

Fuelled by the Resurrection

29 March 2023



‘And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in vain.’ (1 Corinthians 15:14, ESV)

As a wide-eyed, waist-high human, I fully believed in Father Christmas. I was convinced and assured that, along with his happy company of flying reindeer, he magically delivered my gifts, drank the milk and ate the cookies laid out for him on [Christmas](#) Eve. I saw the evidence of it the following morning! But my fanciful faith was built on a lie. It was never true in the first place (or, at best, is a half-truth, depending on your views on St. Christopher). Some equate the resurrection of Jesus with this: they say it was merely an elaborate hoax, therefore Christians are delusional and believe in something that is not true. I want to explain some reasons why the resurrection is true and how it fuels our lives today.

How Do We Know the Resurrection Happened?

1. Jesus Claimed It Would Happen, and It Did.

To the hearers of His day, the Lord made seemingly outlandish claims, stating that He would suffer, die and rise again. No one in their right mind would predict their death (only three days) and subsequent resurrection, yet Jesus does this several times (see John 2:19-22, Matthew 16:21 and Matthew 12:39-40). The authorities put guards in front of His tomb, knowing the predictions and that the disciples might want to ‘pull a fast one’ (Matthew 27:62-64).

Jesus said these things and then actually conquered death to show He was who He claimed to be. He can be trusted and believed! If His promises regarding His death and resurrection were true, how much more should we not trust Him with our very own lives. How dare we then not seek first His Kingdom or live to make disciples of the nations! He promises, if we do this, to provide for our needs (Matthew 6:33) and to be with us always (Matthew 28:20). The resurrection proves we can trust Jesus and take Him at His Word.

Who would die for a lie?

2. There Were Eyewitnesses and Changed Lives

Some of the most extraordinary evidence of the resurrection is seen in people who encountered the risen Christ. We look back to that Jew, Paul, who made it his goal to exterminate the early Christians in his Jesus-hating days, yet he became one himself. How? He tells us the resurrected Jesus appeared to him on the Damascus road (Acts 9:27). How else could you explain such a transformation? Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 then lists the apostles and many other people Jesus appeared to soon after His resurrection – eyewitnesses of the account. Sceptics scoff at this and say these disciples made false claims. But church history shows these eyewitnesses were so convinced of the resurrection that many died for their faith. Who would die for a lie?

A Christian recorded in the Bible believes that this event happened, and we see evidence of resurrection power in that God is still breaking into human lives – even our lives. Christianity is a supernatural but reasonable faith built on the historical ministry of the Man who lived, died, rose and promised to come back again. It is the most compelling reason why we believe.

We believe in life after death, and this hope is grounded in Jesus' resurrection

How Does the Resurrection Fuel Our Lives Today?

a) With a Future Hope

'If all we get out of Christ is a little inspiration for a few short years, we're a pretty sorry lot' (1 Corinthians 15:19, MSG).

Christianity is good news, not because it gives us self-esteem and lets us live our best life only now. Then you might as well aim to try something more exciting or exotic. Instead, we get out of Christ eternal hope and a future. We believe in life after death, and this hope is grounded in Jesus' resurrection, since His rising from the dead points the way to our future resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20-22). We are those *'having a hope in God...that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust'* (Acts 24:15).

For followers of Jesus who have really followed Jesus (this is what a disciple is), what a day that will be. We don't often speak about judgement day or the resurrection of the dead, but these are parts of the basics of the faith we should all know (Hebrews 6:2). The return of Jesus will be a time of unbridled joy, where believers will receive brand-spanking-new resurrected bodies and minds (1 Corinthians 15:51-54) that will never get tired, old, sick or sinful. With these bodies, we will be able to enjoy God's pleasures and presence in unimagined, unrivalled ways on a renewed earth, full of God's glory. That is real hope, and it is what the early Christians looked forward to (see Acts 24:15, Titus 2:13, Galatians 5:5), which fuelled them to handle adversity and hardship.

Jesus will complete what began at the cross and the empty tomb.

b) With a Present Power

The resurrection gives us spiritual power for the here-and-now. We believe in life before death as well! Because of the resurrection of Jesus, we are told that we can '*walk in newness of life*' (Romans 6:4). We are now raised with Christ spiritually (Ephesians 2:6) but not yet raised physically (1 Corinthians 15:52).

I meet Christians who don't understand this tension of experiencing resurrection life now. We want it to be simple and either one or the other. But the New Testament unpacks both realities for us. We are now saved in Christ (Ephesians 2:8) but not yet saved (Romans 5:9). We are now adopted in Christ (Romans 8:15) but not yet adopted (Romans 8:23). We are now redeemed in Christ (Ephesians 1:7) but not yet redeemed (Ephesians 4:30).

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So because we get to participate in Jesus' resurrection now through the power of the Holy Spirit, we get to taste '*the powers of the age to come*' (Hebrews 6:5). We have to believe we walk on resurrection ground. In other words, there is power available today for sinful strongholds and destructive habits to be broken, for relationships to be restored, for healing to come into our bodies (James 5:15), and for sins to be forgiven. But even as we experience the power of sin being broken in our lives, only one day will sin's presence finally be removed. Jesus will complete what began at the cross and the empty tomb.

I believe in the resurrection. It's not a myth or a fairy tale but an actual event that shook the foundations of the known world order and is central to everything it means to be Christian.

Even as we celebrate [Easter](#) this year, let's remember and thank God for that old, rugged cross and the empty tomb.

*This article was originally published on [Michael's personal blog](#) on 14 April 2022.
