

You must believe that God raised Jesus from the dead

(Acts 2:22–32)

We celebrate the resurrection as the most significant event in Christian history, our basis for hope and significant living. But the resurrection has taken a backseat in the proclamation and even belief of many who call themselves Christian. How does a failure to proclaim and believe in the resurrection line up with the New Testament? What place does the Bible give to the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

I. What place does the resurrection have in the proclamation of the gospel?

1. Peter preached on Pentecost to explain the coming of the Spirit. This first apostolic, Spirit-filled sermon of the NT begins a pattern of including the resurrection of Jesus as part of the proclamation of the gospel.
2. The crucial events in Peter's argument include God's attestation of Jesus by miracles (v 22), the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus (v 23), the resurrection of Jesus (vv 24–32), and the exaltation of Jesus (vv 33–36). The amount of space dedicated to the resurrection emphasizes it.
3. Testimony to a resurrected, exalted Jesus became the pattern of subsequent proclamation. Cf. Acts 3; 4; 5:29–32; 7:55–56; 10:40; 13:30–37; 17:31; 26:23.

The resurrection is an essential part in the proclamation of the gospel as Paul summarized in 1 Cor 15:3–5.

II. What place does the resurrection have in the events of the gospel message?

1. It was a necessary event for God to keep His word, as explained by Peter in Acts 2:25–31
2. It was a necessary event because Jesus Christ was Himself sinless, perfect, fully sufficient sacrifice (cf. Acts 2:27; 13:35; 1 Cor 15:17).
3. It was a necessary event to give hope for the future and meaning to our present life (1 Cor 15:19).

The resurrection was an essential part in the events of the gospel, expressing the character of God and His acceptance of Christ's sacrifice.

III. What place does the resurrection have in the response to the gospel?

1. The resurrection was an essential part of the events and especially of the proclamation implies that it is necessary to respond in belief.
2. Logic implies that belief in the resurrection is necessary. Forgiveness is a greater work and an intangible work of God (cf. John 3:12). If you cannot believe in a lesser work, or in a tangible event, how can you believe in forgiveness of sin?
3. Most important is the explicit statement of Romans 10:9, "...if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Just as confession is more than just saying words (cf. Matt 7:21–23), believing is more than acknowledging an historical fact. It is trusting that Christ's sacrifice was sufficient and that we have future hope, as declared in the resurrection.

Belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is an essential part in the response to the gospel.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is an essential part of the Christian message. It was an essential event. It is essential to proclaim it. It is essential to believe it. To deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ is to be not Christian. To profess Christ and believe that God has raised Him from the dead brings salvation. It is the only sure basis for hope and for significant living now.