

1 Peter 1:3-9

Our past, present, and future are redefined through the resurrection of Jesus.

It was the great pivot that changed the world. The event that answered prayers and cries for help. That satisfied ages of longing and expectation.

A new King had come into the holy city. Followers had spent years in amazement at his authority, compassion, and teaching of the Kingdom that was at hand.

But for all that hope, all the proof that he was the One, this King was sentenced to death - to that of a traitor and blasphemer. As he took his final breath confusion spread among his followers. Had all this hope really come to an end? Had they heard him wrong?

“On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices they had prepared. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb. 3 They went in but did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men stood by them in dazzling clothes. 5 So the women were terrified and bowed down to the ground.

“Why are you looking for the living among the dead?” asked the men. 6 “He is not here, but he has risen! Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee, 7 saying, ‘It is necessary that the Son of Man be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and rise on the third day’?” 8 And they remembered his words.” -- **Luke 24:1-8** (CSB)

It was just as he promised it to be. And the Kingdom was truly at hand.

As we celebrate Easter, we can take confidence in the historical account of the resurrection of Jesus. It happened and the world was forever changed. But beyond the historicity, what is the significance of the resurrection today for those that gather in buildings large and small, or in no building at all, to mark this miracle?

It proves what he taught. It made the Kingdom real. And Peter, the one-time denier, gives us a picture of what the resurrection delivers. And it is meant to bring great joy. So that is what we are going after today!

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Apart from the resurrection, our situation is death. Spiritual and physical. Without it we are desperate and embattled, ultimately assuming relief will come in nothingness - just and end. No joy. Maybe momentary glimpses of bliss or euphoria along the way but when sobriety hits, the darkness lingers.

Resurrection changes everything. It brings a redefinition to life, past, future, and present.

Past:

Peter gives the image in his epistle of new birth. Building from Jesus' own teaching on the necessity of being born again, we gain that, Peter says, "through the resurrection."

We are made new through the resurrection. Things that once defined us no longer do and instead we are brought into real life because of Jesus' defeat of death.

His resurrection both confounds and confirms. For his followers then questions remained about what was to come next, and what life would look like for them. But the empty tomb also confirmed for them that he was the One, long-hoped-for, true.

His resurrection sealed his atoning work on the cross and ignited the undoing of all the sad and darkness of the world.

Like an earthquake deep in the earth that generates devastating Tsunamis forever changing what it reaches. And the waves of the resurrection reach us.

And Peter tells us that what remains in the wake of these waves of grace is new life and living hope.

Because Jesus rose, we too experience resurrection, one spiritual and one physical to come. It's this spiritual resurrection that is so profound for us. And to gain a sense of the significance, we look at a promise from Ezekiel.

(who is Ezekiel, who are prophets?)

Israel is exiled, for its disobedience, yet God will bring them to life.

“The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by his Spirit and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. 2 He led me all around them. There were a great many of them on the surface of the valley, and they were very dry. 3 Then he said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live? ”

I replied, “Lord God, only you know.”

4 He said to me, “Prophesy concerning these bones and say to them: Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! 5 This is what the Lord God says to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you will live. 6 I will put tendons on you, make flesh grow on you, and cover you with skin. I will put breath in you so that you come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.”

7 So I prophesied as I had been commanded. While I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. 8 As I looked, tendons appeared on them, flesh grew, and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. 9 He said to me, “Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man. Say to it: This is what the Lord God says: Breath, come from the four winds and breathe into these slain so that they may live! ” 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me; the breath entered them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, a vast army.” -- **Ezekiel 37:1-10** (CSB)

Here God's people knew the image well. They seemed beyond help, far from the life they were meant for. Dry bones, sun-baked and brittle. But God promises to act.

This image comes just after the promise of being made clean and given new hearts, and God's Spirit to dwell in them. And it is delivered through resurrection.

This is a vivid description of how God works within those he saves through the resurrection of Jesus.

Lost in sin, disregarding God and his way, all we bring is need.

Dead, dusty bones, given meat and movement. Given breath, made to stand. It is not just awakening but a remaking.

This is what faith in Christ is doing in us - reshaping, remaking, breathing life by His Spirit. When hope seems absent, when it doesn't make sense, by the great mercy of God, this is where salvation is found.

“Jesus rescues us from the penalty and power of sin. This should floor us. Such mercy shown by God, at the cost of his very own Son, should change a man through and through, even if the change is gradual. Receiving this divine mercy for your sins is your first step into the resurrection.” Raised

Through the resurrection of Jesus, this miracle in the past rewriting ours, we experience resurrection. New birth. Living hope. A hope that is headed somewhere glorious.

Future:

This redefined past equates to a redefined future.

“into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.” -- **1 Peter 1:4** (CSB)

Those in Christ have the utmost security, guarantee. Through the resurrection, you are as secure before God as Jesus is. And you are headed somewhere.

To a final salvation that is to be revealed in the last time. A life that builds up to “praise, glory, and honor at the revelation”, the return of Christ.

A future of great hope. It is the answer to that uneasy feeling we have that things of this world just are not right. That there is something better. Truer to come.

John gives us an image of it in Revelation.

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.

3 Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God’s dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.

5 Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new.” He also said, “Write, because these words are faithful and true.” 6 Then he said to me, “**It is done!** I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will freely give to the thirsty from the spring of the water of life.” -- **Revelation 21:1-6 (CSB)**

No death. No sin. No war. No pain. Instead refreshment and peace.

From the “it is finished” of the cross to the “it is done” of the new city, this is where the resurrection brings us. What it gives a taste of... everything new, life with him.

Your deepest longings met through the resurrection.

Anchored in the past (the resurrection) with our eyes eager for the future - we experience living hope now.

Present:

Through the resurrection, you are not left alone but you are protected by the same power that raised Jesus.

“You are being guarded by God’s power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 You rejoice in this, even though now for a short

time, if necessary, you suffer grief in various trials so that the proven character of your faith — more valuable than gold which, though perishable, is refined by fire — may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” -- **1 Peter 1:5-7** (CSB)

Guarded by God’s power through faith.

We can get funny and think faith is meant to elevate us out of the human experience. But Peter is making clear to believers that life is a challenge and can be painful.

It is refinement, like the fire that heat impurities off of gold, that strengthens the character of our faith. The resiliency of our faith. A steeling of God’s power in us to carry us through.

And we can rejoice in his power for us, even as we suffer... bearing our cross and following Jesus, becoming like our King. Safe like him as our lives are redefined by his resurrection. And we cling to his word - this announcement of guarding and care to get through.

“We as Christians can take heart, even in our darkest struggles with sin. Just as God spoke the creation into existence, just as Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb with only a word, just as Ezekiel preached to the dry bones, God’s word gives life. The supreme word from God, the gospel message itself, tells us not what we must do to earn life but what God has done, in Christ, to give life.”

Trials come, we look to the empty tomb, we look to the promised future, and we keep going. Keep trusting. By faith! This is our joy...

“Though you have not seen him, you love him; though not seeing him now, you believe in him, and you rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy, because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” -- **1 Peter 1:8-9** (CSB)

The One who was raised. The One we love. The One we believe in. The One we rejoice in. Friends, in him, salvation is yours. The script has changed for you. Your past is handled, your future secure, and now you can live, even through the hard things, with joy in him.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem the cry was “save us!” Though many didn’t have the eyes to see it - that is what his death did - and because he rose on the third day, through the resurrection, your past, present and future are redefined as living hope... as inexpressible and glorious joy.

What good news this is. What a hope to live from. What a merciful God to praise.

Heidelberg #45

Q. How does Christ’s resurrection benefit us?

A. First, by his resurrection he has overcome death, so that he might make us share in the righteousness he won for us by his death. Second, by his power we too are already now resurrected to a new life. Third, Christ’s resurrection is a guarantee of our glorious resurrection.

Our past, present, and future are redefined through the resurrection of Jesus.

To a fearful and weary sister, Jesus said: “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live. 26 Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this? ” -- **John 11:25-26** (CSB)

Believe in Him - own Peter’s claims for yourself, that he has given you new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Maybe for the first time, no day like today. Call him Lord as he calls you his.

Take joy in the resurrection - know you are guarded by His power, and you get to live in that power now. The past, present, and future come together as the spark we need for all of life. Salvation is yours, press on in joy.

What the prophets promised was for you - this good news of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Love him, believe in him, and rejoice. You are receiving the goal of your faith - the salvation of your souls!