

# Resurrection Power

Acts 2:22-32

17 April 2022 | Grace Bible Church Corinda | Ben Shannon

**Big Question:** What difference does the resurrection of Jesus make?

**Big Idea:** Life isn't found in what we do but in trusting the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

## Prayer

Gracious Lord, you have given us your holy Bible for our learning. Help us to hear your words, understand them, remember them and apply them. Please encourage and support us so that we'd hold tightly to the joyful hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

## Introduction

Julio Garcia saved lives.

He wasn't a doctor who found a cure to a rare disease or a fireman who dragged people from a burning building.

He didn't heroically save people by disarming a thermonuclear device with a paperclip and some grundies.

He saved them by dying.

In March 2010, Julio passed away from a brain haemorrhage at the tragically young age of 38.

In the midst of her own grief, his wife donated his organs to be used by others.

**{DP}** Here's a picture of his family with a grateful recipient.

Praise God that we can take organs from a dead person and use them to give seven strangers a new lease on life.

That's the miracle of modern medicine through the gift of one man and his family.

Today is a special day in the calendar of the Christian church.

It's the day when we remember the gift of one man that gives life to many.

Each year on this Sunday we set aside time to particularly remember that Jesus died for us and God rose him from the dead.

As I've been meditating on the resurrection of Jesus, I've been reminded that's just an incredible thing.

It's a miracle that through the death of one man, not just seven, but millions if not billions of people have life.

The life that Jesus gives doesn't just last for a short period of time.

The new life that's found in Christ begins now and extends into eternity.

For some of us – especially if you've never heard this before – that might sound so incredible that you really wonder whether it could possibly be true.

For others of us, we've become so familiar with this, that it's lost some of the sparkle and we might understate just how incredible this is.

## Outline

Easter is when we remember in a very focused way that God's heart beats for his people, but there's also lots of confusion about Easter isn't there?

Just like many Japanese people think Christmas is all about eating KFC, many Australians don't think Easter's about Jesus.

Easter's the jewel in the crown of the nation of the long weekend, but four days off isn't really what makes it great.

And Jesus didn't die on the cross so that we could eat chocolate.

The promise of Easter is that God gives us life.

**{DP}** Jesus is all about life.

That was the reason and purpose that Jesus, God's Son, entered into the pages of history as a man.

**{DP}** Jesus came to give life and to give it to the full.

**John 10:10b** NIV11 I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

At Easter, we remember that Jesus died for our sins and rose to life.

And because he's risen to life, we know for certain that we can have eternal life too.

The Resurrection is a miracle that shows us the power of God.

What we're going to see this morning is that **life isn't found in what we do but in trusting the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.**

- God's Plan for Life (vv22-24)
- God's Plan Predicted (vv25-30)
- God's Plan Witnessed (vv31-32)

## God's Plan for Life (v22-24)

Let me set the scene for you.

It's the day of Pentecost – fifty days or seven weeks of seven days plus one after the Passover.<sup>1</sup>

The Israelites came to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Weeks as God commanded them.

All twelve of Jesus' followers who'd been with him from the beginning were there, including Peter who was kind of like their unofficial leader.

Peter stands up to speak to the crowd of Israelites who were there about Jesus from Nazareth.

Everyone knew the man Jesus, I mean how couldn't they?

He was a man, but not just some random Charlie.

The miracles, wonders and signs he did were legendary – like feeding the five thousand, healing a blind man so he could see and commanding the wind and waves to be still.

All these miracles were performed in public places where everyone could see.

The question was where did Jesus' power and authority to do these miracles come from?

Some people said that Jesus got his power from Satan.

Jesus himself pointed out that his power couldn't come from Satan because that's who he was working against.<sup>2</sup>

No, Jesus' power came from God.

All of the miracles, wonders and signs were a sign that Jesus was accredited by God.

He was God's endorsed candidate.

We've got a federal election coming up and candidates need to be endorsed by their party.

Being endorsed gives a candidate status as representing the party.

That's why Scott Morrison got into strife this week for endorsing a candidate that said things some people deemed offensive.

Jesus was endorsed by God himself by the miracles he did and everyone knew it.

Yet this's the same Jesus they killed.

No one individual was responsible, but the crowds were eager to condemn Jesus to die.

Pilate planned to please the people and keep them happy.

The leaders wanted Jesus dead because he was a threat to their power.

It wasn't Judas so much as the crowds who handed him over to the Romans to be nailed on the cross for execution.

As we saw on Good Friday, this wasn't a mistake on Jesus' part because it was all a deliberate part of God's plan.

A plan that wasn't cooked up on the fly, but was created long ago.

A plan to save sinful human beings from their sin.

The Romans did the dirty deed but God foreknew it, decided it, planned it.

Sentence 23:

**Acts 2:23** NIV11 <sup>23</sup> This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

The Cross isn't the end of the Easter story or of God's plan though.

Sentence 24 starts with "But God..."

"But God raised him from the dead."

Jesus didn't just decide by himself that he was going to roll over in the tomb, get up and walk out.

God intervened with a powerful act to raise his son from the dead.

That's what we're celebrating today.

Apart from Jesus, death isn't just AN option, it's the ONLY option.

Dead people don't have the option of not staying dead.

Nobody escapes the painful and agonising experience of death.

An eternity being separated from the goodness of God's not something to look forward to.

There are all kinds of different views about what death will be like.

It's not going to be all pushing up daisies and having a raving party.

The Bible gives us the sobering and confronting insight that death is painful and agonising.

I wonder people's perspective on the euthanasia that's allowed in our State would change if they knew that without Christ, they're not escaping the pain and misery of death at all, but simply bringing it on faster?

Lots of people are afraid of death.

I can understand that because most of us intuitively realise that death's a scary thing.

We try to pretend that it doesn't exist by trusting that somehow medical advances will be able to delay it forever.

And we try to hide from death by even trying to hide from seeing dead bodies to keep up the illusion.

Christians can confront that bleak reality with hope though.

Death holds sinners captive, but God freed Jesus from that captivity.

It was impossible for death to hold Jesus.

Jesus dying was a bit like a round peg in a square hole.

Death is the wages of sin, but Jesus didn't sin. Ever.<sup>3</sup>

He and he alone lived a perfect life, never doing anything wrong and always doing exactly what God required of him.

Death had not right to hold Jesus and the power of God was greater than the power of death.

Jesus doing miracles was controversial enough, but the miracle of the resurrection takes things to a whole different level.

Because if Jesus rose from the dead, then there is an alternative, it means that there's another way.

Christians can approach death very differently, with hope, the hope of being raised to life.

{DP} Sin brings death but God's power brings life.

**Romans 6:23** NIV11 <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Life is a gift from God to be received.

Just like there's nothing that you can do for yourself to avoid death, there's absolutely nothing you can do to gain life.

You must simply trust in what Jesus has already done.

He died for your sin if you will only trust him and believe in him.

{DP} If you do, God's promise is that:

**Romans 8:11b** NIV11 he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

God's plan wasn't just for his son to die.

It was also for him to open the way to life.

He was the trailblazer, the leader and the proof that sin couldn't hold Jesus down.

God's plan was that we can be free of death in Jesus.

## God's Plan Predicted

Secondly, God's plan was predicted.

We read in sentence 25 that David had this to say about Jesus.

Now, if you're wondering who David is when he's at home, he's one of the best-known kings in the Old Testament.

He's famous for killing a giant named Goliath with a stone and a sling.

He's also well-known for writing a whole heap of songs that we call psalms.

Peter quotes from Psalm 16 here.

In the Psalm, David tells of his commitment and confidence in God, even when things aren't going well for him.

He uses this as an explanation for why death didn't have power of Jesus to keep him dead.

God is near – at his right hand – and so the writer relies on him.

And so he's not at all worried that he'll be rocked.

He might be stirred, but he won't be shaken.

He knows that God will always help him and therefore he obeys and remains faithful to God.

He's free to express this confidence with all of his being.

Knowing that God's going to look after him makes his heart glad.

That kind of joy is going to well up and pour out of his mouth in rejoicing, even in the middle of hard times.

David doesn't need to be afraid of the future because he's got hope.

It might seem strange at first that the hope is in his body, sentence 26.

But not if this's talking about his body being resurrected from the grave.

This isn't just talking about a kind of spiritual resurrection in our hearts, but a physical and bodily resurrection that gives hope.

His hope comes from the knowledge that God won't abandon him.

Have a look at sentence 27:

**Acts 2:27** NIV11 <sup>27</sup> because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay.

He's not going to be left in the realm of the dead – far from God's presence.

Jews typically understood the realm of the dead is the place where the dead will gather, waiting for judgment.

God won't let the body of his holy one decompose.

We freeze bodies when someone dies because if you don't they get quite whiffy quite quickly.

Fortunately, I can't say that's from personal experience of a human body, but I have smelt dead mice past their prime.

I've set mouse traps before and then forgotten about them.

It quickly goes from a little bit of a sell to a full-on stench really quickly. Yuk!

He's sure that God will lead him on the path of life.

God will provide an alternate route that doesn't lead to death.

And he will come – with joy – into the presence of God.

To be with God forever.

Did you notice that the psalm is written in the first person.

It's very personal and he talks about "I" a lot.

Now the thing about Psalm 16 is that it was written LONG before the time of Jesus.

David lived about a thousand years before Jesus.

That's exactly Peter's point.

Peter says that you can be sure that David fell off his perch and he was buried – you can read about it in 1 Kings 2.

After all that time, his body was going to be fairly far gone.

**{DP}** If you visit Jerusalem today, you can visit David's grave.

Over the passage of time, the actual site has probably been lost and most people don't think it's really authentic.

But according to sentence 29, Peter knew exactly where it was in the first century.

David wasn't talking about himself.

Like a prophet, he was looking ahead and speaking about what Jesus would experience.

David was a prophet and he was also a Messiah.

The Hebrew word Messiah simply means anointed one.

Kings were anointed with oil as a symbol that this's the man who'll be king.

In 1 Samuel 16, you can read about how the prophet Samuel take a big jar of oil and dumps it on David's head.

David wasn't talking about himself, he was talking about THE Messiah – Jesus.

In another one of his songs, he writes about the promise that he had that one of his kids would stay on the throne.<sup>4</sup>

One of David's descendants could sing this song in the first person.

We know that Jesus was one of David's descendants from Luke's earlier account.<sup>5</sup>

Peter says that the words of Psalm 16 are the words of Jesus.

They're talking about his resurrection, the resurrection of the Messiah.

This psalm speaks of God's plan to resurrect his son a thousand years before it happened!

Why couldn't death hold Jesus?

Because God promised him that it wouldn't.

Long before his time, God promised through David that he wouldn't abandon his Messiah but would be with him.



God would save his servant by raising him from the dead.

That same promise is extended to you and I if we're united with Jesus.

We've got the promise that if we trust in Jesus, then we will live eternally with him.

We won't be abandoned to death but will be raised to life.

Romans 6:5 tells us:

**Romans 6:5** NIV11 <sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.

God's plan for life can be trusted because it was predicted.

## God's Plan Witnessed (vv31-32)

David saw what was going to happen to the Messiah in the future, verse 31.

Peter, the other eleven disciples and plenty of others got to see it actually happen in time and space.

Peter riffs off the part of Psalm 16 in verse 27.

He repeats himself, but he deliberately changes it a little bit.

He makes all the verbs – all the doing words – past tense.

What God promised through David in Psalm 16, Peter's already seen come to pass.

They'd seen this actually happen.

Jesus died on the Cross, but he wasn't abandoned by his father.

He went down into the grave, but he wasn't compelled to be stuck in hell for all of his life.

He rose from the dead.

And his body didn't decay.

When Mary met Jesus on that first Easter morning, she mistook him for the gardener.

Jesus didn't rise from the dead like some zombie who had all kinds of bits of flesh missing.

The only thing that happened to his body is that it now had the marks of the nails in his hands and side.

God raised Jesus to life and “we are all witnesses of it”, Peter says.

I presume that means that the eleven disciples were witness, but I also think that all the people were witnesses as well.

First the women, then the two disciples, then others on the road.

Jesus appeared to all of his closest friends in the locked room and finally to more than 500 people.

Peter’s saying that the proof of the resurrection’s in the seeing.

Two thousand years later, people can say that this was a story that’s just made up.

Do you really think that people at the time were so stupid that they’d follow along without checking though?

They were clearly going to have a look for themselves.

At this point, it’s too late for them to check for themselves because Jesus had already ascended into heaven, but there were plenty of people they could ask.

Jesus’ disciples walked with him and talked with them.

They ate with them.

One of Jesus’ friend in particular was sceptical at first.

He wasn’t just going to believe a story, so he wanted to put his finger in the holes left by the nails.

And I’m glad he did because it gives me greater confidence that this really is true.

We can’t see Jesus risen back from the dead ourselves, but we know things by trusting the testimony of others.

In this case, men who were so convinced of what they’d seen that they were willing to give their lives to stand by it.

Being a Christian risked being fed to the lions, becoming a candle or having an otherwise early and creative death certificate.

Yet they stuck to their story.

I was listening to a podcast from a very intelligent man who helped in the development of the Australian school curriculum.

He was encouraging people to be curious and have the courage to question things.

I agree that it's good to be sceptical.

And he even said that scepticism isn't the same as disbelief.

We need to be careful of being so closed-minded that we're not prepared to consider the evidence.

But he then insisted that we don't get guidance from religious doctrines, traditions or people in authority.

Because – he, an authority – said that we shouldn't trust authorities!

The resurrection of Jesus only happened once – it can only happen once.

We have it on good authority.

It's arrogant to think that if I didn't personally see it, it didn't happen.

Testimony is a legitimate way of knowing things and we accept it as evidence in a court of law.

Listen to the witness of Peter.

Peter's saying that he saw it and therefore you can believe it.

We're told in sentence 41 that 3,000 people put their hope in Jesus that day.

Investigate Jesus and the Bible.

You should've received an invitation to our Life Course as you came in today.

It's an opportunity to investigate Jesus and the claims made about him in the Bible.

Come along and ask your questions – there's plenty of time for that each night.

The next course will be here, starting on 2 May at 7pm.

God's plan to raise his son from the dead was witnessed.

The outworking of God's plan was seen by many people.

## Response

This isn't just a matter for us to turn over in our mind.

The proof of the pudding, they say, is in the eating.

The proof of the resurrection is in the effect that it had on peoples' lives.

A larger number of lives were changed forever because Jesus rose from the dead.

If you look down a few verses, we find that there were many who were deeply affected by what Peter said.

Having heard about what Jesus had done and the significance of it, they wanted to know what to do.

How should they respond to this?

Verse 37:

**Acts 2:37** NIV11 <sup>37</sup> When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Peter’s response was that they needed to repent.

Repenting means turning from what you were doing and going a different way.

You need to turn from your sin.

It’s more than just being convinced by an argument; it’s a change of life.

Instead of being on the road to death, it means changing highways to be on the road to life.

**Acts 2:38** NIV11 <sup>38</sup> Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

If you want life this morning, then that’s what you need to do as well.

You need to turn from your sin and trust in the death of Jesus.

Then you’ll have the life that Jesus offers.

## Conclusion

Julio Garcia did a great thing.

By sharing his organs after his passing, he was able to extend the life of seven people.

One man’s death gave life to many.

But although their lives were extended for a time, it wasn’t forever.

Jesus died, but God rose him from the dead.

Through his resurrection, Jesus gives life to many.

If you trust in him, then you won’t just have your life extended, it’ll be extended into eternity.

A new life, a better life that isn't tainted by the sin and misery of this world.

If Jesus came back from the dead, there's implications for us all.

The resurrection's a gamechanger.

Resurrection is God's great intervention.

Life isn't found in what we do but in trusting the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 23:15

<sup>2</sup> Luke 11:18

<sup>3</sup> Romans 6:23

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 132:11

<sup>5</sup> Luke 3:32

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**Big Question:** What difference does the resurrection of Jesus make?

**Big Idea:** Life isn't found in what we do but in trusting the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

## Discussion Questions

1. What is the context for this passage?
2. What was the purpose of Jesus' miracles that Peter points out?
3. Was the Cross part of God's plan?
4. Why couldn't death hold Jesus?
5. What is death like, according to Peter?
6. How do we know that David was talking about Jesus?
7. What did David say that shows he was talking about resurrection?
8. How can we know that Jesus rose from dead?
9. What does it mean to repent?