

## **The Source of Resurrection Truth**

Selected Scriptures

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Father, thank You this morning for bringing us together on this joyous occasion, a time when we so thrillingly set apart our thoughts and minds from all other things to concentrate upon the living Christ. We thank You for the fact that You're alive. We thank You that we do not worship a...a dead idol, one who cannot respond, a mute god, but a living Christ, who moves and walks in our midst. Oh, how thankful we are for this reality. Bless as we look to the Word, Father. There's nothing I have to say, but only what Thou would say. Exalt the Son through the Word. We pray in His blessed name. Amen.

About a week ago on the Merv Griffin television program, there was an interview with Kenny Kingston, who happens to be a medium to the stars, the movie stars. He's apparently a very popular, wealthy man. Frequently talks with the dead spirits of departed movie stars. He is high priced and very popular. He was telling on this broadcast that, recently, he had occasion to speak with the spirit of Errol Flynn. He also had a conversation with the spirit of Tyrone Power. And Tyrone Power's dead spirit, he said, wants to come back, and actually was in the womb of a woman in Mexico City. But he aborted, because he didn't like Mexico. He also said that he had a recent conversation with the dead spirit of Clark Gable, who said he wanted to tell everybody, please, not to blame Marilyn Monroe for his death. He was guilty of overeating, dissipating, and it was his own fault, and he was to blame. Perhaps the most interesting one that he had recently talked to was Jeffrey Hunter. Jeffrey Hunter, an actor, who died a few years back is now back alive in the body of a 13-month-old baby living in Santa Monica. And every time a Jeffrey Hunter movie comes on television, the baby goes into uncontrollable crying...

Now, you say, "Well, this is ridiculous." And, yet, here is a man who has made a fortune out of this, and there are people who believe this. There are people who go to him, who subscribe to his theories. And there are thousands like him who are mediums, contacting the other world, supposedly. Really, all they do is contact demons who impersonate the dead...But the reason people like this can exist, and exist with great success, is because of the deep desire in the heart of men to know that there is a life after death. This is nothing new. People do want to know about life after death. They wanna know that there is something more. That there is a reality beyond the grave. They want resurrection. They want the hope of life.

You say, "Well, if I wanna know about resurrection, where do I go?" And I say to you there's only one source of resurrection information. That's Jesus Christ. For He is the only one who ever entered into death, conquered it, came out the other side, and promised that because He lives, we, too, shall live also. He not only conquered death for Himself, but He conquered death for every man who comes to Him, for He said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me shall never...what?...die. Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." And though He were dead, though He passed through physical death, yet shall He live. And so there is promise through Jesus Christ, the resurrection for all who believe. I believe that, and I believe that the only source of truth regarding

resurrection life is Jesus Christ.

And lemme just give you four reasons why I believe it. And this is gonna be very simple. Just very basic, and, yet, very profound. Four reasons why we look at Jesus Christ as the source of all truth about resurrection life. Number one, what He did for others. Number two, what He did for Himself. Number three, what He is now doing for Christians. And number four, what He will do for all men. All four of these features give us reason to believe beyond any doubt that Jesus is the source of information regarding resurrection.

Let's look, first of all, at what He did for others. You know, when I wanna find out about resurrection, when I wanna find out about somebody's claims to contact the other life, when I want to know about the truth of whether there's a life after death, I wanna go to somebody who can prove that they know something about it. And as I look at Jesus Christ, I see, first of all, what He did for others that proves to me that He was the source of life. Look at Matthew chapter 9, and I'm just gonna show you some very simple incidents in the life of Christ that give us this truth. Matthew chapter 9 verse 18, Jesus was constantly being questioned by religious leaders and rulers. Most of the time they were endeavoring not to get an answer, but to trap Him in His Words. But in this particular occasion, in the midst of answering a question, He is confronted with another situation. Verse 18 of Matthew 9, "While He spoke these things unto them...that is in response to their questionings...behold, there came a certain ruler." Israel had a lotta rulers. When you see the word "ruler," you just really don't know maybe what it means or to whom it refers, and that's understandable, since there's a broad base of leadership in Israel.

But, basically, the rule of the people of Israel was divided into two different areas. There was the overall rule that was...that was the responsibility of the Sanhedrin. Seventy elders who ruled the nation. But, beyond that, every synagogue in every local area, had its own board of elders. So here was a man who was likely an elder in a synagogue. His name, according to the other records, Mark and Luke, was Jairus, and Jairus approaches Jesus in the midst of Jesus' conversation, and he says, "My daughter is even now dead."...And, incidentally, Mark and Luke record that this is the second statement of Jairus. The first one is, "She's sick." And some people came and said, "No, she's now dead." And so here he says, "My daughter is dead, but come and lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live." Now, that's faith, isn't it? You say, "Well, whatever made him think that this carpenter from Nazareth could take this kind of a...an opportunity and make something out of it?" Well, perhaps he had been from Capernaum. Perhaps he had seen, no doubt he had seen many of the miracles our Lord had done in Capernaum. He was convinced, at least, that Jesus was a miracle worker, and probably beyond that, he was convinced, in some sense, that He was from God, because it says in verse 18 that he worshiped Him. And he would never have worshipped anything other than God. And so, at this point, he had some measure of faith, and he said, "If You just touch her, she'll live."

"And Jesus arose and followed him, and so did His disciples." You'll notice that Jesus takes the disciples, usually a mention is made of that in reference to every miracle, because the miracles were primarily for the disciples. You see, miracles don't really convince skeptics, but they do solidify the faith of doubters, and so the disciples were the ones who benefited most from the miracles. Skeptics have a way of explaining them away. They still do that. So off they went to the man's house. On the way, He just happened to run into a lady who had a problem, so He healed her. And I think that was just to encourage Jairus a little bit on the trip. Verse 23, "When Jesus came into the ruler's house and saw the musicians and the people making a noise"...and this is interesting, 'cause this gives us a

little insight into a typical Jewish funeral. The musicians would probably be translated flute players.

You know, today we say a lot about the guitar, because it seems like everybody carries a guitar. Kids everywhere have guitars. Well, in those days, the flute was what everybody played, 'cause you could make it out of almost anything. A bone, a...a...a stick, anything you had, you could work it out of a...even some reeds could be used to...to make some kind of a flute-type instrument. And so they were very common. And a lotta people came when somebody died and just played sort of maudlin things on their flutes. And then, of course, there was the noisy crowd. There was a lot of vocal mourning. You know, nowadays, when somebody dies, it's sort of painful silence. But in that day, it was very loud mourning, and people sort of wailed, and there were even professionals who did that.

And so they were having all this folderol going on in the house, because the little girl had died. Now notice verse 24, and I'll show something very interesting. "He said unto them, 'Go away...that's interesting in itself. He told 'em all to get out...for the maid is not dead, but sleeps,' and they laughed in His face." They knew she was dead. What is He saying? "She is not dead, but she sleeps." Well, some liberal people have said, some who wanna explain away the miracles of the Bible, "You see, she wasn't really dead. She just was in a coma, and when all those people making all that racket got outta there, she felt a lot better...And in the peace and quiet and the gentle, soothing touch of Jesus, she just came right outta that coma, was sort of a nice...circumstance."...

Was that what He meant? She's not dead. She's just taking a nap. What does the word "sleep" mean? How in the world can Jesus say she's not dead, but she sleeps, if she's really dead. Well, there's a great difference here. Both our Lord and the writers of the epistles in the New Testament use the word sleep to speak of death that is temporary...But whenever the word death is used alone, it has a very permanent quality, doesn't it? What Jesus is saying here is simply this. Death will not be the ultimate victor in this case. She's gonna wake up.

Now, the term sleep is used frequently, isn't it, in the New Testament in reference to death. But notice, only in reference to the death of a believer. Did you know that? Or somebody whose death is temporary...Lemme illustrate that to ya, in John 11. Jesus heard about Lazarus. Lazarus is dead. You know what He said? He said, "That's all right...listen...our friend Lazarus has only fallen asleep." Friends, one thing about sleep, you always wake up. That's different than death. "Our friend Lazarus has only fallen asleep." A little earlier, they said, "Lazarus is sick. Lazarus is sick." You know what Jesus said in John 11? "This sickness is not unto death." Jesus differentiated between death and sleep in this sense only, that death, as He used it here, was in reference to death as the victor. But where death is not the victor, Jesus calls it simply sleep.

Now, in that sense, do Christians die? Is death the victor? Not according to 1 Corinthians 15. "O death, where is thy victory?" No, and so when Christians die, we do not speak of them as dying. We speak of them as sleeping. Their bodies will be resurrected to eternal life. Their spirits are alive already with the Lord. Listen to 1 Corinthians 11:30. Some of those Christians in Corinth had desecrated the Lord's table. They had misused the love feast. They were fiddling around with the doctrines of demons, with idolatry. And the Lord says to them, "You have eaten unworthily of My table." In other words, "You've made a mockery out of your Christian testimony."

"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many...what?...sleep." Now, they were dead, but in the apostle's reference here, you see the same thing as in the Lord's reference. Death for the Christian is called sleep, because it is only a temporary thing. The body is sleeping for a while

until it's resurrected in its full glory. And it's only in reference to the body, because the spirit, of course, is with the Lord. In 1 Corinthians 15:20, it tells us further, "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept." And, again, all of those who will be resurrected, as Christ was, are spoken of as those who sleep.

In verse 51, "I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep." That is, all Christians aren't gonna die. Did you know that? Did you know that you may not die? All you Christians here may not die. You say, "How come?" 'Cause the Rapture could occur before this service is over, and we'll all just go. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." Every one of us is gonna go through transformation. Some of us have to die first. Some are gonna go in the Rapture. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." That's the verse to have in the nursery, too. Think about it. Now, I'm not sure that's what Paul had in mind.

First Thessalonians 4:14, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again...I'll tell ya, I believe that, I believe that...even so them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." And, again, you have in reference to Christians the term sleep used to speak of death. That sleep is never used to speak of an unbeliever, because that is not sleep, because they do not awake from that death. They die eternally in the spiritual sense. You remember the beautiful story of Stephen? You must remember. Stephen, the first martyr...I was reading C.S. Lewis last night, and he said, "I don't know that Stephen was the first martyr. I think Lazarus was because he had the unfortunate problem of having to be resurrected and die all over again. To die twice would be a terrible thing. Dying once is bad enough." But for all intents and purposes, for his faith, Stephen was the first martyr. And it says that, "Stephen cried out...in Acts 7:60 as they were stoning him to death...'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,' and when he had said this, he fell asleep." Isn't that beautiful? You see, it was only sleep for the believer, because there is a waking.

And so the term "sleep" is used even by our Lord to refer to death that is impermanent. And then he says here in Matthew 9, as you remember, "This little girl is not dead. She's sleeping." Which means it's temporary. "And they laughed in His face." That'll give you a little idea of what kind of mourners they were. They turned into laughers in just one verse. The hypocrisy of their mourning. "And when the people were put forth, He went in and took her by the hand...and Mark says...tolethacoomy...which is little girl arise...and she arose and ate. And His fame went about through all the land."

Listen, friends, you tell me about somebody who's got an answer about death, and I'll believe you if I've seen him conquer. Lemme take you to Luke 7. This is beautiful. The funeral procession was very common in that land. It still is. I remember this summer when we were in Israel, we were going into Bethlehem. We ran into a funeral procession, and all the friends and neighbors and the people of the town, and they all march along. The casket is carried high, so everyone can see. And the family walks immediately in front of the casket, and it's another interesting thing about Jewish funerals. The women all walk in the front. Do you know why they put the women in the front? Because it was a woman who first sinned and brought about death...And so, since that was the way it was, they put the women out in front. And Jesus was coming, in Luke 7 verse 11, into a little village called Nain. "And many of His disciples went with Him." Again, they were there to see this miracle. "And many people." Always a lotta witnesses at a resurrection. Irrefutable evidence.

"He came near to the gate of the city, and there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." She had no husband and no son. Now no one to care for her. "And

many people of the city were with her." Apparently, she was a...a lovely lady, a lady of some import or some social prominence. And everybody came. "And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said unto her, 'Don't go on weeping. Cease to weep. Stop crying.'" Which would've seemed a strange thing for Him to say, she not knowing Him. "And then He walked up...in verse 14...and He touched the casket, and that stopped the procession. And they that bore him stood still." You can imagine the shock as He said, "Young man, I saw unto thee, arise." Wow. "And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And Jesus delivered him to his mother."

Do you know why Jesus performed this miracle? Not for Himself alone, but for that mother. You know, I thought to myself, "He could've taken that boy around with Him and introduced him at all of the next meetings that He had as the resurrected boy." And he coulda given his testimony, "You know, I was dead, and I remember I just stood up in that casket and climbed out." You know, He could've really capitalized on that. But Jesus knew the route of sensationalism was not the route. He raised that boy and just said, "Here, take care of your mother."...Well, what kind of an affect did that have on everybody? Pretty dramatic. Verse 16, "They came fear on all, glorified God, saying, 'A great prophet is raised up among us, and God has visited His people.' And this rumor of Him went forth throughout all Judea and all the region about." Listen, this Lord Jesus commanded life out of death.

Lemme show you one more that you know well. John 11, and we go to Lazarus. Lazarus was good and dead four days. The Jews have kind of a little theory. They believe that the spirit, when somebody died, the spirit hovered over the body for four days, and on the fourth day, it left because the body was decomposed so badly by four days that the spirit could no longer recognize the body, so it just left. They did not embalm, you know, and so there was preserving of the body. And so Lazarus was dead for four days. And they had the typical Jewish funeral. The body would only remain out of the ground a very brief time. The mourners would come. They would mourn a little bit. No food was allowed because of the kind of mourners they were. They didn't want it turning into a party. So there wasn't any food until the burial took place, and they came back and had a meal, but all the people remained for several days, speeches went on, wailing. Jesus arrives, and that's the scene.

Verse 20, "Martha, as soon as she heard Jesus was coming, went and met Him; but Mary sat in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, 'Lord, if You'd been here, my brother had not died.'" In other words, she believed that Jesus could take care of sickness...but not resurrection. She believed that Jesus could handle a sick man, but not a dead man. She had half-faith. "'If You'd been here, he wouldn't have died. Ah,' but she said...verse 22...I know that even now, whatever You ask of God, God's gonna give it to You. I know enough to know that." And just maybe he could come again from the dead. "Jesus said unto her, 'Thy brother shall rise again.'" And she thought He was giving her a sermon. "Sure, sure." Right? Verse 24, "I know he's gonna rise in the Last Day. I'm not interested in that. I know my theology. You don't have to give me a sermon on resurrection. I know that. I'm...I miss him now.' Jesus said unto her, 'I am the resurrection and the Life.'" He knew what she was thinking, so He put it in the present tense. He didn't say, "I will be the resurrection and the Life in the Last Day." He says, "I am right now, right this minute."

"And he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." And here He gives a spiritual truth. He's not talking about physical resurrection here alone. He's simply saying, "'I am resurrection now. I am Life now, to whoever believes, anytime. Not just future. Martha, get it straight. That is not just future. It's now. I give spiritual life now. I can

also give physical life now.' He says, 'Do you believe that?'...The end of verse 26...She said 'I believe it, Lord. I believe You are the Messiah, the Son of God, who should come into the world.' And then she ran and told Mary, 'Mary, He's here. He's here.' And they all went out the grave." Skipping through some of the passage, go down to verse 39. "Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.'...Oh, this was gonna be a hard thing for Martha...Martha, the sister of him that was dead, said unto Him, 'Lord, by this time, he stinketh. You're just gonna roll that stone away and all that stench is gonna come out of here, Lord. What are You doing? He's been dead four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Said I not unto thee that if you would believe, you should see the glory of God?'" He reiterated the lesson back at the house. He said, "Hey, didn't I tell you, if you just hang in there, you'd see the glory of God?"

Then He had a little prayer with the Father, verse 41, "Lifted up His eyes and said, 'Father, I think You that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always, but because of the people who stand by I said it, that they may believe that You've sent Me.'" In other words, He wanted those people to know that He and God were one. And so He just connected Himself verbally with God and said, "All right, Lord, we're gonna do this together. I thank Thee for it."

"And then when He had spoken, He cried with a loud voice...verse 43...'Lazarus, come out!'" I'm telling you, people, that's astounding. "Lazarus, come out!" Now, what happened? "He that was dead came out, bound hand and foot with grave clothes. His face was bound with a cloth." And he came out, and the people were so shocked, they just stood there. And so Jesus said, "Well, loose him and let him go. Just leave him standing there all wrapped up."

Listen, He had the power to conquer death. The kind of power that stops decay, that reverses rigor mortis, that pours new life into rotted organs, that starts a bloodless heart beating and pumping fresh new blood. The kind of power that creates a whole new body. The...the kind of power that takes sightless, decomposing eyes and gives them sight. That's the kind of power He had. But lemme show you what's gotta be the most shocking display of resurrection power He ever exhibited toward others. Turn to Matthew 27. This is just really, just tremendous. They finally got to Jesus, and they put Him on a cross, and the chapter that we're looking at, chapter 27, we have the record of His crucifixion.

His crucifixion lasted for many hours. But finally it came to an end in verse 50 of Matthew 27. "Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice...and what He said was, 'It is finished.'...yielded up the spirit...He died." You say, "Ah, the resurrection and the life is now dead. That's the end of His resurrection power. That's the end of His power to give life." Is it? Watch what happened in verse 51. "Behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom." The first thing that happened when Jesus died was the veil in the temple that separated the holy place from the Holy of Holies was ripped from top to bottom. Why? Because there was no need to be a veil anymore between man and God. Right? Jesus Christ had given the final sacrifice. There never needed to be a veil anymore. The way to God was ripped wide open, and men could come and go into the presence of God, and we now enter boldly, right? Because the high priest has torn the veil in half. Men could come unto God. We don't need priests. We don't need high priests. Every believer has absolute and full access to God. Jesus ripped the veil from top to bottom, and he did it from top to bottom just so we'd know no man did it, 'cause he would've had to start at the bottom.

Not only that, but the earth shook and the rocks were split. Now something's really gonna happen. "When the rocks split open...verse 52 says...the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints that slept were raised and came out of the graves." You know what that is? That's resurrection,

friends. You say, "How many?" It doesn't say how many, but many. Listen to me. Jesus had the power in life to raise the dead, but have you ever thought of this? He had the power in death to raise the dead. A dead Christ hanging on a cross raised the dead. And I think that keeps the perspective clear, doesn't it? Do you think you can kill Christ? You think you can kill His resurrection power? No. In His own death, He raised the dead. The graves were split, and these people came out.

And verse 53, the best rendering of it would be not, "And came out of the graves after His resurrection." If I had just been resurrected, I wouldn't be laying in my grave for three days. They didn't hang around. It's best to read it, "They were raised and came out of the graves, and after His resurrection, went into the Holy City and appeared unto many." They waited till the resurrection, and then joined. And what a...what an impact. There's resurrected people all over town. What's going on? He not only had the power to raise the dead in life, but He had the power to raise the dead even when men thought He was dead. So when you say to me, "Who has information about death?" I say, "Jesus does." "Who has it about life after death?" I say, "He does, and He proved it by what He did for others."

Secondly, He proved it by what He did for Himself. Matthew 28, right there. What did He do for Himself? He was buried. "At the end of the Sabbath...it says in verse 1...'as it began to dawn the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the sepulcher. And behold, there was a great earthquake." God likes earthquakes. He put one when Jesus died. He put one when He rose, and He's gonna put a whole bunch of 'em when He comes again. They usually are sort of like an announcement. "Hear ye, hear ye, I'm about to say something."...

"There was a great earthquake, and an angel of the Lord descended from Heaven, came and"...the Greek rendering here is very interesting. Apparently, the angel picked the stone up, dropped it on the ground, and then sat on it. Wow. Strong angle. Not only that, the whole guard fell over, verse 4 says, "Started shaking and fell over in a dead faint." One angel. And the legions and legions and myriads and myriads and tens of thousands and tens of thousands of angels together have so much power it's unbelievable. But they wouldn't even be one grain of sand in the seas of God's power. But men are so puny. They sealed the tomb. Hmmmmm, put a little guard there. One angel came, picked up the stone, threw it on the ground, and sat on it. The whole army fell over.

And then the women all came, and, of course, the angel was something to see. He was "like lightning...verse 3 says...and his raiment white as snow." So it's no wonder they fell over in a faint. And the women came, and he said, "Fear not, for I know you seek Jesus, who is crucified. He's not here. He is risen." You know why the angel rolled the stone away? Not to let Jesus out, but to let them in. Jesus didn't need to get let out. He just went out. The stone was taken away to let them see He was gone.

You say, "I don't know if the resurrection was true." Listen, friends, the resurrection is true. It isn't even on trial anymore. The evidence is all in. The only question is where you believe it. I'm not gonna even bother to give you the evidence of the resurrection. That's an open and shut case. Over 500 witnesses, an empty tomb for 2,000 years. A church that was born out of it. People who gave their lives because of the resurrected Christ. There's no question about that. Jesus not only could raise others, but raised Himself from the dead...

Lemme give you a third reason I look to Jesus...for the truth about resurrection life. Not only because of history, not only because of the past of what He has done for others and what He's done for

Himself. But because of what He is now doing for Christians. If somebody came to me and said, "Jesus never rose from the dead," I'd say, "That isn't true." You know why? Because I know He lives, because He lives in my life. The greatest proof that I have for the resurrection is not just the history of the Word of God. But it has to be coupled together with the experience of my life. I'm like Peter, you see, I say, "Whom having not seen, I love." He is real to me. You can't deny me that. I know He's alive. I talked to Him this morning. I know He lives.

And maybe going through the trial that I've gone through recently has drawn me even closer to His side. I know He's alive. You could never, ever deny me that experience, and I would never try to deny it to you; because if you're a believer and you know the Lord Jesus Christ, it's a reality, isn't it? We haven't postulated some imaginary guru in the sky...This is not the figment of some demented imagination. We aren't Freudian people trying to find a super father...This is reality. He lives.

And I'll tell ya something. I get excited about that. I know He lives, because He lives in me. Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live, yet, not I, but Christ liveth in Me." Paul prayed. He said, "Oh, I just pray that you'll understand. That you'll understand that Christ is in your hearts by faith, and that He'll settle down and dwell within you in that sense. That's the great truth that every believer experiences. He is alive. You say, "What's He doing now?" What do you mean? You know He's alive. Well, I know what He's doing. I see Him working. You say, "How?"

Look at Revelation 1. Lemme show you what He's doing. He's doing a lotta things. This is just one of 'em...Revelation 1:12, He's working in His church, and we see this in the beautiful symbolism of the vision of Revelation 1. John has a vision here, and he hears a voice. Verse 12, he turns around to see the voice, and when he turned, he saw seven golden lamp stands. Revelation 1:12. Seven golden lamp stands. Now, these represent the church. You'll see in verse 11 the names of seven churches right there in Asia Minor. Those churches are typical of all kinds of churches. And so here we see this Christ moving among His churches. "In the midst of the seven lamp stands...verse 13...One like the Son of Man." Here is Christ moving in the church, ministering to the churches, ministering to the seven churches. And, of course, the number seven in the Bible is the number of completeness, so it's a picture of the whole church.

Christ is alive and ministering to His church. And he describes Him, "Clothed with a garment down to the foot, girded with a golden girdle." This was the priest's clothing, the king's clothing, and the prophet's clothing all together, and He is all three. "His head and His hair were white like wool, and white as snow." Symbolizes His purity. "His eyes were like a flame of fire." Searching, penetrating. "His feet like fine bronze, as if they burned in a furnace. His voice like the sound of many waters." This is his judgment. "And He had in His right hand seven stars or seven ministers." Here are the seven ministers of the churches. He is moving in their lives. He is ministering to His churches through them. "Out of His mouth a sharp two-edged sword. His Word. His countenance was as bright as the sun at its greatest strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. He laid His right hand on me, saying unto me, 'Fear not; I am the First and the Last...Listen...I am He that lives and was dead; and behold, I am alive...how long?...for evermore.'"

Is Jesus alive? You better believe it. And what's He doing? He's working in His church, ministering in His church. Say, "What's He doing? What do you mean His church? You mean He's here in the building?" No, ministering in the lives of the people. What's He doing for His church? One, He's ruling His church. He's ruling in your life. I hear Christians say, "You know, Christ isn't ruling in my life." That isn't true. You're just not obeying. He's ruling...It's only a question of obedience. He is ruling His

church. He is ruling His believers. But some of them are not submitting, but He rules, nevertheless.

Oh, we've seen Him rule. Have you seen Him rule in your life? Have you submitted to His leadership? We've seen it here just in this little, local assembly here at Grace. We've seen the Lord, who is the head of the church, lead and guide in things that we've done. And if you've been here any time, you've seen Him ruling, haven't you? You've said, "Oh, you know, only the Lord could've done that. Only the Lord could've led us in that way. Only the Lord could've solved that problem." He rules His church.

Secondly, He intercedes for His church. Hebrews 7:25 says, "He ever lives to make intercession for us." You know what He's doing right now? He's telling the Father what you need. That's right. That's why the Bible says, "Don't worry about what you need. Don't worry about what you wear. Don't worry about the things you think you need to have. Your Father knows you have need, and He's gonna take care of it before you ever bother to ask." He knows your needs, and Christ intercedes for us. John 14, He was leaving. He said to the disciples, "I'm going away, but don't worry. If you ask anything in My name, I'll do it. I'll ask the Father, and He'll give it to you."

In Hebrews 13, the writer of Hebrews says, "You oughta be content with what you have, and don't be covetous, because God said, 'I'll never leave you or...what?...forsake you.'" Listen, He intercedes for His church. He takes care of us. Not only that, He defends His church. You know, I need to be defended to God. There are days when Satan could go to God and say, "You know, that MacArthur is really bad news. He's blown it again today. Lots of sins in his life." And it's just then that the Lord comes in and says, "Father, the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed him from all sin. It's taken care of." That's an advocate, right? The lawyer for the defense. We have an advocate.

First John 2, if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Who shall lay any charge to God's elect? Shall Christ that justifies us? No. Who's shall separate us from the love of Christ? Nothing. Nothing. Romans 8, so He defends His church. Satan accuses, and He defends us. Not only that, he prepares for His church. You know, He's up there getting us a place. Did you know that? "I go to prepare a...what?...place for you," John 14. He's busy getting ready for us.

Well, lastly, He empowers His church. He lives within every Christian. Christ in you, right? He lives in you. He moves in my life...Oh, listen, just to think that He's alive in my life, how exciting. You ever read Romans 5:10? Listen to what it says. "That when we were enemies, He reconciled us by His death." Now think about it. Here's God, absolutely holy, absolutely perfect. Here are you, absolutely depraved. How are you ever gonna make a absolutely holy God have any relationship with a totally unholy man? Jesus did it by His what? Death. Can you imagine? You can't do anything by your death. Neither can I. I mean when we've died, that's it. We're not much help to anybody. But Jesus Christ in His death did a miracle beyond the...the ability of man to conceive. That's how powerful He is, even in death.

Now listen to what Romans 5:10 says. If He could do that in His death, imagine what He must be doing now that He's alive. Fantastic? You say, "Well, I know He saved me in His death. I wonder if He can hang onto me." If a...if a dead Christ could save you, you think the living one could keep ya? Whoo. I guess. Listen, He's alive. And in His life, He keeps His church. We shall be continually being kept, delivered by His life. Listen, all you gotta do is remember that Christ is alive, and you can get over the hump of any problem. If you start looking at your little problem, you say, "Oh, I have a little

problem here. What am I going to do? What am I gonna do?" Then all of a sudden you realize that Christ has the power of the resurrection. It kinda changes your little problem. No wonder Paul said, "Lord, I wanna know You and the power of Your resurrection. I wanna remember how much power You've got." Soon as you have a little problem, just remember how powerful He is. He raised the dead. Think He can take care of you? Your little problem?

Timothy had a problem. He had a lot of 'em. He had some people bugging him because he was young, telling him he's probably too young to be effective in the ministry. He had some other people who were bringing in all kinds of heresy. He had some other people who were persecuting him. False teachers were attacking him. And you know what happened? He lost the...the battle, and he was really under it spiritually. He was a defeated guy. And so Paul writes in 2 Timothy and says, "Come on, Timothy, get it together. God has not given you a spirit of...what?...fear." In one and eight, he says, "You're not to be afraid and ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. Come on, get with it." And then he gives him what amounts to a Knute Rockne pep talk in chapter 2 verse 3. "All right...he says...endure... verse 3...hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Hey...he says...get it together like a soldier. Get tough, Timothy, get tough."

Boy, I heard that so many times playing football in college. "Come on, you guys, get tough. Come on, you're in a war. You're in a battle. Get tough." And old Timothy is saying, "Yeah, right, uh, huh, huh." See...Then he says, "Don't you realize that if you're gonna get in a war, you can't mess around with the world. You can't fool around with the affairs of this life...chapter 2 verse 4...but you have to remember that you've been called to be a soldier, and you gotta get under the commander and function, fella. Get tough." And he uses another analogy. He says, "If a guy runs a race, he runs it to win, and he only gets a crown if he runs according to the rules. So look, Timothy, God's laid down some standards. Get in there. Discipline yourself to conform to the standards, and run that race."

So, first of all, he says, "Get tough like a soldier." Then he says, "Get disciplined like an athlete." Thirdly, he says, "Work like a hardworking farmer." Verse 6, "The farmer, he who labors hard, and he is then the first partaker of the fruits." "Come on, Timothy, put out. Crank it out. Get it on." You say, "Well, that's all, you know, I mean that's easy to say, but a guy is flat out. I mean what is he gonna...how does he get the wherewithal to do it?" He comes to him in verse 8, and here's the key. Watch this. Fantastic. "Remember that Jesus Christ, born of the seed of David, is risen from the dead." Not was raised in the literal. Is risen from the dead. If you've got a problem, remember, you've got a living Christ who conquered death. I think He could handle your problem." Right? What a solution. What a solution.

Christian, it's exciting to know that Christ is alive, isn't it? Or have you forgot it? Have you been running around with your spiritual mouth dragging on the ground? "Oh, woe is me."...Remember, He's alive, and He is able to do exceeding, abundantly, above all you could ask or think according to the power that works in us. Listen, I believe in Jesus Christ as the source of life and resurrection, not only because of what He did, but because of what He's doing. He's alive in my life.

Lastly, I turn to Jesus for resurrection truth because of what He will do for all men. John 5. You say, "What will He do for all men?" Well, I'll tell you something. You might not have realized this, but did you know that all men who have ever lived and died will be resurrected literally? You say, "I thought resurrection was just for the saved." No, the unsaved will be resurrected, too. "You mean the people today who...who died without Christ and whose spirits are now separated from God will have a physical resurrection?" That's right. Their physical resurrection in some form, they will be brought to

the great white throne and then cast into the eternal hell, eternal lake of fire. Tragic. All people will be resurrected. Everybody. That's how much power He had.

In fact, somebody said one time that when He raised Lazarus from the dead, it's a good thing He said, "Lazarus, come out." Because if He'd have just said, "Come out," everybody woulda come out, 'cause He had so much power...Someday everybody's gonna rise from the dead, and Jesus discusses this in John 5:25. Look at it. "Verily, verily I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." Now, here he's talking about spiritual life. He's saying there are people who are spiritually dead. That is, they're just dead to God. They can't sense God. They can't relate to God. Just like a dead person can't relate to a living person. A spiritually dead person can't relate to a living God. There's no contact.

"There are people," He says, "that are dead, but the hour is coming, and it's already here, when these people are going to live. If they hear My voice." Jesus says this, "I came into the world to bring spiritual life to spiritually dead people, and they can have it if they'll hear My voice and believe on Me, and that hour is now here. I have come to give them life." Even before Jesus died, friends, and even before He rose from the dead, He could still give life, couldn't He? Of course. So He said, "The hour is coming. The great Messianic hour. The great salvation age is here. It's present and future. It's now and it's gonna continue. When any spiritually dead person who hears My voice will come alive spiritually." And, listen, when you receive Jesus Christ as Savior, when you believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, when you accept Him as your Lord, at that moment, you come alive to God. That's the testimony of every Christian. That's what He's saying.

"I have this power. This power has been given to Me, as the Father has life in Himself...26...so He is given to the Son to have life in Himself. Together with God, I have the power to give life." And he says, "I have also the power of judgment...verse 27." He has just talked about spiritual life. Now He talks about physical resurrection in verse 28. Watch. "Don't be shocked at this; the hour is coming...now watch. This is not an hour is coming and now is, this is strictly future...in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice." Everybody that ever died will hear His voice...and be resurrected.

The only people who won't get resurrected, you know, are the ones who won't die. And the only ones who won't die are the ones that go in the Rapture, right? Everybody else dies, should be resurrected. Watch. You say, "Great, everybody's gonna get a resurrection." Yes, but "Some shall come forth to the resurrection of life. Some to the resurrection of...what?... damnation." Say, "What's the resurrection of life?" Well, that's when the Lord gathers His church, and the dead in Christ rise first, don't they? And then the Old Testament saints' bodies will rise at the end of the Tribulation. That's the resurrection of life. The resurrection of damnation comes later at the great white throne when the sea gives up its dead, and death and hell give up its dead, and the clods release the dead, and all the ungodly dead come to the great white throne and are judged out of the books and cast into the lake of fire.

Jesus Christ has displayed resurrection power in the past. He is displaying it in the present. He will display it at a scale undreamed of in the future. When you want information about life after death, He is the source of that truth...The question that remains as we close this morning is a simple question, really. It's simply this: Which resurrection will you attend? A resurrection to life or damnation? You say, "How do you choose which one you want?" Those who hear the voice of the Son of God and believe that Jesus Christ is God in human flesh, and that He raised from the dead, they are given life.

Eternal, and will attend the resurrection of life. Those who reject Christ will be at the resurrection of damnation. The choice is yours. As for me, I choose life. Let's pray.

Father, I thank You for the fact that You give life freely. That You paid the price. That You exhibited the power. Thank You for the evidence in the past, the ongoing evidence in the present, for the evidence in the future that You are the Lord of life and resurrection. God, I thank You that we who love You come alive to live evermore. Thank You for the reality of Jesus Christ. In His name we pray. Amen.

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