



Resurrection: Past, Present, Future by Tony Cooke

No, I'm not confused about what month it is. I know that Easter is not until next month. I believe, though, it's important that we not only think about resurrection when Easter comes around. I wonder how many believers appreciate all the ramifications of resurrection, and recognize its multi-dimensional influence in our lives.

Our word resurrection is from the Greek word *anastasis*, which means *a rising again, a resurrection from death, raised to life again, to stand up again, raising up*. While it's important to know the meaning of the word, it's just as important to understand the diversity of how resurrection applies in our lives. **When people celebrate Easter, their primary focus (and rightfully so) is on the past, when Jesus was resurrected. However, we will miss much if we neglect the present and future aspects and applications of resurrection.**

Resurrection is:

- **An historical fact to be celebrated**
- **A current reality to be experienced**
- **A future event to be anticipated**

Let's look at each of these.

1. Resurrection is an historical fact to be celebrated.

The culmination and crescendo of each of the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. According to Paul, the resurrection is of first importance. **1 Corinthians 15:3-4** says, “*For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures...*”

The doctrine of the resurrection is absolutely central to the Christian faith. If the resurrection of Jesus is not totally true, then everything in the Bible and in the life of Jesus that precedes it (Genesis through the end of the Gospel Accounts) and everything that follows it (The Book of Acts through the Book of Revelation) is absolutely meaningless.

Of what are considered the great faiths or religions of the world, Christianity alone stakes its entire claim and bases its entire existence on the Resurrection of its Founder; nothing more, nothing less. Christianity is not based on a set of ideas, creeds, morals, beliefs, lifestyle, discipline, or practices. Christianity may produce some of those things, but genuine, biblical Christianity is based entirely and squarely on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:4 says that Jesus was, “*...declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*” His resurrection is the basis for all of our hope! Jesus said, “*Because I live, you will live also*” (**John 14:19**).

2. Resurrection is a current reality to be experienced.

Most believers recognize and celebrate the past resurrection of Christ, and most are also aware of the future resurrection spoken of in Scripture, but I’m not sure how many Christians realize that there is an aspect of resurrection power that is available to us all at this very moment. What we can experience now is not the full-blown resurrection of receiving new, glorified bodies, but rather, what we might call (using the words of the old song), “a foretaste of glory divine.” Consider the on-going, day-to-day, moment-by-moment resurrection power that Paul said we could all experience:

10 *[For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly], and that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from his resurrection [which it exerts over believers], and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed [in spirit into His likeness even] to His death, [in the hope]* 11 **That if possible I may attain to the [spiritual and moral] resurrection [that lifts me] out from among the dead [even while in the body].**

– Philippians 3:10-11 (Amplified)

There is what we could call a “*resurrection power*” that is available to us right now. Paul said that “*...we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us.*” (**Romans 8:23, NLT**). We’ll get brand new, resurrected bodies in the future, but right now we have, as Paul said, “a foretaste of future glory.”

Romans 6:4 says, “*Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*” Because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we get to walk in the newness of life right now! We are new creatures in Christ because of His power that has worked and does work in us. We don’t have to wait until heaven to walk in the newness of life!

Though we don’t receive the full dose of resurrection power now, we do have the “foretaste” of His glorious power that has made alive our spirits, comforts and strengthens our souls, and can even quicken our mortal bodies. A great illustration of this is shared by **Kenneth Hagin**. Having been bedfast for 16 months, he received his healing, and then, after only a couple of months he got a job pulling two-year old peach trees.

He wrote (in “Exceedingly Growing Faith”), “*Each morning before sunup we would meet, and every day some of the boys would say, ‘Well, I didn’t think you’d make it today. You know, two or three quit yesterday.’ Even as a young man, Brother Hagin responded, ‘If it weren’t for the Lord I wouldn’t be here, I would*

answer, for you see, His strength is my strength. The Bible says, The Lord is the strength of my life.’” He also related, “Now, if I had gone by my feelings I would never have gotten out of bed! I was never so weak in my life. I felt as if I couldn’t do it. But I stayed with it. I acted upon the Word because I knew what faith was.”

Brother Hagin ended his testimony about his early work experience saying, “*When we began to work each morning I wouldn’t have any strength, but when we started on the first tree (or sometimes the second) I would feel something hit me in the top of my head. It would go through my body, out the ends of my fingers, and out the ends of my toes. Then I would work all day long like a Trojan.*” Finally, he said, “*In the natural I was the weakest and the skinniest, but I was the only man left of the original crew. I had proved God’s Word.*” **Resurrection power can make us stand right now! Resurrection power can lift our spirits, encourage our souls, and bring life and strength to our mortal bodies!**

3. Resurrection is a future event to be anticipated.

We could never praise God enough for the resurrection of Christ and the eternal life His resurrection has made available to us. But we must remember that what Jesus did in His past speaks volumes about what will occur in our future!

Even in the Old Testament, a future resurrection was perceived and prophesied.

- **Daniel 12:2** (NLT) says, “*Many of those whose bodies lie dead and buried will rise up, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting disgrace.*”
- Even Job recognized and proclaimed resurrection. “*For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God*” (**Job 19:25-26**).
- **Isaiah 26:19** (NLT) says, “*But those who die in the LORD will live; their bodies will rise again! Those who sleep in the earth will rise up and sing for joy! For your life-giving light will fall like dew on your people in the place of the dead!*”

And of course, the New Testament is loaded with powerful promises about our future resurrection. For example, “*...the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the*

resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28-29).

“And God will raise us from the dead by his power, just as he raised our Lord from the dead” (1 Corinthians 6:14, NLT). Paul went on to say, “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep... (1 Corinthians 15:20) and shortly after wrote, “...each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming” (1 Corinthians 15:23). In other words, our future resurrection is based on His past resurrection. He is the firstfruits or the prototype for our future.

“...our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body...” (Philippians 3:20-21).

The future resurrection we will experience not only gives us hope for the future, but conveys to us the great value that God places upon our bodies. Unlike the Greeks, Jesus and Paul did not perceive the body as an evil prison from which our primary aspiration is to escape. We belong to God—every part of us! Paul said, “... *your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s*” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Because our bodies belong to God, and because God’s claim on our bodies extends into eternity, what we do with our bodies now is significant. This is why Paul told believers to, “...*present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God...*” (Romans 12:1).

Resurrection is what happens when the life of God touches and influences everything else. Resurrection is an historical fact to be celebrated, a current reality to be experienced, and a future event to be anticipated. Make sure that you are celebrating, experiencing, and anticipating God’s life to the fullest.

(You can visit www.tonycooke.org for more resources that are designed for those in the 5 fold ministry. MJB Ministries highly recommends them all).