

In some countries, it's really dangerous to be a Christian. And there's one day a year, where the danger increases, markedly.

On that day, especially in Islamic countries, more Christian churches are bombed, and worshippers are gunned down, or hacked to bits, than on any other day...

Easter Sunday, is the day they choose to attack, because they know, that for us, this is our most holy of days.

Easter Sunday, and what it represents (the resurrection of Jesus), is the most important date on our calendar.

It is more important than:

- Palm Sunday;
- Good Friday;
- Christmas day;
- ANZAC day;
- Australia Day;...

- Mother's Day.

You see, it is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, on which the whole of the Christian faith depends...

The Apostle Paul said best, in 1 Corinthians 15:

If Jesus hasn't been raised from the dead, then we should be pitied more than anyone else, because that would mean:

- Our preaching is in vain;
- Our faith is in vain;
- Our hope for the resurrection of the dead is in vain;

- It would mean that the whole “Christianity” thing has been a theological con-job – nothing but a lie about God.

But,

if the resurrection of Christ is **true**:

- that changes everything.
- then **this** is the most important event that has ever taken place, in the whole of the history of the world.
- this is something we **should** not and **must** not ignore;
- the only appropriate response, is for Jesus to become No.1 in all that we do:
 - No **thing** comes before Jesus;
 - No **person** comes before Jesus;
 - No **activity** comes before Jesus;
 - No **job** comes before Jesus;
 - No **business** comes before Jesus;
 - No romantic interest comes before Jesus;

Nothing. If Jesus is raised from the dead, this profound spiritual truth demands that we live every moment of our lives for Him.

And if the resurrection of Christ is true:

- Then any decision that we about Jesus: (and whether I believe/follow/serve Him) cannot be “made”, and then “put on ice”, as if I haven’t made it.....

I heard a preacher say once, “*You show me what you do, and I’ll tell you what you **really** believe.*”

Now, a statement like that, cuts through to the heart of the reality of faith... It cuts through a whole lot of false professions of faith, to discover what's really real.

*“You show me what you do, and I’ll tell you what you **really** believe.”*

Do you **really** believe that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead??? Do your actions (in every way) demonstrate that belief???

Here at Bush Disciples, usually when we open up the Word of God, we take a fair chunk of Scripture at a time, and then we delve into the vast richness of **all** that we’ve read.

I’m going to break with that tradition today. Today we’re going to be focusing on one verse (Romans 10:9), and apart from that one verse, I’m only going to pull in enough other verses, to help unpack it.

9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Now, to unpack that, let’s begin with **a** key purpose of Christianity – why would I want to be a Christian? What’s the benefit of it – What’s the outcome???

You see, people come and check out this Christianity thing for a whole bunch of reasons.

Some are:

- looking for healing;
- looking for meaning;
- wanting a code of honour to live by;
- seeking a higher purpose;
- want some tools to help them be a better husband/wife;
- have a need for hope;
- wanting financial blessings;

- just looking for a person to marry;

- wanting something different, because their current state just ain't doing it for them...

VV5 & 6 today, highlight a virtue, which is right for us to desire & pursue: "Righteousness"...

- We cannot commune with a Holy God, unless we are righteous.

Alright, that's why we talk in terms of "salvation"/being saved. We need to be saved from sin, so that we can gain the righteousness we need to commune with a holy God.

- It is the righteous who are saved.
- It is the righteous who enter eternal life.

But, how can we become righteous.

And here's the critical point. "I cannot develop in myself, a state of righteousness". I cannot establish my own righteousness. I am powerless to do so.

No matter how much extra good I do, and no matter how hard I try to limit the evil I do, I cannot achieve a state of righteousness. The level of righteousness that's required, is pure holiness, and that's beyond my grasp.

Are you with me?

Imagine if you wanted to set up a rain water tank on your house – something to drink from.

And you rang up Scott, and you asked him, “How much for a new rain water tank”. And you think, “Yeah, that's a bit more than I wanted to spend... I know what – I've already got a septic tank.”

What about if you used your septic tank. It's half-full of sewerage. So you do a bit of plumbing from your roof to the septic tank (so that it's now going to get nice clean water into it), and you try to limit how often you flush the toilet...

Will the rain water ever overcome the sewerage so you now have pure drinking water? I don't think so...

And that's what it's like, trying to achieve my own righteousness.

If I want pure water, I cannot begin with a filthy septic tank – What I need, is a new tank, that's been built for rain water....

And spiritually, I don't need a nicer version of me. And that's why in Baptism, there is a putting to death of the old man, and raising up of the new.

And so, by faith, I submit to Christ. I no longer depend on my own futile attempts to become righteous, rather, I receive the holy righteousness of God.

And V6 tells us that this is a righteousness based on faith.

To have faith, is to believe. But, to believe what?

⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

When I was a kid, our family had a pet budgie. And he was a good talker. We taught him to say a lot of stuff.

- *It made me realise there must've been a lot of joy in our family, because we didn't purposely teach him this, but he learned to laugh;*

He'd say:

- *hello;*
- *give us a kiss;*
- *give us a kiss*
tsk
got ya.
Ha Ha Ha
- *come on;*
- *Where's Jim?*

And then he'd string it altogether:

- *where's Jim*
Come on
Give us a kiss
tsk
got ya.
Ha Ha Ha.

It was a real circus. Anyway, Mum decided she was going to get a bit of religion into this budgie, and she taught him to say "God is love". That should be very edifying shouldn't it...

But what we didn't foresee, is what he would do with that...

And when he started coming out with

- *Where's Jim,*
God is Jim.

we realised our budgie had become a satanic blasphemer...

Anyway, the point is, I can teach a budgie to say "Jesus is Lord". But that ain't going to save him.

And I suspect there are many people who believe they are saved, because at some point in their past, they said the magic words – maybe they said the sinners prayer – maybe they said "Jesus is Lord"....

I'm going to tell you today,

When it comes to Salvation/the righteousness of God, mere words count for nothing. Our words are powerless,

unless they are connected to the faith that dwells in the heart.

⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Do **you** believe? Do you **really** believe?

And we need to understand, there is a difference between “Knowing” and “Believing”. And there is a difference between “Believing”, and “Believing in your heart”.

Over the years, I’ve had a lot of God-conversations, with non-Christians.

And many people have explained their position to me as “Oh yeah, I believe in God.”, as if that was some kind of tick in their spiritual favour...

But to know that there is a God, and to believe that there is a God, well, that places them on about the same level as Satan. **Satan** knows there is a God. And he more than knows it – he **believes** there is a God...

You see, knowing about God: That’s not what’s going to save me.

Even believing about God, doesn’t save me...

And even when it comes to the resurrection, the Devil knows that Jesus is raised from the dead. Big whoop...

Our salvation, has to be a thing of the heart. To genuinely proclaim that Jesus is Lord, is when the Godliness of our heart, overflows out of our mouth.

Jesus said:

Luke 6:45 (ESV)

45 The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

If I believe, that God raised Jesus from the dead; If I really, really believe this in my heart,,, I cannot remain the same.

If God truly did raise Jesus from the dead, that means “Jesus is The Lord”. And if Jesus is “Lord”, and I truly believe this in my heart, then I have a massive choice to make:

Do I reject His Lordship? Or, receive Him as Lord?

BTW, there is no in-between.

- I cannot give Jesus a little bit of Lordship, and keep the rest for myself;
- I cannot give Jesus sections of my life, and set others as off-limits;
- I cannot yield to Him one day a week, and dedicate the next day to something else...

Jesus is either “Lord”, or He isn’t. Because that’s what the word “Lord” means. For Jesus to be Lord, means:

- He is my Master.

I am His servant (No, let's use the term as it really means "I am more than a servant – I am His slave");

And if I feel uncomfortable about being a slave of Jesus, then that's a pretty good sign that He is not my Lord...

For Jesus to be "Lord", means total submission to Him.

In evangelical church language today, it's a very common phrase "To receive Jesus as Lord"... and in our culture, we understand "receive" as "It's a gift". Somebody's giving me Jesus:

- I receive Jesus
- He adds to the experience I have
- He adds to my future
- He enhances my life.

And it may be a very common phrase in churches, and it makes it sound really easy, to become a Christian – just receive Jesus... But the thing is, in our culture, we have lost sight of what it means to receive someone as "Lord".

In a Kingdom, the subjects of a king, would kneel before him, and pledge their fealty to the king...

They would commit:

- *to serve him;*
- *to battle for him;*
- *die for him;*
- *give, in service of the kingdom...*

That is what it means to "receive" a king – to pledge undying fealty to the king...

And when we receive Jesus as Lord, this is no small matter. I think of the words of the grand old hymn (When I survey the wondrous cross):

*Love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.*

Isaac Watts who wrote that, understood very well, what it means for Jesus to be Lord.

So, it's a matter of the heart – genuine faith, is to believe, from the heart. But a genuine heart of faith, cannot be restrained as a private commitment. That's why V10 says:
¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

You see, if I believe in my heart, that God raised Jesus from the dead, I cannot remain silent about something as wonderful as that. And if I believe it in my heart, I have to **do** something about it.

The resurrection of Jesus, is the hinge of our faith.

Because Jesus is raised from the dead, He is Lord.

And because Jesus is Lord:

- He is worth leaving everything to follow;
- no matter what comes against us, we will remain faithful to Him;
- faith (genuine faith), will be lived.

A couple of weeks ago, I heard a very small snippet of an interview on Vision Radio. And they were talking about when a person might have been hurt by someone else in the church, and so they:

- *fall away*
- *stop coming to worship; withdraw from fellowship; and*
- *might even stop believing in Jesus....*

And in the interview, the response from their guest, was so insightful, and it has just stuck with me.

He said,

“I’d want to ask the question,

“When that person in the church wronged you, how did that stop you believing that Jesus was raised from the dead?””

Think about that for a minute. Think about the profound truth, and the challenge that’s in that statement.

“When that person in the church wronged you, how did that stop you believing that Jesus was raised from the dead?”

It cuts to the heart of the matter of faith, doesn’t it. It cuts to the heart of what we truly believe. And if I let something like “offence” or “unforgiveness” (or anything) keep me from worshipping God, do I really believe that Jesus is raised from the dead?

And this is what we celebrate today. Jesus is risen. He is Lord.

⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

We **say** that Jesus is risen, but do we really believe it?

I'm going to invite you to pray with me now.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father,
we are mindful of the great love You have for us,
a love so great, You gave Your only Son,
to suffer and die on the cross,
so that we could receive the righteousness of God.

What a gracious thing.

What a great mercy.

And Lord, we praise You,
for You raised Jesus from the dead.
And we want to shout out Hallelujah.

And Father,
as we consider the gravity of this;
- what it means that Jesus is raised from the dead;
We proclaim: "Jesus is LORD!!!."

And Lord, we submit to You,
for You are LORD.

Lord Jesus Christ,
You are our King.

May this faith be genuine, from the depth of my heart;
And may our faith be proclaimed before the nations,
with our lips.

Jesus,
Take my life.
It belongs to You,
in its entirety.

And as we confess our sins,
we thank you for the forgiveness we receive
in the Name of Jesus.

I pray, that by Your Holy Spirit,
I will remain faithful,
as Your humble servant,
until the day I die,

To God be the Glory,
Amen.