



“He Lives”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3iishAH8NWy>

“At the Cross”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cdfw9-l65yg>

Christ Arose

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=unAarn9nIFQ>

Have you ever considered that the resurrection of Jesus is the most encouraging event in history? What I mean is no event fills with courage more than this event we celebrate today.

God Himself in the Person of His Son declared that what we have all feared, death, is conquered. We have locked down our economy, closed stores and businesses, been quarantined in our homes, and been denied meeting together as the church for one full month. Why? The fear of death. Maybe you're not afraid to die, but you're afraid of spreading death to friends and neighbors, family-the fear of death. Maybe you're afraid of missing out on the lives of your children and grandchildren. Everywhere in the world people are afraid of death. Our age has not seen widespread death from war.

Apart from Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan and Iraq, most of our society has been spared the fear of imminent death.

We have tended as a culture to look on life as our right. We think we have a right to live, to have a guaranteed lifespan.

But the end of all human beings is ultimately death. All of us will die.

Everybody always has. "Nothing is more sure than death and taxes," says the old adage.

This pandemic has, if you will, put the fear of death back in the headlines, back in our hearts.

Hebrews 2:14-15 says this about Jesus:

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

God came in the flesh in the Person of Jesus, His Son, to deliver us from the fear of death and the power of death. Satan had the power of death.

The resurrection of Jesus conquered death once for all time. That is what we celebrate on this Lord’s Day, Easter.

Yesterday I watched a video I recorded titled the “Fires of Faith.” It was about the men who translated the Bible into English—ultimately giving us the King James Bible.

I heard once more names like John Wycliffe. Wycliffe in 1382 completed a translation of the Bible into Middle English, the first Bible in English. He died of a stroke, but one hundred years later, the Catholic Church ordered his bones be dug up, burned, and the ashes cast into the River Swift. During that time William Tyndale translated the first English Bible taken directly from Hebrew and Greek. He fled England to Holland where he was ultimately betrayed and captured

and returned to England. As he was being hanged, Tyndale prayer, "May God open the eyes of the king of England." I heard again of Miles Coverdale, who translated the first complete printed Bible in English. He was exiled three times for his work and died in poverty. When Mary Queen of Scots, bloody Mary, ascended the throne, she renewed persecution. Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley preached salvation by faith alone. She had them arrested and burned at the stake for refusing to accept the mass as a sacrifice of Christ and refusing to honor the pope. On October 16, 1555, both men were put to death. As he was being tied to the stake, Ridley prayed, "Oh, heavenly Father, I give unto Thee most hearty thanks that Thou hast called me to be a professor of thee, even unto death. I beseech Thee, Lord God, have mercy on this realm of England, and deliver it from all her enemies." Ridley's brother had brought some gunpowder for the men to place around their necks so death could come more quickly, but Ridley still suffered greatly. With a loud voice Ridley cried, "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit," but the wood was green and burned only Ridley's lower parts without touching his upper body. He was heard to repeatedly call out, "Lord have mercy upon me! I cannot burn. Let the

fire come unto me, I cannot burn." One of the bystanders finally brought the flames to the top of the pyre to hasten Ridley's death. Latimer died much more quickly; as the flames quickly rose, Latimer encouraged Ridley, "Be of good comfort, Mr. Ridley, and play the man! We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace, in England, as I trust never shall be put out."

That, dear friends, is the victory of the resurrection. That is victory over the fear of death. That is Easter. And, I confess, it puts me to shame.

This morning, I want to look at a short passage in John 5.

Jesus healed man at Pool of Bethesda on Sabbath.

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Making Himself equal with God. Then Jesus claimed even more clearly who He is. He claimed the power of giving life.

John 5:21: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."

Two parts: God raises the dead and makes them alive. Pharisees OK with that. Sadducees not—rejected resurrection. Quickeneth—makes alive. Present tense.

"Even so" (also) the Son quickeneth whom he will."

Jesus had raised no one from the dead yet, but He claimed the power to do it. The son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17) is yet future.

The raising of Jairus's daughter (Matthew 9:18-26) has not yet happened. Lazarus had not been raised. But the power is there.

“Whom He will.” “Will”—*thelo*—to determine, to choose. **Jesus has the power to make alive whomever He chooses.** Physical and spiritual life—both included. He has power over life, power over a virus. In a very real sense, we can honestly say, it is *His* virus.

Jesus then moved to final judgment. The Father, Jesus said, judges no man. Why? He “hath committed” (gave, perfect tense, completed act) “all judgment unto the Son.” “Judgeth”—*krinomai*—to distinguish, discern, to decide, to sentence. Why? “That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.”

“Even as”—with the same worship that belongs to the Father. To worship any creature is idolatry. Jesus is to be worshiped as the Father is worshiped. Therefore He is not a creature, but the Creator, God, come in the flesh.

Jesus went further: “He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.” Not to worship the Son is not to worship the Father. Jesus claimed here the same worship due God.

Jesus is not a good teacher, a wise man, someone on the par with Krishna or Buddha. He was no mere man. He claimed to be God. Either He is who He said He is or He was a liar and a fraud. There is no other option. He arose from the grave. No one else ever did that—not Mohammed, not Krishna, not Buddha. Only Jesus.

“Verily, verily” (Amen, amen). Usually used at the end of a statement, “Amen.” Jesus prefaced what He said with it. He repeated it for emphasis. “I say unto you”—thus saith the Lord. “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation.” Literally—“He who is hearing my word, and is believing Him who sent me” is having right now “everlasting life.”

Unusual: “Believeth on him that sent me”—more usual to have Jesus as the object of faith. Here it is the Father who is the object of faith. Jesus was saying, All who really believe the Father accept Me. It is not possible to believe what the Father says and turn away from Jesus.

1 John 2:23: “Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.”

“Everlasting life”—it is quality and quantity of life—a life that is of eternal quality, God’s quality, and it is a life of eternal existence.

“Shall not come into condemnation”—will not go into judgment.

Believers will not go into that final judgment, the Great White Throne of Revelation 20. Why? Jesus said that person “is passed from death unto life.”

“Passed” (perfect tense—already done, finished) to pass from one place to another, to move one’s living quarters.

John 3: 18: “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

The person who believes in Jesus right then has eternal life (present tense—continuing). The person who has eternal life now will not come into judgment. To have eternal life now is to be secure forever.

The words are not merely a statement of fact but an invitation to believe. They are Jesus’ call to believe in Him. Do you not want to face God as Judge, trust Jesus.

“Verily, verily” once more, hard on the previous statement.

Unusual. Only place Jesus repeats “Verily, verily” in two verses together. “The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” This is a repetition of the invitation. It is deadly serious.

Three kinds of death mentioned in the Bible:

Physical. Spiritual. Eternal.

Jesus was here addressing **SPIRITUAL DEAD** people with His invitation. If you don't know Jesus, He was talking to you. You are already dead—you're spiritually dead. If you hear (in your heart and mind) Jesus' invitation to you, you will live, you will get eternal life. How can that be? Jesus has the power of life, just as God the Father has the power of life. Continuous. Ongoing. Self-existent. He is the uncaused Cause.

A materialist scientist confronted God one day: "God, we don't need You anymore. We can create life from dirt without you."

God said, "Is that so. Let's see. Get your own dirt." That is the materialist's conundrum. Nothing comes from nothing. Yet they tell us, "Give us enough time—and material with which to begin, and we can create life." Nothing from Nothing yields Nothing. Only God is Self-existing.

"Hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (vs. 27).

"Hath given" is gave (aorist, past act at a point in time) "to execute judgment." God is the "Judge of all the earth" (Gen. 18:25). He is

“Jehovah the Judge: (Judges 11:27). This startling claim that judgment belongs to Jesus points to Jesus’ prerogatives as God in the flesh. He is God.

Back to where we started, the fear of death.

A believer in Jesus Christ has no need to fear death. Jesus told Martha at the grave of Lazarus, “Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

“**Never**” translates two Greek words, ου μη. It’s a double negative: “NO WAY.” Paul wrote, “Absent from the body, present with the Lord.”

Do you believe that? Do you hear and believe Jesus’ words? If you have, you have passed from death into life—you have changed your location.

John Rogers edited and published an English Bible in 1537 under a pseudonym, Thomas Matthew. It was ultimately discovered who had done the work. Reading the Bible, Rogers came believe in salvation by faith alone and rejected the teachings of the Catholic Church. Mary Queen of Scots, bloody Mary, ruled England at the end of his life, and he was the first martyr she put to death.

According to *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, when the sentence of death was passed, Rogers begged his judge to let him speak a few words to his wife. He refused, telling Rogers he was not legally married because he had once been a priest. However, as Rogers walked to the stake, singing the 51st Psalm, he saw his wife at the roadside, holding their youngest baby, whom he had never met.

At the stake, Rogers was offered a pardon if only he would recant his beliefs and return to the Catholic church. He refused. The fire was lit and Rogers washed his hands in the flames as though they were cold water.

Here is an account from Bishop J. C. Ryle: “An immense crowd lined the street, and filled every available spot in Smithfield. Up to that day men could not tell how English Reformers would behave in the face of death, and could hardly believe that Prebendaries and Dignitaries would actually give their bodies to be burned for their religion. But when they saw John Rogers, the first martyr, walking steadily and unflinchingly into a fiery grave, the enthusiasm of the crowd knew no bounds. They rent the air with thunders of applause. Even Noailles, the French Ambassador, wrote home a description of the scene, and said that Rogers went to death ‘as if he was walking to his wedding.’”

By God's great mercy he died with comparative ease" (*Why Were Our Reformers Burned?*).

Before his death, knowing what he faced, John Rogers wrote these words, which were reprinted in *The New England Primer*, the book all schoolchildren in the Colonies read (this is but a part):

“When I am chained to the stake, and fagots girt me round,
Then pray the LORD my soul in heaven may be with glory crown'd.
Come welcome death the end of fears, I am prepar'd to die: Those
earthly flames will send my soul up to the Lord on high.”

The resurrection of Jesus frees us from the fear of death. Today we celebrate that Jesus conquered death for us who believe, once and for all, for all time. “He that believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

Because He lives, we, too, shall live.

Closing Hymn: “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNG9F7oGGOA>

Kids' Songs Version:

“Low in the Grave He Lay”

Artist Go Fish:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOgpwSM4D7M>

Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

Artist Go Fish:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVHZYWhO2pA>

Here is more of John Rogers' poem to his children. It is worth reading, if only to see how far we have drifted from the faith of the English Reformers.

Give ear my children to my words Whom God hath dearly bought,
Lay up his laws within your heart, and print them in your thoughts.
I leave you here a little book for you to look upon,
That you may see your father's face when he is dead and gone:
Who for the hope of heavenly things, While he did here remain,
Gave over all his golden years to prison and to pain.
Where I, among my iron bands, inclosed in the dark,
Not many days before my death, I did compose this work:
And for example to your youth, to whom I wish all good,
I send you here God's perfect truth, and seal it with my blood. ...
Abhor that arrant whore of ROME, and all her blasphemies,
And drink not of her cursed cup, obey not her decrees.
Give honor to your mother dear, remember well her pain,
And recompence her in her age, with the like love again. ...
Beware of foul and filthy lust, let such things have no place,
Keep clean your vessels in the LORD, that he may you embrace.
Ye are the temples of the LORD, for you are dearly bought,
And they that do defile the same, shall surely come to nought.
Be never proud by any means, build not your house too high,
But always have before your eyes, that you are born to die. ...

Seek first, I say, the living GOD, and always him adore,
And then be sure that he will bless, your basket and your store.
And I beseech Almighty GOD, replenish you with grace,
That I may meet you in the heavens, and see you face to face. ...
Though here my body be adjudg'd in flaming fire to fry,
My soul I trust, will straight ascend to live with GOD on high.
What though this carcase smart awhile what though this life decay,
My soul I hope will be with GOD, and live with him for aye.
I know I am a sinner born, from the original,
And that I do deserve to die by my fore-father's fall:
But by our SAVIOUR'S precious blood, which on the cross was spilt,
Who freely offer'd up his life, to save our souls from guilt;
I hope redemption I shall have, and all who in him trust,
When I shall see him face to face, and live among the just.
Why then should I fear death's grim look since CHRIST for me did die,
For King and *Caesar*, rich and poor, the force of death must try.
When I am chained to the stake, and fagots girt me round,
Then pray the LORD my soul in heaven may be with glory crown'd.
Come welcome death the end of fears, I am prepar'd to die:
Those earthly flames will send my soul up to the Lord on high.
Farewell my children to the world, where you must yet remain;
The LORD of hosts be your defence, 'till we do meet again.
Farewell my true and loving wife, my children and my friends,
I hope in heaven to see you all, when all things have their end.
If you go on to serve the LORD, as you have now begun,
You shall walk safely all your days, until your life be done.

GOD grant you so to end your days, as he shall think it best,
That I may meet you in the heavens, where I do hope to rest.”