

# The Consequences of the Resurrection

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A great, solid, hard fact that won't erode nor soften nor chip away, but a great, solid fact of history, something took place. The God-Man rose after His Passion. He showed Himself alive, said Luke. He showed Himself alive after His Passion by many infallible proofs. These infallible proofs have satisfied the simple people, the plain people, scholars, geniuses, great men, and men of all nations since that time, so far as I've heard about them. The Son of Man is risen again.

Now, this event doesn't come and go. It remains. We only celebrate it. But this event has consequences. And because of this event, this great historic event, things can never be the same. Never can they be the same. They cannot be the same in heaven, for the everlasting doors opened wide to receive Him and He sat down beside the Father, the Majesty in the heavens. And the earth can never be the same, because He who was God came, stayed awhile, did His world-shaking work and went again, and left the earth different from what He found it.

And Israel can never be the same. Israel scattered all over the world. Something happened that day. Something happened that morning as the sun was rising. And for Israel, it changed things, it confirmed things. It made possible for God to fulfill the Scriptures which the holy prophets did write.

And because of this event, the gentile world will never be the same. Somebody else now is in authority. Somebody owns the nations of the world all around from pole to pole, all because He rose and man's responsibility now is confirmed. It's the same, no arguments anymore, nothing unsettled or uncertain. He did come. He did live. He did die. He did rise and there are consequences. And because of this great fact, the people called Christians stand by themselves. They stand by themselves unique among men. They stand by themselves, reconciled, forgiven, accepted before God in the Beloved, related to God as sons.

I don't think many Christians stop to meditate on this, but let us this morning; that because of this great historic fact, one consequence is that the people called Christians are now related to God as sons in a way they couldn't be before. And these sons of God are commissioned, the Christian because of that open grave, because of that triumphant ascension. The Christian is a commissioned man. He is not his own. He is one whose life now is completely committed.

An Englishman said on one occasion, a churlish, impatient Englishman, when the claims of religion was being pressed upon him, he said, things have come to a pity pass when we allow religion to interfere with our daily living. I think he was an ignorant man, and as such, God will have mercy on

him. But my friends, the Christians, because Christ rose from the grave, the Christians are those who are interfered with. The cross of Christ slices, slices into the life of every Christian.

Every man who believes on Jesus Christ savingly, the cross of Christ slices into his life like a spear into the side of Jesus. There's interference there all right, sharp contradiction. The old life changes and things aren't as they were. The empty grave made a difference. It's not simply something that we talk about as we talk about Abraham Lincoln's assassination or some other lovely or terrible or wonderful scene in history. But this has consequences on every human being that breathes the breath of life today, and particularly upon the church. The church is commissioned and the church is empowered. Let's not forget it.

You have seen the Alliance Witness for this issue, if you have not, they can be picked up out there in the lobby. But if you have seen it, perhaps you took time to read the great sermon by the Methodist preacher, Daniel Steele on the authority of the believer, the rights of the Christian, what rights we have. The signet seal of God is given to the Christian. That Christian goes forth in complete authority carrying more authority before this world than our ambassadors carry when they go to foreign capitals to represent our land. Carrying more authority than our soldiers carry. Carrying more than any man, for the Christian has the authority of God, authorized completely and empowered and obligated beyond other men.

Although I don't like ever to talk when I'm preparing a sermon and I'm praying and thinking it through and setting down a word here or there that I want to remember. I rarely use the word obligation or obligated or duty or dutiful. I rarely use those words. Perhaps it was my early upbringing as a Christian. I was taught in those early days that I did not serve God by duty or obligation. I serve God out of the sheer joy of serving Him.

Yet I know there's another side to it. And I know that some of the old Puritan writers made a very strong and noble case for our obligation to God. But service that is done as an obligation is not much of a service. That is why I never in 30 years have I appealed to you to be loyal. Never in 30 years, have I said, be loyal to your fellowship, be loyal to your church. Never, I trust, can it be found anywhere in print or on tape or can it be remembered that I ever said it? If I did, it might have been a weak moment, or when I meant it in a certain context. But for the most, I have never said be loyal, be loyal, now you've got a duty to perform. I think that's the purest, lowest approach ever to take toward the work of God. I have never served God because I felt I had an obligation. I have served God because I felt it was one of the highest privileges accorded to mortal man. I have served God because I feel that I have a privilege higher than the very angels above.

And it's not an obligation or a duty, something that I do, because the pressure is on me and I cannot help it. Rather, it is something that I do joyfully out of my love for Christ, I do not say that there are not duties and obligations. But I say that that's not the highest motivation behind the

service of God. Rather, we are permitted. We are privileged, we are allowed of God to share with Him.

A little farm boy, when he gets big enough to be able to toddle and keep from falling over the furrows, when he goes out with his daddy into the field, his smiling, good-natured father will allow him to do some little thing. And he considers that the highest privilege. No farmer needs to say to a five-year-old boy, Junior, I will let you do this. Why, anything that he can do, he's delighted to do. Or the little girl in the kitchen four years old, so eager, so eager to do something that Momma's doing. You don't have to say, now, it's your obligation as my daughter to do this. Why, she'll break dishes for you joyfully. She'll drop them joyfully for you, happily, and spoil the dough gladly, just for the joy of doing it because Mama does it. And so I follow along beside my Savior. And I know I've dropped many a dish. I know that I've spoiled many a bit of dough and I know that I failed God. But I also know that He smiles because He knows why I did it. I did it because I wanted to be along with Him, the privilege of it.

Now, that great event in the opening verses of this chapter, there were Mary and the other Mary. And there was the great earthquake. And there was the angel of the Lord that descended from heaven and rolled back the stone from the door. And his countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him, the keepers did shake and became as dead men. There's the great fact. And the disciples now get a change of direction. These women represented all the rest of the disciples, and they represent you and me today. And it says in verse one, they came to see the sepulcher. And these women, their direction was toward the sepulcher. Notice it. They were directed toward the sepulcher. But verse eight said, they departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy, and did run to bring the disciple's word.

Now, this set the direction for the church and for all the disciples. It's away from the sepulcher. You know, what is that poem that says that our hearts, like muffled drums, are beating funeral marches to the grave. I've often wondered how, when congregations met and sang, we are going down the valley one by one with our faces toward the setting of the sun. Down the valley where the mournful cypress grows where the stream of death in silence onward flows. I wondered how they could look at each other without breaking out laughing, because we're not going down any valley, and we're certainly not going down a valley where there's cypress trees that are hanging and mournful aspens. We are risen. They departed quickly from the sepulcher. With fear and great joy they did run. And though later they went by the natural way of death, they went into no valley. They went where their Lord went.

So, I couldn't possibly sing that without breaking into a grin. The idea that the Church of Christ, 1900 years after the angel had rolled back the stone contemptuously and sat on it. The idea that we can sing, we're going down the valley, one by one, with our faces toward the setting of the sun. No. The man who wrote that was still living back in the gospels, or back in the Old Testament, for

the time being. I don't know who he was, and don't remember, don't intend to bother looking it up. Because if he's with his Lord, he's with his Lord. But I don't know why he left us that legacy, because the Christian direction is not toward the grave. The Christian direction is away from the grave.

And I say that not only did these women, when they ran, set the direction, but they set the mood. It said they had fear and great joy. Their fear wasn't the eating, gnawing fear. It wasn't anxiety and apprehension. It was another kind of fear. It was the joyous fear that men feel in the presence of supernatural beings and the holy powers. It was delicious, a delightful fear; fear and great joy. And this also set the example, because they did run to bring the word.

Verse nine says, as they went, Jesus met them, and they could not see Him by looking in. They ran to the grave to look in. But as they went, Jesus met them. They couldn't see Him in there for He wasn't there. Why? Why? Because He had come out. But, as they went, He greeted them. Now, I want you to hear this. That as they went, He greeted them. On their way to the tomb, they didn't see Him. But, on their way out, with their backs to the tomb, He greeted them.

Now, let's break in right here with a discordant note. I didn't put it here. The Holy Ghost wrote it here. It tells us this. It says that they were going to hold, some of the watch came into the city and showed unto the chief priests all of the things that were done. When they were assembled with the elders and they had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, see ye, His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we slept. And of course, that would put any soldier into immediate trouble with his superiors. Your word would be, why, we gave you the watch. You were to stay awake. Soldiers are shot for falling asleep on duty under certain circumstances. And those soldiers knew they would be in trouble. And they said, if we say, we fell asleep and these disciples stole away his body, we'll be in trouble. And then they said, well, but if it comes to the Governor's ear, we will persuade him and secure you. They wouldn't have, and probably didn't. But that's what they said. So, they took the money and did as they were taught. And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews unto this day.

Now, why is that here? Why is that here in the midst between, lying between the open grave and the Great Commission; the fear and joy of the disciples; the happy racing away with the message; the the strong promise, I will be with you to the end of the world, lo, I'm with you always, go ye into all the world. All this radiant delight, right in the middle of it is this awful story of religious people who hoped to turn the clock back and buy and pay for testimony that was false in order to save their own hides and nip in the bud, this Jesus story.

Think of it my brethren. Think of the awful horror of this. Right in the presence of the resurrected Christ. Right there with the open grave, and right there with the shining angel and with the living person of Jesus, this awful thing occurs. Did they hope to turn back the wheel of God? Did they

hope to put the man back in His grave again by saying He'd never come out? Did they hope to send Him back to death again, who had conquered death? They hoped to do it. They're forgotten and their names are not known. But the name of Jesus has circled the globe. And if all the hymns that were written in praise of that One who came out that morning were in one book, nobody in this building could lift that book. Nobody, nobody, not two men could carry it out if all the hymns of the Greek and the Latin and the German and the English and all the rest. I tell you; they're forgotten. And they're anonymous, faceless men, hunting the grave they said they had stolen Jesus out of, but Christ lives.

Why is it there? I suppose it's because we're on the earth. It wouldn't be there in heaven, and it won't be there in heaven. And if this scene had taken place in heaven, it wouldn't be there. But it took place on earth. And never forget this Christian, no matter how happy you may be this morning, and I hope you're too happy to contain, but no matter how happy you may be, remember this, that there isn't a garden without a serpent; that there isn't a rosebush without a thorn; that there isn't a city without a cemetery, don't forget it; and that there isn't a human being without a pain, then forget it. The world lies here all about us, but Christians are another breed of people all together. And even among Christians still down here, there's thorns in our rose. And there's likely to be trouble, even among the dear people of God, because there's somebody here that won't let us have all this joy to ourselves, they won't. They won't allow us to run joyfully in fear and wonder to tell the story of the resurrected Christ. They'll trip us up somewhere, somewhere there's a little conspirators group buying false testimony.

And it says here that they paid to have this told abroad, large money, it said, a bought and paid for lie. And here's the tragedy, that for millions, this became history, and for millions, it is still history. And there are those today after 1900 years that still hear the echo of those words, "while we slept, his disciples stole him away." And they don't believe that Christ rose from the dead. They believe that His loving disciples laid him reverently and lovingly in Joseph's new tomb, but that while the Roman soldiers slept, the disciples stole him away, and falsely reported that he had risen from the dead. That lie was bought and paid for, and it has affected the thinking of nineteen centuries.

Now, Christ commissions them, but He commissions them by telling them first of all that He had all the authority there was. In this instance, the word power there doesn't mean power, it means authority. Other places it means power. Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost comes upon you. That means power. But here it means authority. Authority and power always go together in the Bible. Jesus Christ couldn't have had authority without power. How could He? How could Jesus Christ be commissioned of God to bring the world under His feet and to rein from the river to the ends of the earth and not have power to enforce His authority? No, he couldn't.

What good is power without authority and what good is authority without power? Khrushchev has power without proper authority. There are men who have authority, but no power to enforce

it. They're overthrown by rebellions. To do His work, Christ must have both authority and power, and He has both. He is Himself power. And so He gives to the Christians this same authority. He gives to the child of God authority, and every Christian has that authority. But not every Christian has the power, because he hasn't paid the price to receive it. Ye shall receive power, but not every Christian has believed that and has waited before God until the power came.

Anyway, the authority and the power are His and ours. Go ye therefore He said. Go ye. Why? Because I have the authority. You'll never be any place where I can't take care of the situation He said. He said, I'll never send you any place, and not all the camels or airplanes in the world can take you anyplace where I haven't authority. He said, I have all authority. No situation can ever develop where I don't have authority. I have all authority. Remember, He said that. He said, go ye therefore because I have the authority, go ye, go into all the world. He said, you do these three things, make disciples out of all nations, preach the gospel.

Did any of you read Mrs. Walter Post's article about the Ilaga Valley. That has sent a happy thrill around the world. I received a call just last week from one of the largest missionary societies, a gospel missionary society, larger than our own, slightly. And the man's voice was hushed as he said, I've just been reading Mrs. Post's, report of God's working in the Ilaga Valley. He said, you know, we want to publish it in our magazine. And so, we got permission to publish it. We're sending him the pictures. They're going to carry it in their magazine, TEAM, the Evangelical mission, the Swedish crowd that's now taking in everybody and they're a great and growing concern.

Well, the delight of it, the delight of it, the Ilaga Valley wide open. God sent them in there and said, go and make disciples there. They went and made disciples. Not very nice-looking disciples. The picture we sent the editor to reproduce, certainly they weren't in formal clothes. They were squatting around, almost anyway. But the point is, they were believing on Christ by the scores, meeting together and saying, let's, let's learn about this Jesus, we want to obey and we want to do what He says to do.

Incidentally, that article comes by a new arrangement that we have in the Weekly, the Witness in order that we have now in every field, foreign correspondents whose business it is, elected by their own field conference, to report such things to us. I think I can safely say that you're going to see lots better foreign field reporting now from here on.

Well, anyway, He said, go and make disciples of all nations and baptize them. Then He said, teach them. I want you to notice, He didn't say, teach them, period. He didn't say teach them My commandment, period. He said teach them to observe my commandments. It was a strong verb in there. He said, go first win them, then baptize them, then teach them to do after my commandments. He said, If you will do that, lo, I am with you, lo, I am with you.

My dear friends, Easter is today and tomorrow and next week and always. The victory is today and next Sunday and next week. And the power is today and next week and the week after next. The joy and the authority and the happy obligation, to use a word that I claim I don't like to use. The privilege at all hours and it's tomorrow, it's today, it's next week. Shortly we're going to hear the words, ye do show the Lord's death till He come. Why has He not come along ago. I don't hope to nor claim to know anything of the deep secrets of God's dispensational plans. But I do know this, that until He comes, He will have His people busy gathering pearls, bringing in lost lambs, and winning souls. And He said, go ye therefore and lo I am with you.

Beginning next Sunday, we are going to spend a week in thinking over again, our privileges granted us by the open tomb and the shining angel and the command of our Savior.

Now my friends, the great wonder is, He appeared after His Passion. That's the great wonder, He showed himself alive after His Passion. And he said it would be so and when they went where they told them to go, He appeared unto them. As they went, He appeared.