

Four Graces for You in the Resurrection of Jesus  
Resurrection Sunday (March 31, 2024)

**1 Peter 1:3-12 (ESV)** <sup>3</sup> *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup> so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

<sup>8</sup> *Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, <sup>9</sup> obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. <sup>10</sup> Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, <sup>11</sup> inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. <sup>12</sup> It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.*

Christ is risen! **(He is risen, indeed!)**

Yesterday the current president of the United States of America made a proclamation about today. Today is Resurrection Sunday. Today is the day billions of Christians in the United States and around the world celebrate the most incredible act of divine power and grace next to creation and the Incarnation. Today people of faith in America and elsewhere acknowledge and rejoice in the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's Son, from the dead. And President Joe Biden made a proclamation about this day, about March 31, 2024.

Would you like to hear the President's proclamation? Our President has proclaimed Sunday March 31, 2024, Resurrection Sunday to millions, the most solemn Christian holy day as "Transgender Day of Visibility." You heard right. Not "Easter Sunday." Certainly not, "Resurrection Sunday," especially since he decreed there would be no spiritual or religious themed egg decorations on the eggs used in the National Easter Egg hunt on the White House lawn. Nope, President Biden has declared this day, "Transgender Day of Visibility" saying, "Today we send a message to all transgender Americans . . . You belong. You are America, and my entire Administration and I have your back."

It is a good thing the president and his administration have the back of transgender people in this day because he and his administration have repeatedly taken aim at Christ and anyone who holds to a biblical, Christian faith or social ethic. And the man presents himself as a devout Catholic who attends church regularly.

How can a man, a leader, who claims a religious practice that hinges on the resurrection of Jesus treat both Jesus and the resurrection as though they have no meaning or significance?

To be fair, this should not surprise us. Lifeway Research began an annual study in 2014 called the State of Theology survey. This research company studies cultural perceptions and social attitudes among US citizens relative to all things “theological.” Listen to some of the findings of their 2022 study:

- 66% of US adults say the biblical accounts of the physical resurrection of Jesus are completely accurate. 23% disagree and 11% are unsure.
- Young Americans (18-34) are least likely to express belief in a historical resurrection: 58%
- Evangelicals (90%) and Black Protestants (89%) are more likely to affirm Jesus’ resurrection than Catholics (70%) and mainline Protestants (74%)
- Americans with evangelical beliefs are more likely than those without such beliefs to accept the resurrection as fact. The ratio is 98% v 58%.

But all of these statistics pale in impact to this one: though 66% of US adults say they believe the resurrection of Jesus is a historical fact a majority of US adults surveyed see no connection between the resurrection of Jesus and their daily lives.

For most Americans today, the resurrection of Jesus has the same personal impact as the sinking of the Spanish Armada in 1588. “Oh. Yes, that happened. What’s for dinner?” It is no wonder a national, a world leader, who claims a religious connection to the resurrection, can treat the resurrection as though it doesn’t matter, has no bearing on the lives of people today, and is not worth protecting in the public arena. Most of the people he leads don’t see a connection between the resurrection and their daily lives.

Rebecca Mc Laughlin, author of *Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World’s Largest Religion*, had this to say about the Lifeway study: Many Americans “need to understand what difference it makes that Jesus rose from the dead. We need to show them it makes all the difference in the world.”

This morning, I want to attempt to show once again that the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead makes all the difference in the world. First, I want to set before us four reasons why God raised Jesus from the dead. Then, I want to share with us four graces that are ours through the resurrection of Jesus that would never be ours without His resurrection.

## **Why was God right to raise Jesus from the dead?**

### **1. Jesus stuck with the plan.**

- a. Two verses
  - i. **Revelation 13:8 (KJV) 8 *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world***
  - ii. **Ephesians 1:3-4 (ESV) 3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord***

*Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.*

- b. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit determined before ever they spoke the world into existence that the Son would take on flesh and enter the world and offer Himself as a sacrifice of love to save sinners.
- 2. Jesus lived in perfect compliance with the will and character of God.**
- a. **1 Corinthians 15:22 (ESV)** *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*
    - i. The first Adam failed to retain the image of God and because of his sin condemned all his descendents to death
    - ii. But Jesus is the second Adam, sent from God to do what the first did not, to retain the image of God without sin or guilt
    - iii. To live a sinless life
  - b. Jesus never departed from the eternal plan
    - i. Not when tempted by the Devil
    - ii. Not when misunderstood by His disciples
    - iii. Not when mistreated by His people
    - iv. Not when crucified by the Romans
- 3. Jesus died a sacrificial, substitutionary death (in our place, on our behalf)**
- a. **Romans 5:8 (ESV)** *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
  - b. “For” us
    - i. Your life
    - ii. Your death
    - iii. Your sin
    - iv. Your guilt
- 4. Jesus retained joy**
- a. **Hebrews 12:2 (ESV)** *looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*
  - b. God raised Jesus from the dead
    - i. Certifying the validity of His work
    - ii. Justifying the validity of His joy

But what is the resurrection of Jesus to us? God certifies Jesus’ life work by raising Him from the dead. God establishes Jesus’ eternal joy by raising Him from the dead and restoring Him to glory.

**But what difference does that make to you and me and the people of this world trying live and make our way in this world today, 2000 years later?**

**Here are four graces that can only be yours through the resurrection of Jesus.**

**1. Atonement**

- a. **Hebrews 9:27-28 (ESV)** <sup>27</sup> *And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and*

*after that comes judgment,<sup>28</sup> so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*

- b. Christ is offered once to bear the sins of many. Why?
  - i. Because sin separates us from God
  - ii. Because sin leads to condemnation and death
  - iii. Because without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin
- c. Every one of us must face God and give an account of our sin
  - i. Either we will face God with our sin in our hands and guilt in our hearts
  - ii. Or we will face Him with our sin on Christ and our guilt in His cross
- d. Forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God through faith in Christ is guaranteed through the resurrection of Jesus

## 2. **Redemption**

- a. When Adam sinned he sold the human race into slavery to sin and self and Satan
- b. Christ, in his life and death and resurrection provides the price that redeems us from slavery to sin

## 3. **Reconciliation**

- a. Sin separates us from God
- b. Bummer Lambs
  - i. A bummer lamb is a term used to describe a lamb that has been rejected by its mother, often due to its small size or other weaknesses. When a ewe (the mother sheep) gives birth to multiple lambs, she may not be able to provide enough milk for all of them. In such cases, one of the lambs—the bummer lamb—goes hungry because the mother cannot feed it adequately.
  - ii. But fear not! The shepherd steps in to care for the bummer lamb. Here's what the shepherd does:
    - (1) Bringing the Lamb Home: The shepherd takes the rejected lamb into his home. He recognizes that the little creature is in danger and needs intervention.
    - (2) Hand-Feeding and Warmth: The shepherd hand-feeds the bummer lamb, ensuring it gets the nourishment it needs. He keeps it warm by the fire, wrapping it in blankets. The lamb can hear the comforting rhythm of the shepherd's heartbeat.
    - (3) Intimate Care: The shepherd holds the lamb close, providing the love and care it lacks. The bummer lamb learns to recognize the shepherd's voice and presence.
    - (4) Integration with the Flock: Once the lamb grows stronger, the shepherd reintroduces it to the rest of the flock. Despite being part of the larger group, the bummer lamb never forgets the shepherd's care during its vulnerable time.
- c. The resurrection of Jesus assures our reconciliation with God.

## 4. **Salvation**

- a. Sin-guilt subjects us to the right and reasonable wrath of our just and righteous God.
- b. The nature of our sin is such that we cannot save ourselves.

- c. Jesus gave Himself to death on the cross to atone for our sin and remove the wrath of God from all who believe.
- d. The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee that everyone who puts their faith in Him will be saved.
  - i. **Romans 10:9-12 (ESV)** *if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11 For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. 13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

The resurrection of Jesus makes all the difference in the world. Let me take you back to the verses we shared at the beginning of this message. **1 Peter 1:3 (ESV)** *<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

God has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Born again. Living Hope. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The one hope that we have both for living in this world and for life in the world to come is ours from God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. **The resurrection of Jesus makes all the difference in the world.**