

**Introduction:** Today is Palm Sunday, the day Jesus is coming into Jerusalem and beginning His final week before His crucifixion and resurrection that all culminate on what we celebrate as “Easter Sunday!”

But we don’t celebrate Easter like we do days like Christmas. I mean we have our annual egg hunts and baskets. But we don’t seem to put as much emphasis on it. For a lot of people, their understanding of Easter hardly goes beyond Peter Cottontail, colored eggs, and chocolate bunnies. But here in his letter to the Romans, Paul wants us to know that the real story of Easter involves a lot more than marshmallow Peeps, plastic grass, and a new outfit. The resurrection of our Lord is the centerpiece of our faith. (1 Cor 15:20-22) Just as at Christmas Christ came to us, at Easter, He rose for us! And His resurrection has a direct impact on our own. This is what the Apostle Paul is saying here...

## **I. The promise of the resurrection illustrated:**

Throughout this entire chapter Paul has been using the example of Abraham.

### **1. There was a promise made to Abraham:**

- a. These verses are an expansion of one phrase in Rom 4:17: "who gives life to the dead..."
- b. Paul saw the rejuvenation of Abraham's body as a picture of resurrection from the dead; and then he related it to the resurrection of Christ.
- c. Abraham was declared fit (justified) before God by trusting by faith in God’s promise... (v. 23)

### **2. This promise extends to us.**

The application to salvation is clear: God must wait until the sinner is "dead" and unable to help himself before He can release His saving power.

- a. It was when Abraham admitted that he was "dead" that God's power went to work in his body.
- b. So, it is when the lost sinner confesses that he is spiritually dead and unable to help himself that God can save him and raise him up in Christ. (Rom. 1:16)
- c. because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, we too will come to life. (v.24)

### **3. The promise is to all.**

- a. *All who believe and by faith trust in God's promise of salvation in Christ, are made fit (justified) before God...*
- b. to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, will be raised up!

Paul writes, the sacrificed Jesus made us fit (justified) for God, set right with God. and the resurrection is proof that God accepted His Son’s sacrifice and is therefore, able to justify all who come by faith believing. (v.25)

## **II. The power of the resurrection applied:**

### **A. The resurrection guarantees our forgiveness –**

1. Peter’s private appearance reassured him, he was forgiven since he had just denied his Lord. (Lk 24:34)

2. The resurrection means the forgiveness of sin is a reality and that God has accepted the sacrifice of Christ to atone of our sin by His death on the cross.
3. Jesus through His death and resurrection has paid our sin debt (*He paid a debt He did not owe, for a debt we owed and could not pay!*)
4. So, we can be assured forgiveness is available to us just as forgiveness was available to Peter!

### **B. The resurrection guarantees our continued forgiveness – *Our forgiveness is not just a one-time experience – Thank God, because we still continue to sin!*** *1 Jn 1:9*

1. To be forgiven once would be sufficient if we only sinned once. But we need God’s continued forgiveness. John in the verse just above this promise reminds us, (1 Jn 1:8)
2. But we have been graciously shown the power of forgiveness not only for ourselves, but so that we can show it to others.

If there is one thing that can short-circuit the power of the resurrection in us – our Lord taught us it is an unforgiving spirit. (Mt. 6:14-15)

## **III. The provision of the resurrection’s future expectation:**

*The resurrection of Christ provides us a bright future hope!*

- A. **No one is beyond this hope** –the essence of despair. It is the realization we all have a past; we are living in the present, but we have no future hope.

But to those who know the hope of the resurrection – there is great hope now and in the future!

1. **Paul tells us the key, of course, is "if we believe"** (Rom 4:24).
  - a. God's saving power is experienced by those who believe in Christ (Rom 1:16).
  - b. His righteousness is given to those who believe (Rom 3:22).
  - c. We are justified by faith (Rom 5:1).
  - d. *The object of our faith is Jesus Christ* who died for us and rose again.
2. And when we are saved by faith – We are raised with Christ and given a great hope for today and tomorrow!
  - a. Paul wrote Col 3:1-4
  - b. To the Ephesians he wrote - Eph 2:6-7
  - c. To the Galatians he wrote - Gal 2:20-21
  - d. To the one who is saved by faith – *the resurrection life we have been given in Christ is gives us great hope now and in the future*
  - e. John writes - *1 Jn 5:4-5*

### **B. This is a hope that overcomes all despair** – On resurrection day; two disciples of Jesus were headed out of town in despair.

1. They told the stranger who walked with them, “We had hoped that He (Jesus) was the one to redeem Israel” (Lk. 24:21)
2. But then Easter came when their eyes were opened –*Lk 24:33-34*

### **C. This is a hope that overcomes even death –**

1. But the resurrection of Jesus is the light to the darkness of death – (Jn. 14:19)
2. Paul reminded us in one day, (1 Cor 15:54-57) That is what Easter joy is all about! The expectation of life beyond the grave in glory of our own resurrection!