

## 2 Timothy 2:8

Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, a descendant of David, in accordance with my gospel.

### Christ Is Risen!

#### I. Remember.

The women approached the cemetery with downcast faces and heavy hearts. Their Lord and Master had died. They had been there. They witnessed the whole sordid ordeal. They came with all the accouterments to complete the burial process they had to abandon in order to keep the Sabbath late on Friday evening. Luke told us about it in today's Gospel.

The women found the grave open—the stone rolled away. The body of Jesus was not inside. They stood there, no doubt in shock. What had happened? Who would violate a grave this way? Would someone take the body of their beloved Jesus away?

Two men—we know they were angels—came in and spoke to the women. They said: “Why are you looking for the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup>He is not here, but has been raised! Remember how he told you...” (Luke 24:5-6, EHV).

Remember. Remember, remember, remember. How many times did Jesus say that to his followers during his earthly ministry? Since they forgot so much, we think it was probably not enough. Not enough for followers who are described in the Bible as being *slow to believe* and *afraid* and as people *with doubts arising in their minds*. Remember...

The Apostle Paul wrote the words of our text today to Timothy, who hadn't been anywhere near the early disciples on the first Easter. These were some of the last things Paul ever wrote. He knew that his work on earth for the Lord Jesus was nearly completed. He knew it was safe to assume he would die a martyr's death at the hands of the Romans very soon.

What does a person think about when you know you're about to die? Childhood joys? Professional accomplishments? Friends and family? All the experiences you have had throughout a long and lustrous life?

Not Paul. What was on his mind was this: “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, a descendant of David” (2 Timothy 2:8, EHV).

The heart of the Christian faith is remembering—remembering what God has done for us. The main message God has for us is not “Go and do!” but rather “See and believe!” *That* is what we *remember* this Easter morning—the great things the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us, so that through faith in him we may have forgiveness of sins and everlasting life.

Remember. There really isn't anything else we can do this morning, is there? Like the women, we go in faith to the cemetery. Unlike the women, we *know* we will find it empty, because we *remember* the story from last year, and the year before that. We look inside the empty tomb and ponder with amazement what this means for us.

It means there is nothing. Nothing else we can do. Nothing else we *must* do. God has done it all for us. *He* defeated sin, death, and hell. *He* rose in victory. His resurrection guarantees that the payment for sin has been accepted by the Heavenly Father, and that his promise to return and raise us from the dead is sure and certain. As Paul said in his resurrection chapter: “Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!” (1 Corinthians 15:57, EHV).

We couldn't possibly forget those things, could we? Jesus hasn't changed over the centuries, and neither have his followers. We need to be reminded to remember, because we

so often forget. We have fears, we have doubts, we—just like the early disciples—are slow to believe.

## II. Jesus Christ.

All the more reason to remember. But remember *what*? Remember *who*?

“What’s in a name?” Shakespear asked.

When you hear the name of a great sports hero, or a great actor or actress, or a Rock-n-Roll icon, or a famous politician, the name tells you a lot. The name represents everything the person has done, everything they stand for. When you hear their names, a mental image forms in your mind.

Paul says “Remember Jesus Christ” (2 Timothy 2:8, EHV). More so than any famous figure, that name “Jesus” says much. God gave that name to his Son. The name means “Savior.” Jesus came to the little town of Bethlehem on a silent night to begin a rather violent mission. He came to do battle with the forces of hell. Throughout his ministry he displayed what his name meant. He undid what sin and Satan had done—he healed the sick, drove out demons, raised the dead. On Good Friday his battle reached its final, decisive hour. Remember.... Remember the writhing agony of the cross, as God and Satan went head-to-head for the eternal possession of your soul. It was a struggle to the death. By the end of the day, Jesus—the Son of God—lay dead in a tomb.

But...things didn’t stay that way. He is risen! He is alive! Death is dead! Remember Jesus Christ.

## III. Raised from the dead.

There is one word that creates more doubt, more uncertainty, more fear than any other. It is the word *death*. We *know* it is part of life. We know that it’s coming—to friends, to family, to spouses, to *me*. It is said that fear is often caused by the unknown. Death is very well known, but it still fills us with fear.

So...“Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead” (2 Timothy 2:8, EHV).

You see, the fear of death comes from the knowledge of sin. You learn about sin in the Bible. But even those who don’t ever open a Bible know about sin from their own conscience. Deep down in the conscience we know there is a God and that he is holy and good and just. Deep down we know he requires perfection and we have failed to live up to his demands.

The Bible bluntly draws the inevitable conclusion for us: “The soul who sins is the one who will die” (Ezekiel 19:4, EHV). *That’s* what fills us with fear. We were created to live in harmony with God, but our sins bring God’s wrath and punishment. Our sins separate us from God and his love—from peace and joy. They bring upon us God’s sentence of “guilty of eternal death.” What will we do?

“Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead” (2 Timothy 2:8, EHV). Out of the tomb has come the One who paid for all your sins. He carried them to the cross. He left them in the tomb. Your sins are gone! They are dead! They are buried! Out of the tomb came a holy Lord Jesus Christ. On the cross he had been covered with our sins and he had suffered death. But *now* he is alive! This is the proof that God has accepted his sacrifice!

Jesus’ resurrection is the very foundation of our faith. *That* is what we celebrate today. His resurrection gives us certainty about our forgiveness and all the promises God has made. Look at what God has done for you! You can trust him with your life—and with your soul!

There is a famous story about a Russian leader addressing a reeducation assembly. For more than an hour the leader named Bukharin proclaimed the party line of atheism to the assembled Christians, hurling ridicule at them. When he had finished and viewed what seemed to be the smoldering ashes of the men’s faith, he asked: “Are there any questions?” One lone

figure got up and asked permission to speak. He got up on the platform with the communist and slowly scanned the audience. Then he shouted the ancient Orthodox greeting: “Christ is risen!” (“Christos anestay!”) The vast assembly rose as one and shouted: “He is risen indeed!” (Aleythos anestay!”)

What do cynics and nonbelievers do at Easter? Humanism may be a somewhat believable theory in the classroom—a theory that warms the heart with thoughts of human goodness and potential. But what do they do at a cold graveside, where everything is so final, so *meaningless*? It is just at that point that our Christian faith holds on to the promise of Jesus: “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even if he dies” (John 11:25, EHV).

That is your faith, your hope, and your joy. “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead.”

#### IV.

But look just one step further in the brief words of Paul we consider today. “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, a descendant of David” (2 Timothy 2:8, EHV).

Jesus, who is risen indeed, is a descendant of David. He comes from a king. He is a King. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. Heaven is his throne and earth is his footstool. He commands and rules all things by his powerful Word.

This is the King that protects you with all his power. Later in this same letter, Paul wrote: “The Lord will rescue me from every evil work and will bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom” (2 Timothy 4:18, EHV).

David was a king, but David was a man. So is the Lord Jesus Christ. It wasn’t just the Son of God who came out of the tomb on Easter morning, but also the Son of Man. It was a human being, fully like us, who rose from the dead.

By his resurrection we are given a glimpse of the glory that will one day be ours in Christ. He will call us out of our graves into glory everlasting. He will give us a glorified body that does not experience all the aches and pains and hurts we experience now. That new body won’t be subject to the curse of death any longer.

Paul wrote: “We will all be changed, <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52, EHV). By his resurrection Jesus shows that he has power over death. He will raise all people from death and glorify the bodies of believers who trust in him. What Job confessed, we also believe; “After my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; <sup>27</sup> I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!” (Job 19:26-27, NIV84).

All that Paul told Timothy in the short sentence of our text he closed by saying that it was “In accordance with my gospel” (2 Timothy 2:8, EHV). Gospel means “Good news.” It isn’t just Paul’s good news, or mine, or yours. What Paul recorded at the direction of the Holy Spirit—and the rest of the writers of Scripture, as well—is *the* gospel—the eternal gospel of Jesus Christ. It is God’s own message of peace and hope to the world. *He* is the One who has spoken these things. God said it, therefore it is true.

Remember this gospel always, for by it you are saved. Remember... Remember what God has done for you. “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, a descendant of David” (2 Timothy 2:8, EHV). Amen.