part of the truth we must believe.

Now not for his sake only was it written, that it was reckoned to him, but for our sake also, to whom it will be reckoned, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, He who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification. (Romans 4:23-25)

It is the motivation for the repentance God commands.

“Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent,³¹ because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.” (Acts 17:30-31)

It is the foundation for our confession of Jesus as Lord.

that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (Romans 10:9-10)

It not only provides the imagery for baptism, it gives baptism its saving power.

And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him. (1 Peter 3:21-22)

One truly acknowledges the resurrection in every condition when he/she responds to the gospel in obedience to God's terms of pardon.

Live a new life!

Just as we acknowledge the resurrection through obedience to the gospel, we also acknowledge the resurrection through living a changed life.

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:3-4)

Just as Jesus died to sin once for all, so we should die to sin once for all. Just as Jesus lives to God (through His resurrection), so we should live to God through our resurrection.

Notice how Paul prefaces the changed lifestyle of the disciple of the Lord in Col. 3:1

If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:1-2)

Affirm our spiritual completeness in Jesus and not in the OT Law.

Paul was concerned about the Colossians because they were being influenced to a higher spiritual life through teachers that emphasized keeping the Law of Moses.

And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. (Colossians 2:13-14)

It is interesting that Paul in Colossians appeals to the death and resurrection of Jesus as achieving for us release from the "debt" of the Law and consequently release from the obligation to obey the Law. Thus Paul applies the teaching in Col. 2:16-23.

Ironically, many who profess faith in the resurrection consistently appeal to the Law as the basis for their religious practice as if the Law has some continued binding power over disciples of Jesus.

Rely upon the power of God to transform us into Jesus' likeness.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the

strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, (Ephesians 1:18-20)

Paul's point is that the resurrection power of Jesus works in us too to raise us from spiritual death and make us alive in Him. It is this power that "strengthens us in the inner man" (Eph. 3:16) and causes us to know that "he is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20).

We acknowledge the resurrection when we look to that power as the source of our spiritual strength.

Pray to the Father for forgiveness and help in times of weakness.

The Hebrew writer reminds us that what makes Jesus a great high priest is the fact that, unlike OT priests, His life is indestructible.

And the former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers, because they were prevented by death from continuing, but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently. (Hebrews 7:23-24)

When we pray, relying upon His intercession, we are really showing our faith in Jesus' resurrection.

Worship with other Christian's each first day!

There may be more than one reason why the first day was the day enjoined by God for Christians to meet together.

It may have been selected because of the analogy of creation.

Just as the seventh day Sabbath suggested the completed redemption of God of the Israelites in dwelling in the land in rest, the first day suggests the ongoing work of God in beginning a new creation and working in it until the day of rest comes! The Sabbath acknowledges redemption completed! The "Lord's Day" acknowledges redemption begun!

Thus, I believe it was no accident that Jesus was raised on the first day of the week and not on another day.

I believe it cannot be successfully contradicted that the first day was chosen for God's people to meet because of the resurrection of Jesus.

I learned while in Russian speaking countries that the day for Saturday is "sabbota"; but the day for Sunday is "vokresenya" (the resurrection!).

When we meet with the saints on the first day and break bread we acknowledge the resurrection of Jesus as I pointed out in today's "pen points" article.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. (1 Corinthians 11:26)

Conclusion: The resurrection of Jesus is not just a nice fact to accept. It is one of the essential life-transforming truths of the gospel. To truly acknowledge the

resurrection of Jesus is to live a totally different life from the world about us. In all these ways we show the world about us what the “resurrection” life means!