

#1 THE CENTRALITY OF THE RESURRECTION

(Seven sermons in Acts)

**The earliest Christianity and Christian preaching focused on a single event:
*the raising of Jesus from the dead.***

Passage/sermon	Speaker	Audience	Message	Method
• Acts 2:22-32—	Peter	Jews in Jerusalem on Pentecost	You killed; God raised; we're witnesses	Quote Scripture
• Acts 3:12-26—	Peter	Jews after healing lame man	You killed; God raised; we're witnesses	Perform miracle; quote Scripture
• Acts 4:8-12—	Peter	Sanhedrin to explain healing of lame man	You crucified; God raised; we declare v. 12	Explain miracle; quote Scripture
• Acts 5:27-32—	Peter	Sanhedrin, after angel released them from jail	You killed; God raised; we're witnesses	Answer accusations by explaining recent events
• Acts 10:34-43—	Peter	Gentiles, at house of Cornelius after visions	They killed; God raised; we're witnesses	Connect the dots—explain meaning of separate visions of two men
• Acts 13:16-41—	Paul	Jews and God-fearing Gentiles in the synagogue	Jews asked Pilate to kill; God raised; he was seen, and they're witnesses	Summarize Jewish history, show how Jesus fulfilled it
• Acts 17:22-31—	Paul	Pagan philosophers at Areopagus in Athens	God will judge; God raised Jesus; I declare your unknown object of worship	Quote philosopher-poets, use idolatry to connect

The resurrection is the epicenter of the Christian faith.

QUOTES OF NOTE

We can say that the story of the Resurrection means simply that the teachings of Jesus are immortal like the plays of Shakespeare or the music of Beethoven and that their wisdom and truth will live on forever.

Or we can say that the Resurrection means that the spirit of Jesus is undying, that he himself lives on among us, the way that Socrates does, for instance, in the good that he left behind him, in the lives of all who follow his great example. Or we can say that the language in which the Gospels describe the

Resurrection of Jesus is the language of poetry and that, as such, it is not to be taken literally but as pointing to a truth more profound than the literal.... In the case of the Resurrection, this simply does not apply because there really is no story about the Resurrection in the New Testament. Except in the most fragmentary way, it is not described at all. There is no poetry about it. Instead, it is simply proclaimed as a fact. Christ is risen! In fact, the very existence of the New Testament itself proclaims it. Unless something very real indeed took place on that strange, confused morning, there would be no New Testament, no Church, no Christianity.

(Frederick Buechner, *The Magnificent Defeat*)

It is not a belief that grew up within the church; it is the belief around which the church itself grew up, and the 'given' upon which its faith was based.

(C. H. Dodd, *The Founder of Christianity*)

The Resurrection is the epicenter of belief.

(Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew*)