

3 ways the Lord is spoken of in resurrection (1 Cor. 15)

Part 1

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[00:00:00] Anything, any subject of scripture that directs the heart and the faith to a Christ out of death, in resurrection and in glory, must of necessity be a weighty matter. Because we are totally dependent upon the authority of scripture and the power of the spirit of God to make the reality of such things living in the soul.

You know, beloved brethren, there is great stability gained in the mind and in the heart and in the affections, which of course must affect the character and the life that we live. If we know something of what it is to be engaged by the spirit of God with a Christ in another world, because we are part of and in the midst of a world which is tottering.

[00:01:09] It may not be true, but one feels, because of one's circumstances, that perhaps there has never been a day like the present in this land anyway. Where there is a tremendous need, not only amongst young people, but amongst middle-aged and elder saints of God as well, for stability. That ability that will keep the heart and the mind from being diverted from Christ and the things of Christ.

That will give the heart an object, that it will not run after other things that we may naturally be inclined to follow after. [00:02:01] When days of perversity and adversity and trouble and difficulty come, there is tremendous need for the heart to lay hold. Like as we have read in one of our scriptures, to have an anchor. Something that one can lay hold of in the faith of one's soul and the affections of one's heart. Perhaps also with a degree of intelligence, begotten of God, as taught of God. It is a wonderful thing to have something to lay hold on, which is immovable. Which is not affected by time and change, but is safe and sure.

All those things, beloved brethren, are connected with a Christ, who has carried manhood through death into resurrection. [00:03:03] And he's even now gone, as we sung in our little hymn, Within the Veil. There is the point of stability, that the spirit of God, through the word of God, and I trust tonight, through the ministry of the word, will direct our minds and our hearts to the person of Christ. Notice how it says, even Jesus. Jesus.

You see, beloved brethren, and I speak first of all here now to younger persons. It's not just a matter of intelligence and knowledge.

When the spirit of God refers to our Lord Jesus Christ in that intimate personal way, as Jesus, it should first of all cause a movement in our hearts as to our affections.

[00:04:03] Because he was the blessed man that died for me, and for you. Gave himself on Calvary.

But the spirit of God in these scriptures would lead us to where he is now. I believe, beloved brethren, that that is one of the prime operations of the spirit of God. That is to lead us to where Christ is. To where he is now.

Beyond death. Outside of the affairs of this life and this world. The centre of the glory of God. Even now.

And you know, as you study these scriptures, and I hope tonight we will grasp something of the wonder of them. We have to realise how powerful is the link that the believer has with the Lord Jesus Christ now, where he is.

[00:05:10] And so I just want to speak very simply, as far as one is able, about these three ways that the Lord Jesus is spoken of. They are scriptural expressions that we are not imparting into the word of God something that isn't there. They are scriptural definitions, or titles, or names, whatever you like to call them, that the Holy Spirit of God uses. In order to convey to you and I some impression of what is ours in Christ, where he is in the presence of God.

So first of all we come to this little expression, first fruits.

Now the Spirit of God leaves us in no doubt at all in the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 15. [00:06:10] Well-known chapter, I trust. You mustn't assume too much in this day. It should be a well-known chapter, the 15th of 1 Corinthians. One of the outstanding chapters of the New Testament that establishes un-infallibly the truth, not only of resurrection, but the resurrection of Christ.

Now is Christ risen from the dead.

It might be worthy of note, these things are always helpful, I believe they were helpful to me to point out that there are about five or six times in this chapter where the apostle uses the word void or vain. They're not all the same if you look them up in a concordance. [00:07:02] They don't all mean the same. But I think tonight you and I understand what we mean when we talk about a thing being void or vain. No significance, of none effect, of no worth, of no substance.

You run your finger over these in this chapter and see what the apostle says about fundamental things of Christianity that are void. If it be true that there is no resurrection.

Verse 2, you've believed in vain.

Verse 10, the grace that Paul received, grace, his grace, in vain.

Verse 14, preaching, vain.

Again, 14, faith, vain.

Again, 17, your faith is vain, yet in your sins. [00:08:03] Verse 18, they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. 19, we are of all men most miserable. Paul refers to his manner of life, likens it to having fought with beasts at Ephesus. He says, I might just as well have had a good time, eat, drink

and be merry, for tomorrow we die. And right at the end of the chapter, the labour of the saints of God. All these things are of no value, are of no substance, if Christ is not risen from the dead. But he says where we began to read tonight, but now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. Verse 23, every man in his own order, Christ the first fruits. [00:09:02] Afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Now then, this little scriptural expression, first fruits. One or two little things that we must underline, that are important in regard to this little word. One of them you'll find in the twelfth chapter of Romans. And I want you particularly to pay attention to this one. As are the first fruits, so is the lump.

As are the first fruits, so is the lump.

That I believe is one of the most important things to get a hold of in order to understand the scriptural meaning of the word first fruits. Now then, we turn to the 23rd of Leviticus, didn't we? [00:10:04] Where we have the instructions given of Moses to the children of Israel concerning the feasts of Jehovah. Feast number three was the feast of first fruits.

It followed on from the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread, which go together.

That is followed by the feast of first fruits and likewise by the feast of Pentecost, which go together.

But I want beloved brethren for us to look at this Old Testament chapter in the light of New Testament teaching. Let us just say very briefly in regard to this chapter, we start off with the Passover.

[00:11:05] Which very, very simply, beloved brethren, tonight, and we will have to leave it at this, directs your heart and your mind to the cross of Christ. To the death of Christ, to the work of Christ, when he gave himself that offering to God.

In order that the blood of redemption, in order that the glory of redemption might be secured for God and for men. The place where redemption's price was paid.

I often think of it, beloved brethren, particularly on a morning when we remember the Lord. We sing, we probably will too tonight, of the wonder of the glory of redemption. But let us never forget that ere the glory of redemption could be secured for God and for men, [00:12:05] redemption's price had to be paid.

And it was paid at the cross. When Jesus paid that mighty debt that for me would have involved eternal damnation. When in infinite love he laid down his life in order that his precious blood might be shed. In order that that redemption's price might be paid.

Or that we never might forget it. Or that the cross of Christ might ever speak loudly and effectively to one's heart in order that there might be found a response there to himself and to God for the love divine that gave him to die for me.

Following on from that is the feast of unleavened bread which you can see morally. [00:13:05] It's the effect that should be produced practically and morally in our lives by a right apprehension of what took place at the cross of Christ. I'll have to move on. It's not one subject tonight. But we come now to the feast of first fruits. And the first thing that I want you to know, beloved brethren, that you have in type moved off Jewish days.

You've got to the day after the Sabbath. Which in some Old Testament scriptures is referred to as the eighth day. But when we come to New Testament we find it's the first day of the week. The Lord's day.

So you can see, beloved brethren, that when we talk about the feast of first fruits we're talking about something which is absolutely and primarily connected [00:14:03] with that truth that came out consequent upon the death of Christ. Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, when ye be coming to the land.

You see there's a change immediately, beloved brethren. The wilderness has passed. The Red Sea and the Jordan has been gone over. And the people are in the land.

God has in view the securing of his inheritance for himself by placing his people there. But the first thing he does is place Christ there. That's the first fruits.

When ye shall reap the harvest thereof. This I understand would have been the barley harvest. When you get down to Pentecost you'll find it's the wheat harvest. John chapter 6 brings before us five barley loaves.

[00:15:07] And if you read the chapter, John chapter 6, you cannot get away from the fact that ultimately to understand that chapter you must bring into it the truth of the death and the resurrection of Christ. I believe barley brings before us the truth of Christ in resurrection. When you come to John chapter 12 we have that little expression that unless a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone. But if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.

And I believe when we get down to the feast of Pentecost you'll notice that those two loaves were wheat. Two tenths deals.

I believe wheat speaks of Christ having gone through death and into resurrection but has ascended into the glory of God. The wheat harvest was seven weeks after the barley harvest according to Edersheim.

[00:16:10] They were to take a sheaf of the first fruits.

We are told by that same writer, who's worth reading by the way if you can get a hold of his writings, Edersheim, that the priest and the members of the Sanhedrin later would have already have gone into that field and have bound certain bundles of barley awaiting that moment when they would be cut and brought unto the priest.

First mention of the priest in this chapter. Brought unto the priest.

And it says he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord on the morrow after the Sabbath [00:17:02] and he shall offer that day and he lamb and a meat offering and a drink offering. Oh beloved brethren, how we wish we had the time to go into the details of this chapter. But I want you to grasp not so much the detail but an impression. I have found latterly in my life, beloved brethren, wonderful help in getting an impression from scripture.

And that is what I want to convey to you tonight. I want you to envisage that wonderful scene. The

children of God in the land. The wilderness finished. Jordan crossed over. And there is the harvest, the barley harvest.

And there they go in and cut a sheaf and bind it and bring it to the priest. And he waves it, waves it to Jehovah.

And he offers an he lamb and a meat offering and a drink offering. [00:18:03] Oh beloved brethren, doesn't it bring to your heart the wonder of what it looked forward to that moment when Christ should reign from among the dead.

That sheaf of first fruits.

The commandment was given, you shall eat neither bread nor parched corn nor green ears. We are thankful for another in regard to the meanings of this but if you take them in reverse, when we think of green ears, we have the vigour of life personally in Christ. In him was life.

We see him there having carried manhood through death, coming forth in resurrection. Having that same life.

Wasn't a different life.

It was that life that was his inherent in him as a divine eternal person. [00:19:04] But seen in manhood and John says we saw it and we handled it. That word of life.

And in manhood he'd gone through death. And he'd come out in resurrection.

Christ in all the vigour of life that was inherent in himself.

But roast or parched corn, roast, leads us to see that same person in death.

And firstly it says you shall eat bread. Bread is that which has sprung forth out of the ground and has been roast and is now available as food. Food for the people of God.

You see beloved brethren, you get the picture. You and I cannot take to ourselves life.

[00:20:05] We cannot feed upon Christ to sustain life.

We cannot have his life until he has gone through death and has come forth into resurrection. But he has done it beloved brethren. Christ Christ risen from the dead.

He's gone into death and he's come forth in resurrection. Burst the iron portal, rolled away the stone, rosy life immortal.

We know in the gospel of John soon after that event his own gathered round him. He says he breathed into them. He imparted to them his life in order that they might share with him into that life which he was now unable to part to them [00:21:02] and share with them in order that they might have part with him. He has come forth in resurrection.

But you know in order to complete the picture we have to move on to the next feast, the feast of Pentecost. He shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath from the day that he brought the sheep of the way of offering seven Sabbaths.

Fifty days.

And he shall bring a new meat offering. Notice that those two loaves are also called at the end of verse 17 they are the firstfruits of the Lord.

Now you see the picture. The scriptural idea of firstfruits. We have Christ in resurrection.

That meat offering that is mentioned here two tenths deals of fine flour [00:22:03] that was offered with that sheep.

Those two loaves, wave loaves in verse 17 also are two tenths deals of fine flour. Their constitution and their measure and their weight is the same as that meat offering except they were bacon with leaven.

But I want you to grasp the idea that as was that perfect meat offering that spoke personally of Christ so also is this new meat offering which speaks of they that are Christ's. And if you turn into the next chapter it's worth looking at. Chapter 24 and verse 5 And thou shalt take fine flour and bake twelve cakes thereof two tenths deals in one cake.

[00:23:04] You complete the picture. The meat offering, two tenths deals. The new meat offering, two tenths deals. Twelve loaves of showbread, two tenths deals. Christ, the church, Israel in the world to come. Get the idea of the firstfruits? Christ, the firstfruits. Afterwards they that are Christ's. That is coming. God will have it.

That he will fill the world with an impressive Christ and he will do it through his saints, his church heavenly and through the nation of Israel yet to be born in the world to come. Christ will be seen. His manhood, his character, his life his righteousness, his peace there it is prefigured in this meat offering this new meat offering [00:24:01] and those twelve loaves on the showbread.

Two tenths deals. What do they speak of? Responsibility in man. God would and man would.

Seen perfectly in the life of God, life of the Lord Jesus. There he fulfilled completely his responsibility to God. But also in that perfect life he manifest as none other his responsibility to his neighbor.

Thou shalt love the Lord with all thine heart and thy neighbor as thyself.

Responsibility God would. Responsibility man would. He was unique because in him there was displayed for God all that man should be. But not only so.

For man there was displayed all that God was in infinite love and grace.

[00:25:03] He was unique. There it is. But that impress that character that kind of man is that which the Spirit of God forms in they that are Christ's. He is the first fruits. Come out in resurrection. And because of that the Spirit of God ultimately sent down to form that company that we see in the

second chapter of Acts. Sitting upon them.

Taking possession of them. And they moved out to bring into wonderful evidence the fact that they had been with Jesus. They took account of them you see. They saw different men. They saw the character of men that they had never seen before except in one place.

They saw men who were like Christ.

That knew meet offering.

[00:26:03] And in the world to come beloved brethren God will complete the story. And he'll fill the universe with an impress of Christ.

Doesn't that open out to you that little verse in 1 Corinthians 15 Christ the first fruits and afterwards they that are Christ's that is coming. Oh how wonderful it is to realize that in the idea of first fruits as he is so are we in this world.

As is the first fruits so is the life.

Oh that the spirit of God might give us to understand from these few remarks what is meant by the Lord Jesus as first fruits. We must hurry on.

The second one was the idea of a forerunner.

Now we are told from history [00:27:04] that a forerunner was a very menial person.

He was a person who usually ran before an important person to prepare the way. Now in that respect of course history doesn't give us the true scriptural idea of what a forerunner is.

But the scriptures that we have read in Hebrews don't leave us any doubt what the use of this name means. Let us read that verse once again.

We have fled for refuge to lay hold upon a hope set before us which hope we have as an anchor to the soul.

Oh beloved brethren let us get a hold of this right now that when we are going to talk about the Lord Jesus as the forerunner the Spirit of God is presenting him in a way [00:28:02] that I need to grasp hold of.

And if I do it will give me stability and encouragement in order that I will go on and not fall and not fail and not give up.

That's the idea of a forerunner in which entereth into that within the veil whither the forerunner is for us entered even Jesus. Now this chapter doesn't leave us any doubt that in order to illustrate the idea of a forerunner he directs us again back to the Old Testament to firstly Aaron, the high priest and in a greater way to Melchizedek the idea is priesthood one who has gone in.

Aaron went in [00:29:03] and if things had been according to the mind of God his sound would have

been heard without but he was in and he was alive on the day of atonement in the presence of God. That's the idea beloved brethren the testimony of somebody who is alive in the presence of God.

As far as Aaron was concerned he had upon his shoulders for support and on his breast as to his affections the names of the twelve tribes the children of Israel.

How often beloved brethren we are encouraged in the prayer meeting when we take account of the fact that we have one who is in the presence of God who bears us up who supports who suckers who sustains but not only so [00:30:03] who sympathises who feels who understands is compassionate he's passed through the same he knows what Soros trials mean for he has felt the same. We have such an high priest.

Oh I would encourage you know again younger brethren in regard to this matter don't neglect the privilege of getting into the presence of God in prayer individual and also collectively because you know there's something to be gained in the prayer meeting that isn't to be gained in other meetings. I can't explain it I don't know why but I can honestly say beloved brethren [00:31:03] that in regard to one's individual experience I often, frequently get more help in the local prayer meeting than any other meeting.

Why? Because beloved brethren one's heart and one's mind and one's faith is directed afresh to a man who is in the presence of God who is able to keep able to sucker able to sympathise able to support able to save to the utmost he's there for me he's there for God. That's part of the idea of a forerunner. And you know that is that principle is illustrated for us in these verses that we have read we read in chapter 5 firstly of the personal glory of the Lord Jesus of his official glory [00:32:02] and then his moral glory is all connected with the fact that he is a priest he ever liveth thou art my son that's who he is personally now beloved brethren if you and I get a hold of what's involved in that thou art my son and there he is in glorious manhood in the presence of God no greater no more wonderful person than he thou art the son that's the first thing thou art a priest forever that's official glory he's there in manhood in a position that God has set him in on account of the fact that he has gone into death and he has come forth in resurrection and God has set him in his presence [00:33:01] and then it says in the days of his flesh this is the sort of person that he is this is the sort of man that he is when he had offered up prayers and supplications he knows beloved brethren what prayers and supplications are all about he knows what produces a prayer he knows what bows me upon my knees in supplications he knows what strong crying is he knows what tears are he passed through all those experiences in his manhood sin apart and the scripture in given the divine estimate of them says of this he was heard why? because of his piety there is the composition of the man that moves through this world for God [00:34:06] the experiences that he felt and passed through though he were son yet he learned he experienced in an experimental way and you know you can only get experience by experimentally going through it there is no substitute for experience you have to experience it even Christ in dependent manhood he went lower than any other man he plumbed the depths of human feeling in a degree that none ever did he had sentiments and feelings that had not been affected by the fall he was heavenly he was holy you and I are sinful [00:35:03] and those holy sentiments led him to feel things in a measure that I never can because he felt things in a deeper measure he cried to God in a deeper measure when he passed through those experiences but beloved brethren that has fitted him to be my high priest that's why he passed through those circumstances in order that he might be able to feel what you and I feel and to support us in them so he has been made perfect he has been completely initiated in every field of Christian experience yeah I believe it goes even beyond that and because of this he has become the author of eternal

salvation unto them that obey him called of God [00:36:02] and high priest the apostle has to break off here he says I've got many hard things to say but they're hard to you because you're dull of hearing I hope there's nobody in this room like those Hebrews and now for a long many verses right to where the end of chapter 6 he digresses at the end of chapter 6 he reverts to this subject whether the forerunner is for us entered even Jesus Jesus oh I love that beloved brethren he's there he's there Jesus that sympathetic kind compassionate understanding man of infinite wisdom and ability he's there in the presence of God the forerunner and you know we are given to given to understand from this illustration from Melchizedek [00:37:02] simply what he can do what did Melchizedek do?

I'll not talk about the man it's too complicated for the moment let's talk about what he did he blessed Abraham officially he was greater than Abraham I don't think he was morally I don't think he was a greater man than Abraham morally but officially he was he had a greater position because the lesser is blessed of the greater but you know he met Abraham at a critical moment in Abraham's life and it might be that Abraham was not aware of the crisis it might be that he was not aware of how he was going to be tested and tempted I'm not talking about the offering up of his son I'm talking about that which came from Satan [00:38:01] take what you have, give me the souls said the king of Sodom it's a critical moment you know in the history of Abraham one of the severest tests that he passed through you know when he went out with those few souls how many was it? 350 he was dependent he was obviously aware of his smallness and littleness and he went out to combat the armies of four kings he lifted up his hand to the most high god and the most high god brought a great victory and he came back with the spoils and there met him the king of righteousness and the king of peace and fed him and sustained him [00:39:01] because just around the corner was the king of Sodom and when that reward from the king of Sodom was presented Abraham stood secure safe in his faith and refused to be made rich by the king of Sodom that is you see what can a high priest do he can sustain faith in the midst of oppositions and beguilings and temptations and Abraham afterwards God appeared to him and said Abraham, Abraham I am thy reward I am thy reward you see in refusing what Satan offered him he learned in a wonderful way what God was for him and you know beloved brethren [00:40:02] that's true of you and I today the more we know what it is to say no to that which this flesh craves after and that which the world and Satan offers the more we will experience what God has for us in the person of Christ he's there our forerunner he's gone in and the fact beloved brethren that he is there is the proof and the surety that I will be there you know F.B. Hall in his writings in illustrating this point he brings about a hypothetical situation of a great liner setting out from Southampton to go to New York and he suggests if it could be possible that the anchor of that liner before it leaves Southampton is already secured by a long chain [00:41:02] and is settled in the bedrock of Washington Harbour or wherever it is it's impossible isn't it but you get the idea he is there beloved brethren in the presence of God an anchor to the soul sure and steadfast immovable impregnable eternal he ever liveth he will never pass it on to another and faith holds out to him there along the waves and the billows of that ocean journey with its winds and its storms its waves and its billows my soul goes on holding fast because Christ is there and I shall be there because he has entered into the presence of God as the forerunner and lastly the firstborn [00:42:01] other verses about the us being the firstfruits I will have to commend them to you it says there we have the firstfruits of the spirit and if you read that chapter carefully you will see the effect practically upon us having the firstfruits of the spirit means that there is developed in us true feelings according to God even in regard to the creation with its groanings and its travailings awaiting that moment when it shall be delivered from the bondage of sin and come into the glory of the liberty of the children of God you and I are in sympathy with heaven and with God even in regard to the present scene it's an aspect, beloved brethren, of our Christianity that perhaps we don't think about enough [00:43:02] what's going on all around us how does it affect you and your spirit and me according to Romans chapter 8 it should bring forth a groan a groan

Christ felt it when he was here he groaned he groaned when they brought a man to him who was deaf and couldn't speak he groaned at the raveside of Lazarus he felt the effects of sin all around him you and I should, beloved brethren it should take us to God it should prostrate us in his presence we don't even know what we can ask or write we cannot understand we can't comprehend some of the things that happen around us some of the things that happen in the [00:44:01] lives of the saints of God thank God one day we will know and understand but we don't know now we can't pry or write but we have the Holy Spirit who knows what is according to God and searches it out in my heart in a way that I cannot but the Apostle says but we do know this that all things work together for good to them that love God you see all this, beloved brethren is connected with this marvelous truth concerning a Christ out of death who has gone into the presence of God and has sent down the Holy Spirit but I finish with this little expression for whom he did foreknow he also did protestinate to be conformed to the image of his son that he Christ [00:45:02] might be the firstborn now beloved brethren let me say very briefly that the scriptural use of the term firstborn has got nothing to do with being born first in fact it hasn't got anything as far as I can see to do with being born in the way that we use the term there are several characters in the Old Testament who obviously take up the blessing of the firstborn son who were not born first Isaac he wasn't Abraham's firstborn but he's called Abraham's first begotten in Hebrews chapter 12 chapter 11 David he was the eighth and in that little incident where seven were looked over [00:46:02] and he the one who was overlooked is brought in by the Spirit of God he becomes the firstborn and Samuel anoints him he became the chief though he was the youngest and that's the idea beloved brethren of the use of the name firstborn the chief supremacy preeminence we read of it in Corinthians don't we in regard to the sphere of creation because of who he is and what he has done as to creation he must of necessity be the firstborn because it's of him by him from him for him in regard to creation he of necessity is preeminent he's the chief but as coming out from death in resurrection [00:47:02] he's also called the firstborn but not in regard to creation but in regard to another order of things an order that has been commenced by his coming out of death and ascending into the glory of God he's the firstborn in a new world he's the firstborn amongst a new company that we have read of in the 8th of Romans were predestined in eternity to this position in the ways of God have been conformed to his image what for? all like him with him gathered round him that he might be that object supreme of all and by all adored you turn to the end of John chapter 17 Father I will that they whom thou hast given me [00:48:02] be with me where I am that they might behold my glory I believe that's the glory of preeminence in that vast throng in that coming day when his own everyone shall be gathered with him when we shall be like him and we shall surround him we shall have his life we shall be conformed to his image what a triumph for God but at that moment beloved brethren he will rise supreme in the midst of that company and he will be the firstborn and we will say Lord thou art worthy firstborn brings before us the person of Christ in his preeminence the one who will fill all things to the glory of God the one who in that wonderful day will be the centre of that praising and worshipping company [00:49:02] that same person who today can fill and thrill my heart and my life may it be so through his namesake shall we sing number 81 O Lord thy glory we behold though not with mortal eyes that glory on the father's throne no human sight describes and we our great forerunner see in his own glory there yet not ashamed with such as we as firstborn all to share beloved brethren this hymn illustrates the fact that we sing very often of these things or that we might understand and appreciate the things that we sing in a greater way you know I often think beloved brethren we've got a marvellous hymn book [00:50:03] there are words in this book that go beyond what I am and what I understand but I sing them there's an anomaly in that beloved brethren if we sing these things we ought to understand them and appreciate them otherwise it's not a true song