

The Significance of Palm Sunday

“Because He Lives — The Significance of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ”

Matthew 28:5-6 NKJV

⁵ But the angel answered and said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

⁶ He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

- No event in history reaches the importance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- The resurrection is the crowning event in God's redemptive history.
- The resurrection is the cornerstone of Christianity.
- The resurrection is the foundation of the gospel.
- The resurrection is the guarantee of heaven.
- The resurrection is the divine interpretation of the death of Christ.
- Easter interprets Good Friday.
- The resurrection is the divine vindication of the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross.
- The resurrection is the message of the Bible that death does not end the existence of anyone.
- That every human being who has ever lived will live forever either in hell or in heaven.
- The resurrection is what dominates every Sunday when we come together to worship our Lord and Savior.

Matthew 28:5-6 (NKJV)

At the center of the Christian faith stands **not a philosophy, not a moral system, and not merely a set of teachings**—but a **historical, bodily resurrection**. Christianity does not rise or fall on ethics alone; it **stands or collapses** on an empty tomb. The angel's declaration in Matthew 28:5-6 is not poetic symbolism—it is a **divine announcement of reality**:

“He is not here; for He is risen, as He said.” This is the decisive moment in redemptive history. Every promise of God, every prophecy of Scripture, and every hope of salvation converges on this truth: **Jesus Christ did not remain in the grave.**

Your *Reverse for Clarity* powerfully exposes what is truly at stake:

- If Christ is still in the grave → **sin remains undefeated**
- If Christ is still in the grave → **death still reigns unchallenged**
- If Christ is still in the grave → **God's promises have failed**
- If Christ is still in the grave → **faith is empty and hope is illusion**

But the angel interrupts that entire false reality with divine authority: **“He is not here.”**

The resurrection is not an add-on to the gospel—it is the **validation of the gospel**.

- The cross declares: ***“It is finished.”***
- The resurrection declares: ***“It is accepted.”***

The resurrection is the Father's public affirmation that:

- The sacrifice was sufficient
- The payment was complete
- The wrath was satisfied
- The sinner can now be justified

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Without the resurrection, the cross is a tragedy. With the resurrection, the cross becomes **triumph**. This is why the Christian message is **not**: “*Try harder*.” It is: “**Christ has conquered**.”

Modern-Day Introduction

We live in a world that is saturated with **uncertainty, instability, and unresolved endings**.

- Medical reports that end with “we’re not sure”
- Relationships that end without closure
- Systems that promise security but collapse under pressure
- People searching for meaning in things that cannot sustain them

Modern life is filled with **open tombs**—places where hope was expected but **disappointment remained**.

And in many ways, people still live as if your *Reverse for Clarity* version were true:

- As if death still has the final word
- As if sin cannot truly be overcome
- As if guilt must always be carried
- As if hope is fragile and temporary

Even within the church, many believers live as though Christ is still in the tomb:

- Burdened by guilt that should have been buried
- Controlled by sin that should have been broken
- Fearful of death that has already been defeated

But the message of the resurrection confronts modern despair with eternal certainty:

The tomb is not occupied. The grave is not victorious. Death is not final.

Because He lives:

- Your past is not your prison
- Your sin is not your master
- Your future is not uncertain
- Your death is not the end

The resurrection means that **every finality the world assumes is temporary** in light of Christ.

Bridging Statement (Transition into Sermon)

So, the question before us is **not merely**: “**Did Jesus rise?**” The deeper question is: “**What does it mean that He lives?**” Because if He is still in the grave—nothing matters. But if He is risen—**everything changes**. And that is why we can say, with confidence and authority: “**Because He lives, I can face tomorrow. Because He lives, all fear is gone.**”

The Story Behind “Because He Lives”

The hymn “**Because He Lives**” was written by Bill Gaither and Gloria Gaither in **1970**, during a time of deep personal and cultural tension.

1. A World Filled with Fear and Uncertainty

The late 1960s and early 1970s were marked by:

- **The Vietnam War**
- Widespread social unrest and protests
- Rising drug culture
- Assassinations and political instability

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Gloria Gaither later reflected that the world felt **chaotic and frightening**, especially for raising children. There was a real question in their hearts: *“How can we bring a child into a world like this?”*

2. The Birth of Their Child

During this turbulent time, Gloria became pregnant with their third child. Instead of peace, they initially felt **fear about the future**. But as they reflected on the truth of the gospel, a conviction grew:

- Christ is alive
- The resurrection is not just doctrine—it is **present reality**
- Because Jesus lives, **the future is secure**, no matter how uncertain the world appears

This transformed their perspective from anxiety to confidence.

3. A Personal Crisis of Illness

Around the same period, Bill Gaither suffered from:

- **Mononucleosis**
- Severe exhaustion and discouragement

He described it as a time of emotional and physical weakness. In that fragile condition, the truth of Christ’s resurrection became even more meaningful: Not just a theological truth, but a **living hope in weakness**

4. The Birth of the Song

Out of that combination of:

- Cultural fear
- Personal uncertainty
- Physical weakness
- Renewed confidence in Christ

...came the message that shaped the song: **“Because He lives, I can face tomorrow...”**

The song is not sentimental—it is **theologically anchored in the resurrection**:

- The resurrection guarantees hope
- The resurrection removes fear
- The resurrection gives meaning to life and death

5. The Core Message

At its heart, the hymn proclaims:

- The resurrection is the foundation of courage
- Hope is not based on circumstances, but on a living Christ
- Even death is transformed by the reality that Jesus lives

This aligns deeply with passages like:

- **John 14:19 (NKJV)** — “Because I live, you will live also.”
- **1 Corinthians 15:20** — Christ as the “firstfruits” of those who have fallen asleep

Summary in One Sentence

“Because He Lives” was written when fear about the future collided with the truth of the resurrection—and the resurrection won.

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BECAUSE HE LIVES!

Bill & Gloria Gaither [*Key: Eb*]

Verse 1 God sent His son, They called Him, Jesus; He came to love, Heal and forgive; He lived and died To buy my pardon, An empty grave is there To prove my Savior lives!

Chorus Because He lives, I can face tomorrow! Because He lives, All fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future, And life is worth the living, Just because He lives!

Verse 2 How sweet to hold A newborn baby, And feel the pride And joy he brings; But greater still The calm assurance: This child can face Uncertain days because He Lives!

Chorus Because He lives, I can face tomorrow! Because He lives, All fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future, And life is worth the living, Just because He lives!

Verse 3 And then one day, I'll cross the river, I'll fight life's final War with pain; And then, as death Gives way to victory, I'll see the lights of glory And I'll know He lives!

Chorus Because He lives, I can face tomorrow! Because He lives, All fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future, And life is worth the living, Just because He lives!

“Because He Lives” — The Significance of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Matthew 28:5-6 NKJV

⁵ But the angel answered and said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

⁶ He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

Reverse for Clarity — Matthew 28:5–6 (NKJV)

⁵ Be afraid—for the One you seek remains dead. Jesus who was crucified is still in the grave.

⁶ He is here—for He has not risen, contrary to what He said. There is no victory, no fulfillment, no hope. Do not come and see—for the tomb still holds Him. The place where the Lord lay is still occupied.

Clarifying Impact:

If Christ had not risen:

- The cross would be a tragedy, not a triumph (**1 Corinthians 15:17**)

1 Corinthians 15:17 NKJV

¹⁷ And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!

- Faith would be empty, not effectual
- Sin would remain unforgiven, not conquered
- Death would still reign, not be defeated (**1 Corinthians 15:54–55**)

1 Corinthians 15:54-55 NKJV

⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

⁵⁵ “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?”

- The promises of God would be broken, not fulfilled

But praise be to God—this reversal is not reality.

He is not here. He is risen, as He said. And because He lives, everything changes.

Opening

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Church, today we gather not merely to remember an event— We gather to proclaim a **victory**. Not a symbolic victory. Not a philosophical victory. But a **historical, literal, bodily resurrection** of the Lord Jesus Christ. The world has many graves...Buddha's grave. Muhammad's tomb. Philosophers, kings, rulers—all buried. **But there is one tomb that is empty. And that empty tomb changes everything.**

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I. The Theological Significance of the Resurrection

Let us begin where Scripture begins—not with emotion, but with truth.

1. The Resurrection Validates the Work of Christ

Romans 4:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ Who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

The cross was the payment. The resurrection is the receipt. If Christ had remained in the grave: Sin would still be unpaid. Death would still reign. Faith would be meaningless.

1 Corinthians 15:17 NKJV

¹⁷ And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!

But He **did** rise. Which means: The debt is paid. The sacrifice is accepted. Salvation is secured.

2. The Resurrection Declares Jesus Is the Son of God

Romans 1:4 (NKJV)

⁴ And declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

The resurrection is God the Father saying: “Everything My Son said is true.” He is not just a teacher. Not just a prophet. Not just a moral example. He is **Lord**.

3. The Resurrection Defeats Death Itself

1 Corinthians 15:54-55

⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

⁵⁵ “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?”

Death is the greatest fear of humanity.

Every system, every philosophy, every religion tries to answer one question: “**What happens when we die?**” The resurrection answers it clearly: **Death has been defeated.**

Transition

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So, the resurrection is not just important... It is **essential**. **But now let us bring this from theology into reality.**

II. The Resurrection in the Lives of People

The resurrection is not just something that happened to Jesus... It is something that **happens to people**.

1. Mary Magdalene — From Bondage to Devotion

Luke 8:2 tells us she was possessed by seven demons.

Luke 8:2 NKJV

² **And certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons.**

But in **John 20**, she stands at the empty tomb. She came weeping...But she left worshipping.

John 20:16 NKJV

¹⁶ **Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to Him, “Rabboni!” (which is to say, Teacher).**

The resurrection turned: Her sorrow → into joy. Her bondage → into freedom

2. Peter — From Failure to Restoration

Peter denied Christ three times. He was **broken... ashamed... defeated**. But the risen Christ met him in **John 21**.

John 21:14 NKJV

¹⁴ **This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.**

Not with condemnation—but restoration. **“Feed My sheep.”**

The resurrection turned: Failure → into faithfulness. Shame → into shepherding

3. Paul — From Enemy to Apostle

In **Acts 9**, Saul is on his way to persecute Christians.

Acts 9:3 NKJV

³ **As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.**

But he encounters the risen Christ. Everything changes. The resurrection turned: A persecutor → into a preacher. A destroyer → into a disciple-maker.

Transition

Church—this is what resurrection power does. And it is not limited to the pages of Scripture.

III. The Resurrection in Modern Life

The same power that raised Christ from the dead... Is still at work today.

Romans 8:11 (NKJV)

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.

1. The Addicted Set Free

A man bound by addiction: Tried programs. Tried willpower. Tried discipline. But nothing worked... Until Christ. Because you cannot fix what is spiritually dead—you need **resurrection**.

2. The Broken Marriage Restored

Two people living in the same house... but miles apart. Bitterness. Silence. Pain. But when Christ enters: Forgiveness replaces resentment. And Grace replaces pride
Because resurrection power brings life where things have died.

3. The Hopeless Given Purpose

A person drowning in depression... Not because of circumstances alone—but because of emptiness. Then Christ saves them. Not everything around them changes... But everything **within them** does.

4. The Fearful Made Bold

Timid believers become bold witnesses. Not because of personality— But because of **power**.

Transition

So, here is the truth: The resurrection is not just an event to believe in... It is a power to experience.

IV. What the Resurrection Demands

The resurrection is not neutral. It demands a response.

Acts 17:30–31 (NKJV)

³⁰ Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

³¹ because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

1. It Demands Repentance

Repentance is not: Feeling bad. Feeling emotional. **It is:** Turning from sin. Turning from self-rule. Turning to God.

Acts 3:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

2. It Demands Faith

Not faith in religion. Not faith in church attendance. **But faith in:** The death of Christ. The burial of Christ. **And** The resurrection of Christ

Romans 10:9 (NKJV)

⁹ That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

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3. It Demands Surrender

Jesus is not just Savior... He is **Lord**. You do not add Him to your life— You surrender your life to Him.

V. The Invitation

Now I want to speak directly to you. Not generally—personally. **If You Are Lost** You may be: Religious but not redeemed. Moral but not saved. In church but not in Christ . The tomb is empty... But your heart may still be full of sin.

The Gospel

Jesus Christ: Lived a sinless life. Died on the cross for your sins. Was buried. Rose again on the third day. **And now offers you:** Forgiveness. New life. Eternal salvation.

John 11:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ **Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.**

Call to Respond

Today—right now—you must decide: Will you: Believe? Repent? Surrender? Or will you walk away?

Final Plea

Because He lives: Your sins can be forgiven. Your life can be changed. Your eternity can be secured. But if you reject Him... There is no other hope.

Prayer Invitation:

“Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. I believe You died for me. I believe You rose again. I turn from my sin. I surrender my life to You. Be my Savior and my Lord. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

VI. Closing Exhortation

Let me leave you with this: The stone was rolled away not so Christ could get out— but so you could see in. The tomb is empty. The grave is defeated. Christ is alive.

Final Scripture

Revelation 1:18 (NKJV)

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.**

Closing Declaration

Church—say it with confidence: **He is risen! He is risen indeed!**