

The Power of the Resurrection

Easter 2018

PETER DEWITT
AGATHOS CHURCH
APRIL 2ND, 2018

Full Text (for reading on your own)

God Loves How He Made You

God loves how He made you. He really likes how He made you. God thinks you're awesome. It may sound trite. It's not trite; it's true. You are fearfully and WONDERFULLY made. Psalm 139:14 says it ... "I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well."

When is the last time you praised God for how He made you? He wants your soul - your mind, will, and emotions - to know that He loves how He made you!

He doesn't want you to just ascent to it intellectually. He wants you to know it in your heart ... "I am His work, His creation - marvelous and wonderful according to God!"

How He designed me, and how He fashioned me is wonderful!

We are so sheepish about how God made us, not knowing that He absolutely adores how He made you! God has put things in our heart and He wants them to come out. God knows how He's wired you and He thinks you're marvelous and wonderfully made!

Demanding Financial Breakthrough

A couple weeks ago Kenton had been feeding off a sermon about "asking" the Lord - and that there are a couple different Greek words for "ask." One of them is to ask like you're begging "maybe He will give me what I am asking for, but maybe not." The other says "You owe me this because You promised it to me and now I need you to come through." (from John 16)

Two weeks ago Kenton was thinking "I don't know if I can make payroll for my 8 employees so Kenton had a conversation with the Father "You promised me that you would breakthrough ... I need it now." He did! Check came in the mail ... everything covered!

Now, Kenton needed new work to keep his guys busy. So Kenton had another conversation with His Father "I need work, I need good work, and I don't want to wait 3 weeks for this work to trickle in ... I need it now." That day Kenton received a phone call with an opportunity to bid on a significant

development! Since then Kenton has another smaller project turn into a bigger project ... and they even told him to pad his bid on this bigger project to make a bit more money! This bigger project could keep a crew or two of guys busy for a month or two!

Kenton said "this is real - this stuff works!" Kenton encouraged us all to take the time and make the space. If your world is chaotic, remove yourself from your world temporarily. It only takes a few minutes to get yourself into a place of faith to speak with your Father. Some say that faith is spelled RISK ... where you place a demand upon your relationship with the Father that you've never had to place on it before. But now it's time to deepen that relationship with your Father. "Your Word said that You would do this for me ... I need you to come through now." It could be a relationship, a job, finances, peace in your heart that you haven't known, or the salvation of a loved one.

He's going to do it because He promised you that He would do it - and He's not going to break His promises.

The resurrection is PURE POWER! Jesus is the Word. Jesus said He is the resurrection and the life! (Jn. 11:25) God's Word brings life. God's Word brings light. God's word BRINGS RESURRECTION POWER into every area of your life you allow it to touch!

Kenton grabbed hold of the truth from John 16 about being able to place a demand on the promises of God because of direct relationship to Him in Christ. Kenton said "this word is going to impact my life." Now payroll is made and jobs are had! Why? Because the Father Himself loves Kenton, loves his business, and desires that he would prosper in ALL things even as his soul prospers!

What Happened on Easter?

Around 3rd grade, one day, while riding the school bus home, I recall a young school mate saying "Easter is the most important holiday." I recall thinking "WHY?"

I knew that Jesus had died and risen again ... but I didn't GET it. 25 years later I am still digging deeper to answer that same question ... "what happened - and why does it matter?"

Historical Backdrop to Resurrection Day: Adam and Eve

God made Adam and Eve. He made them in His image. He said "be fruitful and multiply - take dominion of the earth and subdue it." Genesis also tells us that God made them spiritually alive. Adam was formed of the dust of the earth and God then breathed into his nostrils the "breath of life and they became a living spirit." The dust was their molecular part. The breath of God was the God part that was in them.

Adam and Eve were both physically and spiritually alive. They walked with God in perfect relationship with Him - that was the spiritually alive part. Jesus said "*And this is eternal life, that they*

may know You ...” (John 17:3) Knowing God is eternal life. In other words, connection to God is eternal life. Disconnection from God is spiritual death. Spiritual life is connection to God. Spiritual death is disconnection from God.

God told Adam and Eve to not eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because in the day that they eat of it they would surely die. We all know they ate the fruit. Did they die?

They actually lived for many years after that physically. So either God was wrong or they died another way than physically. The Bible shows very clearly that they died spiritually. In other words, they became disconnected from the life fo God. As a rose can be cut from a stem and still look pretty for a while - it eventually shrivels up because it's been disconnected form it's source of life. So after eating the fruit, Adam and Eve are disconnected from God, like a dead branch that still looks like it has some life in it. The sin Adam and Eve committed actually brought spiritual death into their lives and into the lives of every descendant that they ever had.

Historical Backdrop to Resurrection Day: Jesus

Yet the Bible talks about a “Second Adam.” His name is Jesus! Jesus is actually very much like what you had in Adam. The angel Gabriel came to Mary and said “the power of the Holy Spirit will overshadow you.” Mary represents the dust of the earth - the molecular / physical basis of Christ. The angel Gabriel comes to Mary and the same thing is happening. The molecules / dust / Mary's body are there but God breathes into those molecules and you get Jesus - the Second Adam. Why's Jesus the Second Adam? He's 100% man (physical) and also 100% spiritually alive!

Jesus then lived a perfect life. Hebrews 4:15 says “*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*” So Jesus was very much unlike the first Adam in this regard.

Remember that satan tempted Jesus in the same way he tempted Adam and Eve. Jesus was in the wilderness, He had fasted for 40 days and was hungry. Satan shows up and says “turn this stone into bread.” Satan had tempted Adam and Eve by saying “you would be like God if you ate from this tree.” Do you know that they were already like God? “Let us make man in our image!” Satan lied to them. They were already *like* God. They were made in His *likeness*! (I am *not* saying they were God).

Satan lies to them “if you eat this you will be like God.” Satan does the same thing with the Second Adam “if you are the Son of God ... command this stone to become bread.” Jesus said “no ... man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Father.”

Satan then offers Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in exchange for His worship. Notice that Jesus doesn't argue with that because those WERE actually satan's kingdoms to give. Romans 6 says we are a slave to whom we obey. Because Adam and Eve - who had been given dominion over the whole

earth - obeyed satan, the whole earth came under the influence of satan. Know you have sickness, death - neither of which are from God. We quickly see the first murder (of Abel). We have rape, incest, theft, lying, etc. Why are these things in the world? Because Adam and Eve left them in.

Jesus knew that satan had control over the earth but He also knew that satan had NO control over Him because satan had no part in Him! Jesus was born spiritually alive and had not sinned. Jesus basically tells satan "I will not worship you. I'm actually your God and you should have been worshiping ME this whole time!"

So, Jesus - tempted in every way as we are yet without sin - remains perfect, remains spiritually alive and goes to the cross.

What happened on the Cross?

The Jewish religious leaders had been wanting to kill Jesus for a long time because He was doing things like healing on the Sabbath. Judas contracts with them to betray Him. So, the High Priests lay hold of Jesus. The High Priests give Him to Pilate. Pilate sends Him to Herod. Now Herod and Pilate are friends because Herod's been wanting to meet Him. Herod sends Him back to Pilate.

Pilate tries to convince the crowd that Jesus could be released because he didn't see any wrong-doing in Christ. The crowd chants for Barabbas to be released to them instead. Jesus, like a sheep led silently to the slaughter, says nothing. *"And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly."* (Mt. 27:12-14)

Jesus goes to the Cross and there is a sequence of comments He makes right before He dies. If you compile the 4 gospels, using the common phrases between them, you can link up the sequence.

- *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* (Mt. 27:46) This is very telling because at no point during His entire life was Jesus forsaken by God. But on the cross He was forsaken by God.
- Next Jesus is given sour wine. (By the way, there were two wines that He was offered. The one wine had a narcotic pain killer in it and He refused that because He refused to not experience all of the pain associated with the crucifixion).
- After being given the sour wine without a pain killer in it, Jesus cries out with a loud voice "It is finished!" (Mk. 15:36-37; Jn. 19:28-30)
- Finally Jesus quietly says *"Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit."* (Lk. 23:46)

So, that's the storyline ... but what's it mean?

Did Jesus Die Physically?

Did Jesus die physically? It's not a trick question. John 19:31-37 makes it clear: *"Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and **saw that He was already dead**, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers **pierced His side** with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, **"Not one of His bones shall be broken."** And again another Scripture says, **"They shall look on Him whom they pierced."***

Not only did Jesus die physically, but again what occurred fulfilled two amazingly specific prophecies: *"Not one of His bones shall be broken"* and *"They shall look on Him whom they pierced."*

So did Jesus die physically? Yes.

Did Jesus Die Spiritually?

This is where it gets a little bit more tricky ... did Jesus die spiritually? Remember Jesus was the Second Adam, spiritually alive, tempted in every way - yet without sin. He's on the cross, "My God My God why have You forsaken Me", sour wine, "it's finished!", and "Father into Your hands I commit My spirit."

Eternal life is that we should know God. Spiritual death on the other hand is separation from God. Spirits are not physical so spiritual death is not like "annihilation" or the ceasing to exist of a spirit. It's separation from the source of spiritual life - who is God! In light of that, let's again look at the question: did Jesus die spiritually? Was there spiritual death Jesus experienced on the cross - did He become separated from God?

Let's again look at what Jesus said on the cross in Mark 15:33-34 *"Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, **"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"*** Does that sound like connection or separation? Jesus forsaken was part of the punishment of the cross.

The same Jesus that said He always did what He saw the Father doing and say what He heard the Father saying. The same Jesus that when He went to tell Lazarus to come forth simply says *"Father, I thank You that You have heard Me."* (Jn. 11:41) He then explains that He only said that out loud for the sake of the bystanders so that they could know where this power was about to come from ... from His intimacy with the Father. "Lazarus come forth!"

Many modern day ministries see the dead raised - even with some consistency! Jesus raised 3 people from the dead - Lazarus, the young girl, and the widow's son. There were also 2 dead raisins in the Old Testament that I know of: Elisha with the Shunnammite woman's son; Elisha lays on him and he comes back to life. Later Elisha's in the grave and they threw someone dead into Elisha's grave who them raised from the dead! His ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts!

This is the same Jesus who cried "why have You forsaken Me?" How could it be that the Father forsook Jesus? I would propose to you it is because Jesus had died spiritually. I know that sounds crazy to wrap you head around, but just follow here for a second:

2 Corinthians 5:21 says "*For He made Him who knew no sin **to be sin** for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*" Jesus actually BECAME SIN FOR US so that we might become the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM!

In the Old Testament, there was a Day of Atonement. The High Priest would go into the Holy of Holies. There are 2 goats that are sacrificed on the Day of Atonement - one was a sin offering to the Lord and the other is what is known as the "scapegoat." The High Priest would lay his hands on the head of the scape goat and impute / speak over it all of the sins of all the people of Israel onto that goat which they would then lead into the wilderness in order to die. "*As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.*" (Ps. 103:12) The scapegoat literally took the sins of the people of Israel as far as the east is from the west - out of the camp ... to take care of the sins of the people for one year.

Hebrews tells us that Jesus is a different sort of high priest - an Eternal High Priest so His high priestly ministry and sacrifice takes care of ALL sins, once and for all and for all time!

When Jesus was on the cross He became the scapegoat for all of humanity - for you, for me - for all of our sins for all time! The Father actually grabbed up all sins from previous to Jesus' earthly ministry, concurrent to Jesus' earthly ministry, and after Jesus - the sins we've not yet even committed. He put those ALL those sins upon Jesus and He actually BECAME YOUR SIN. He who knew no sin BECAME SIN FOR ME! All so that I might become the righteousness of God in Him!

When Jesus BECAME SIN it had to have produced spiritual death. Remember Genesis 2? Adam and Even became spiritually dead. Again, I am not talking about annihilation - it's not that they go away ... spiritual death is SEPARATION from the source of spiritual life. Physical death is that you just return to dust. (By the way, if you want another great scriptural evidence that Adam and Eve really did die spiritually remember that in Genesis 3 God says to them (after they sin) "you are dust and to dust you shall return." Remember they were dust + God's spirit but after they sinned God said

“you are now dust and to dust you shall return.” Which part are they not any more? His Spirit! They are now just dust)

Romans 6:23 says “For the **wages of sin is death**, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 5:12 says “Therefore, just as through one man **sin** entered the world, and **death** through **sin**, and thus **death** spread to all men, because all **sinned** ...” Sin produces spiritual death. Every time someone sins as a 3 year old, do they die instantly? Praise God, no! These verses are talking about spiritual death - which does impact us physically, but not instantly (like a rose cut from a stem - from it’s source of spiritual life).

Jesus was without sin - which made Him the spotless lamb, the perfect scapegoat, the perfect sacrifice for sin. It was completely ESSENTIAL that Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for sin and without sin. THEN, all of the sins for all mankind for all time were placed upon Him and now, being that the Father cannot be associated with sin, it appears the Father has turned His face away from Jesus so-to-speak and Jesus cries out “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Mt. 27:46) Separated from God.

Let’s now look at John 3:16-17 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” These are very familiar scriptures, but have you read the two verses immediately preceding these two verses - because they too are speaking of His crucifixion and what happens there:

John 3:14-15 say “And as Moses lifted up the **serpent** in the wilderness, even so must **the Son of Man** be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” That’s from Numbers 21 in which the Israelites has rebelled against God - they had sinned. Serpents bit them and they were dying because they had been infected with the sperpents’ poison. Sound kind of familiar to Genesis?

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.” So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.” (Numbers 21:8-9) And they were healed! They looked upon the serpent on a pole and they were healed!

Jesus then, describing His crucifixion in John 3:14-15 says “as Moses lifted up the **serpent** in the wilderness, even so must **the Son of Man** be lifted up...” Why is Jesus typifying Himself on the cross as a serpent? HE BECAME SIN who knew no sin in order that we might become the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM ... so that everyone who would look upon Him in that state of having become sin for us would no longer die from the bite of the serpent.

When Jesus died, He became everything that you are that you don't want to be. He became sin. He became sickness. His thoughts became cursed (the crown of thorns represents this) - so that we can then have the mind of Christ.

Everything that He was is everything that you become when you behold Him as crucified on your behalf. It's the great exchange. He became sin who knew no sin that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

1 Peter 2:23-24 shows us that Jesus' sacrifice extends beyond removing our transgressions: *"when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed."* His body was whipped and beaten so that your body could be made whole. His life was shed so that you could receive spiritual life so when we take communion this is what it's saying ... we are receiving His broken body and poured out life ... to remember that His body truly was broken for you and His life was poured out for us!

We don't eat the blood of animals because we are not trying to become an animal. The life is in the blood. Even demonic worshipers know that life is in the blood ... that's why you don't partake of blood! Yet Jesus says "drink My life, receive My life within you ... receive the breaking of My body for you" so that instead of spiritual death you can live in the spiritual life that I'm in.

The Power of the Resurrection is Available to You!

Do you have spiritual life? You can do that today. How do you do that? *"whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* If you will look upon Jesus and what He paid for you and you receive it by faith then you will get everything that He is, not of which you deserved, but all of which He gave you freely.

If you need physical healing, His body was broken for you! If you need a financial breakthrough, remember that Jesus was stripped of His nice garments that were so nice that the soldiers cast lots for His garments because they didn't want to divide them ... what does that represent? He became poor (was stripped of being in a good place financially) so that you we could become prosperous. Everything that He was, everything He had access to, everything we did NOT rightfully have access to, has become everything that we DO rightfully have access to.

That's why Jesus says in John 16 ... in that day, after I give Myself for you, and after you realize all that I've done for you, you are not going to be begging the Father for things as though your request is some sort of a favor that may or may not be in your relational bank-account with the Father. Jesus is saying "no, you will know that the Father HIMSELF loves you and you will therefore actually

demand these things as something that is due to you because of Me.” This is actually a place of humility. We have to be humble before the Lord! But it is humility to say “it’s not on My account, but I am on His account and He said these things are available to me!”

You cannot please God apart from faith, so if there is anything in your life that doesn’t have spiritual life bursting through it, then know that God wants to have His resurrection power move in that area of your life!

An Afterword

Jesus was spiritually dead, right? According to Jesus’ own words in Matthew 12:40, Jesus then went to the heart of the earth (Hell) for three days. This is also prophesied in Psalms and interpreted by Peter in Acts 2 and Paul again in Acts 13. Then we read in Col. 1:18 and Rev. 1:5 that Jesus is then the “firstborn from the dead.”

When Jesus raised to life, He was raised BECAUSE OF our justification (see Romans 4:25). We were IN HIM when He was raised. We were in Him when He died and we were in Him when He was raised. Being that you died with Him (Col. 2:20) you were also raised with Him (Col. 3:1).

His sacrifice paid for everything as the lamb of God and then the power of God raises Him up as the High Priest of God (see Hebrews 5:4, Heb. 9:11-12, and Heb. 9:26), firstborn from the dead. (Rev. 1:5, Col. 1:18, Acts 13:33, Heb. 5:5)

1 Corinthians 15 makes it clear: if Christ did not raise from the dead, your faith is worthless. The One who had all of the sins for all mankind for all time on Him ... the power of God and the power of His sacrifice as the lamb of God was strong enough to rip Him out of the clenches of death because it had paid for ALL OF THAT and He was born again! (Rev. 1:5, Col. 1:18, Acts 13:33, Heb. 5:5)

Fast forward about 2000 years and when you (who had a small small fraction of mankind’s sins to your account) when you called upon Jesus, that same power reached into the grave and ripped you out of the grave and said “you now have resurrection power and resurrection life!” Romans 8:11 then says if the same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in you ... He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you!!!