



SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

THE TRIUMPHANT MESSAGE OF THE RESURRECTION

KEY PASSAGE: Matthew 28:1-8 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES:** Matthew 22:30 | Luke 23:43; 24:30-31; 41-43 | John 3:16; 11:21-25; 14:2-17; 20:19, 27 | Acts 1:8-11 | Romans 8:18-23, 34 | 2 Corinthians 5:8 | Ephesians 1:11-14 | Philippians 3:20-21 | Hebrews 7:25; 9:24 | 1 John 1:9; 2:1 | Revelation 22:3

► SUMMARY

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a critical element of our faith.

Yet many people have a difficult time believing He rose from the dead. This should not come as a surprise to us. Even the disciples had a difficult time believing He was alive. Although Christ had predicted His suffering, persecution, and death, His warnings hadn't made sense to them. How much less did they understand His promise that He would rise from the dead? After the crucifixion, they went away heartbroken, hopeless, and helpless. They couldn't believe the reports of those who had seen Jesus alive. Despite how closely they had walked with the Savior, the disciples were unable to accept His resurrection until they saw the Lord for themselves.

However, when the apostles finally realized Jesus had risen from the dead, their lives were radically changed. They went from cowering in fear to proclaiming the gospel boldly. The powerful message of the resurrection can also transform your life and mine.

► SERMON POINTS

The message of the resurrection assures us that ...

■ **Jesus is alive.** How do you view Christ? Some see Him as merely a biblical character or a historical figure. Others claim He was a good man or perhaps a prophet at best. They would say His resurrection is nothing more than a myth. But as Christians, we believe Jesus

rose from the dead because He was more than a prophet—He was the Son of God.

Because Jesus is alive, we have Someone who advocates for us when we sin (1 John 2:1). In the presence of the Father, He intercedes for us (Rom. 8:34). His Spirit, who lives within us, enables us to live a godly life (John 14:16-17). And we have the assurance Christ is preparing a place for us to spend eternity (John 14:2-3).

The prophets of every other religion have died. Ours is the only faith with a Prophet who is still alive, active, and working on our behalf.

■ **We are forgiven.** When Jesus died, He entered into the presence of God, where He offered Himself as an atoning sacrifice for our sins, just as the high priest used to offer sacrifices on behalf of the people each year (Heb. 9:24). Our sins can be forgiven—not based on our good works or our promises to “do better,” but because of the atoning sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf. Because He was the acceptable Lamb of God, the Father raised Him from the dead. By this one act, God validated everything Jesus had said, including Christ's claim to be the Son of God. As our resurrected Lord, Jesus is able “to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for us” (Heb. 7:25).

■ **We are going to live forever.** Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies” (John 11:25). Although believers die physically like other people, we have the promise

of eternal life, spiritually speaking (John 3:16). At the moment of death, our spirits leave our bodies and are immediately in the presence of the Lord (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8). For us, death is the end of all suffering, pain, death, rejection, temptation, and disappointment, and it is the beginning of a new existence in the presence of God.

Eternal life, by definition, is everlasting. That means you and I cannot lose what the Father has given us in redemption. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit as God's children (Eph. 1:13-14). Does this give us permission to live sinful lives? No. The Lord will chasten us because He loves us too much to let us get by with sin. But our eternity is secure.

- **We will have a resurrected body.** When Jesus walked this earth, He looked just like any other human. After the resurrection, His body was human, but glorified. Christ was completely healed, which is one reason why His followers didn't recognize Him. Our Savior's new body wasn't ghostly—the disciples touched Him and He could eat food (John 20:27; Luke 24:41-43). Yet it differed from ours in that He could pass through walls and disappear in the blink of an eye (John 20:19; Luke 24:30-31).

The Bible teaches that one day we too will have new bodies (Rom. 8:23). Jesus will “transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory” (Phil. 3:21). Although we don't know much about them, our glorified bodies will be healthy and perfectly suited for our heavenly home.

- **Heaven is our home.** When life is difficult, remember this world is not our home. We will live forever in a perfect existence—paradise on earth. Scripture tells us this planet will be renewed, transformed into a paradise similar to the Garden of Eden in its purity, beauty, and eternal nature. There, we will reign with Christ forever. In our glorified bodies, we will serve, love, worship, and praise Him. Although you and I don't know all

we will experience in eternity, we can look forward to purposeful and joyful activity in the Lord's presence.

- **We will see our loved ones.** Relationships are important to God. Scripture tells us that husbands are to love their wives; children are a blessing from the Lord; and Christians are to love and care for other people. God created relationships, so it makes sense that we will know our loved ones in eternity. Remember that the disciples recognized Jesus after they believed He had risen from the dead. Although the Bible says we won't be given in marriage (Matt. 22:30), perhaps God will allow our earthly relationships to continue and develop in eternity.

▶ RESPONSE

- The atoning death of Christ and His awesome resurrection are the most important truths in the entire Bible. Without these realities, Christianity would have no power to save souls. Aren't you grateful Jesus' sacrifice and subsequent victory over death made it possible for you to live forever in the presence of almighty God?

If you aren't a believer, you don't have the assurance that you will be with the Lord when you die. I pray you will accept Jesus as your personal Savior. Surrender your life to Him. Allow Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to enable you to live a life pleasing to Him. Then, when your final hour comes, you will be ready to meet your Maker. There is no greater security in life than to know you will spend eternity with your heavenly Father.

- Are you ever concerned that you might doubt the resurrection of Christ?
- Do you find comfort in knowing that even those people closest to Jesus had trouble accepting what they were seeing?

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