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**Core Seminar**

**Two Ways to Live**

**Class 5: Jesus—The Risen Ruler**

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**PRAYER**

Welcome to this fifth class in the Two Ways to Live Core Seminar. As we’ve been saying each week, the goal of this class is to solidify the content of the gospel in our own minds so we can better share it with others.

This class is split into six weeks with each week focusing on a different stage of the gospel presentation. But before we begin, we want to again review the previous parts of the gospel already taught. Repetition is good to helping us remember what we’ve learned.

**I. Review**

So to review, let’s go through each Cell and 1) explain what we’ve learned; 2) repeat the corresponding verse; and 3) draw the picture that went with it. [*Repeat these questions for Cells 1-4 as shown below.*]

**Cell 1**

***Summary:*** God created everything and is the loving ruler of His creation. He made us in His image to be rulers of the world under Him.

***Verse:*** Revelation 4:11 – “You are worthy our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things and by your will they were created and have their being.”

***Picture:***



**Cell 2**

***Summary:*** Man sinned by rebelling against God, and we try to run life our own way and not God’s. By doing so, we live in misery and have made a mess of everything.

***Verse:*** Romans 3:10-12 – “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away.”

***Picture:***



**Cell 3**

***Summary:*** God won’t let us rebel forever and will punish us through death and judgment for eternity.

***Verse:*** Hebrews 9:27 – “Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.”

***Picture:***



**Cell 4**

***Summary:*** God loved the world and sent His Son Jesus Christ into world to be the sinless and perfectly righteous man who died in our place, took our punishment, and brought forgiveness.

***Verse:*** 1 Peter 3:18 – “Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.”

***Picture:***



**Questions or Comments?**

**II. Jesus, The Risen Ruler**

We can’t share the good news of the gospel and leave Jesus dead, can we? His death is certainly important—because through it we receive forgiveness. But there is so much more!

This week, we’re looking at Cell 5 and Jesus’ resurrection. ***Now, what does the word “resurrection” mean?*** [*It refers to someone who is dead being raised to life from the dead*.]

***So to get us thinking, why would you say Jesus’ resurrection matters in sharing the gospel?*** [*It gives us hope that we will be saved from our sins.*]

***What's missing if we share the gospel but leave out the resurrection?*** [proof of who Jesus claimed to be; assurance that God accepted his sacrifice; an advocate in heaven]

Well, as we’ll see in our class today, Scripture is clear that the resurrection is central to Christianity.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:17-19, **“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.”**

These verses underscore how critical it is that we understand and communicate the truth of the resurrection when sharing the gospel. The resurrection is not merely a pleasant add-on to the gospel—it’s fundamental to our faith. Without it, we would still be in our sins.

In Cell 5 we explain that, though Christ died, God raised him to life on the third day as ruler of the world. The resurrection proves that Jesus has conquered death, gives new life, and will return to judge. The verse that goes along with Cell 5 and that we want to memorize is 1 Peter 1:3: **“In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”**

And if you learn better visually, we can demonstrate this truth with the following picture:



So God’s act of mercy to us through Christ is not only in his death but also in his resurrection. How can we know that Jesus is the author of life and the source of forgiveness? Because he was raised from the dead, and he continues to live and rule today.

So let’s look at Jesus’ resurrection by making seven statements about it that we see from Scripture. By doing so, we’ll hopefully see what it means for us and how it should affect our lives. So let’s begin.

**A. Jesus Predicted His Resurrection**

While we see allusions in the Old Testament of the resurrection – so for example, Psalm 16:10 speaks to God’s holy one not seeing decay, Jesus very clearly predicted his death and resurrection.[[1]](#footnote-1) Listen to these testimonies from Scripture:

* **Mark 10:33-34** – “‘We are going up to Jerusalem,’ [Jesus] said, ‘and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.’”
* **Matthew 26:60-61**— “Finally two came forward and declared, “This fellow [Jesus] said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.’”” [Temple = Jesus’ body]

So why does it matter that Jesus predicted his own death and resurrection? Two things. First, we understand that Jesus’ death was not “Plan B.” This was God’s plan all along, and Jesus knew it. And second: it allows the resurrection to be a test of Jesus’ credibility. Jesus said he was God. Well, lots of people have said that. Jesus said that he would rise from the dead. Well, anyone could say that. But then if Jesus actually made good on that second promise, it gives enormous credibility to the first, doesn’t it? This is primary evidence for the divinity of Christ.

**B. Jesus Was Truly Raised**

Jesus’ resurrection was not merely predicted, it actually happened! The resurrection was a real historical event. Again, listen to these testimonies from Scripture:

* **Mark 16:1-8** – “When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, “He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.” [*Notice that God sent angels to proclaim this good news like he did to Mary when Jesus was to be born and like he did to the disciples when Jesus ascended into heaven.*]
* **Acts 1:3** *–* “After his suffering, [Jesus] showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.”
* **1 Corinthians 15:3-8 –**“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.”

Over the years, many people have debated the historicity of Jesus’ physical resurrection from the dead. From the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus’ day spreading a lie that the apostles had stolen his body (Matt. 28:11-15) to people today saying that the resurrection was something the Apostle Paul made up. While this is not a class on apologetics, let me just say a few things why we should believe Christ’s resurrection occurred. Remember, we don’t have an ignorant faith, but an informed faith.

1. God is truthful and so is His Word. He hates deception. Besides that, nothing is impossible with God. The resurrection doesn’t establish Jesus’ deity, but as I mentioned before, it is evidence for it.[[2]](#footnote-2)
2. As we read in Scripture, the resurrection of Jesus was predicted, and there were many first-hand eyewitnesses testifying to it. Jesus’ resurrection wasn’t done in a closet but was made public. After the third day, a dead body could not be found, but over 500 people witnessed Jesus living after being put to death (1 Cor. 15:6). And they gave their names! Now, these people were still around to confirm or deny these stories—and yet they continued to circulate widely. That’s pretty strong evidence that something amazing happened.
3. Scripture describes the persecution of the apostles, from imprisonment to severe floggings. Tradition holds that almost all of the apostles were actually killed for the message they proclaimed. It would be remarkable that this group of men would die for a lie. The sudden change in them from being afraid to boldly proclaiming our risen Lord is evidence itself.
4. Beyond that, the explosion of the early church in numbers is undeniable. *Something* must explain why so many people started following Christ, at great risk to themselves. You’d be hard-pressed to identify a better explanation than the resurrection.
5. Some of the most conservative traditions in a society are its religious traditions. Yet in the first century AD, you see thousands of Jews—perhaps hundreds of thousands—abandoning a centuries-old tradition of worshipping on Saturday to worship on Sunday. What would have the power to make for such a change?

The historicity of the resurrection is important, for if Christ was never physically raised, then nothing else we talk about is significant.

**Questions or Comments?**

**C. Jesus Is Exalted as the Risen Ruler**

So what happened to Jesus after he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven? God exalted him as Ruler over all. Jesus didn’t simply rise and come to live as a normal person. No, he rose to the highest place. He rose to sit at the right hand of God, and to be the ruler and judge of the whole world and all who live in it.

* **Ephesians 1:19-22** – “[God’s] power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.”

Remember how we talked in Cell 2 about mankind wanting to rule their own lives? Well, those who follow the sinful nature and despise authority won’t naturally accept the fact that Jesus is the Risen Ruler.

Now the fact that Jesus was raised to life after being crucified has implications for us and our salvation, as we’ll see in the next two statements. But before we go there, ***has anyone ever received objection to the resurrection when sharing the gospel with someone? Can you tell us what it was?***

**D. Jesus Conquered Sin**

Romans 4:25 says, **“[Jesus] was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”** Justification is the declaration by God that his people are “not guilty” and are now considered righteous before him.

Now someone might say, “Wait a second, I thought we were justified through Jesus’ death?” Well, that’s true. Romans 5:9 gives the grounds for our justification: **“We have now been justified by his blood.”** But our justification doesn’t just stop there. Paul goes onto say, **“For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life”** (Romans 5:10)! This is the hope we have as Christians, that we will be raised from death to eternal life and be with our risen savior.

Jesus’ resurrection ensures our justification. It ensures that Christ paid the full penalty for our sins. It ensures that there is no penalty left for us to pay. **“If we have been united with him…in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection”** (Romans 6:5).

So while sacrificial goats and lambs had to be offered over and over again in the Old Testament, Christ needed to be offered just once. And while the lambs remained dead because they never truly took away the sin of the people, Christ was raised from the dead because his sacrifice was accepted and sufficient. The wrath of our just God was perfectly satisfied. Jesus didn’t die for his own sins; otherwise, he would still be dead. Jesus’ resurrection vindicates his own claims and was proof of his sinlessness. By raising Jesus from the dead, God was saying that he approves of Christ’s work of salvation, and Jesus no longer needed to remain dead.

**E. Jesus Conquered Death**

If Jesus defeated sin, it shouldn’t surprise us then that he also conquered the result of sin, namely, death. 1 Corinthians 15:55-57 says,**“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

Or Romans 6:8-9, **“Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.”**

Christ cannot die again. And if you are in Christ, though you may die once, you will not die again. Like Jesus you will be raised to live with him forever, and you will be given new bodies like Christ’s.

**F. Jesus Gives New Life**

So far, we’ve seen that Christ’s resurrection is connected to man’s justification and glorification of having new bodies. But here we see that the resurrection also is connected to man’s regeneration, or new birth. This is the focus of the verse we read earlier for Cell 5, which is 1 Peter 1:3: **“In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”**

Even as Jesus’ body rose from the grave, our dead, sinful hearts can be made alive. Christians don’t just do good works through their own effort. Christians are people who have been given new hearts, new lives.

**G. Jesus Will Return to Judge**

While Jesus’ resurrection is exciting for Christians, it’s dreadful for those who continue to reject Christ. Acts 17:31 says, **“For [God] has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man [Jesus Christ] he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.”**

In our evangelism, we need to stress not only the hope of embracing Christ’s resurrection, but the consequences if we don’t. His resurrection means that someday he will be our judge. If we reject Jesus during our lives, He will certainly reject us upon our deaths.

**Questions or Comments?**

***[have the class pair up and practice cells one through five]***

**III. Living in Light of the Resurrection**

Finally, we should mention one way that the reality of the resurrection should affect the way we, as Christians, live.

Colossians 3:1-4 says, **“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”**

We’ve hit on this some throughout the class, but note Paul’s logic. Those who are in Christ have been raised with him, and so it follows that their focus should no longer be on this life. The world is passing away—it will soon be gone. But that’s no worry for the Christian. For believers, the end of this life means living with Jesus in glory. This certainty frees Christians to live for God and for eternity.

What might “seeking the things that are above” mean for us this week? In our seeking, are we also showing others the riches of salvation and the hope that we have in this life and the life to come?

To conclude, not only did Christ die for our sins, but God raised Him from the dead, as well. Christ rules over the world and will one day judge the world. In addition, God’s work extends to us. He gives those who believe in Him new life—one in which our sins are forgiven and one where He lives in us and changes us. On the Day of Judgment, we can know that He will accept us because He died in our place and rose in victory over sin. We have hope because God raised Jesus from the dead, and so we know that he will also raise all of those in Him.

Next week, Lord willing, we’ll finish the class as we look at what the response to the gospel message needs to be.

**Questions or Comments?**

**PRAYER**

###### APPENDIX

**Philippians 3:10-11**

“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

**Aren’t the wicked also resurrected?**

Yes, the wicked are also resurrected but for a different purpose than those who are in Christ. Acts 24:15 says, “there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.” All of the dead will be raised, but the wicked will be raised to be judged and won’t be received into God’s blessed dwelling. In God’s justice, the wicked are given their due. John 5:28-29 says, “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out – those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.”

**What did Jesus’ resurrection make possible?**

(*Raised with Christ* – Adrian Warnock)

* The sending of the Spirit (Acts 2:33)
* Physical healings (Acts 3:15-16)
* The conversion of sinners (Acts 3:26)
* Salvation by union with Jesus (Acts 4:11-12)
* Jesus’ role as the leader of his church (Acts 5:30-31; 9)
* Forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:30-31)
* Comfort for the dying (Acts 7)
* The commissioning of gospel messengers (Acts 9; 10:42)
* Freedom from the penalty and power of sin (Acts 13:37-39)
* Assurance that the gospel is true (Acts 17:31)
* Our own resurrection (Acts 17:31)
* Jesus’ future judgment of this world (Acts 17:31)
1. Also, Jonah and Elijah with the widow’s son. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. John Stott, *Basic Christianity*, p. 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)