

Easter

Opener: How is Jesus' death & resurrection the turning point in history? Describe His impact on the world.

Scripture: I will exalt you, Lord, for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me. ²Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me. ³You, Lord, brought me up from the realm of the dead; you spared me from going down to the pit.

⁴Sing the praises of the Lord, you his faithful people; praise his holy name. ⁵For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

⁶When I felt secure, I said, "I will never be shaken." ⁷Lord, when you favored me, you made my royal mountain stand firm; but when you hid your face, I was dismayed.

⁸To you, Lord, I called; to the Lord I cried for mercy: ⁹"What is gained if I am silenced, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it proclaim your faithfulness?" ¹⁰Hear, Lord, and be merciful to me; Lord, be my help."

¹¹You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, ¹²that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent. Lord my God, I will praise you forever. Psalm 30

If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. . . . If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. ²⁰But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. I Corinthians 15:13-20

Discussion Questions

1. David cried out to God when he was close to death and God saved him. Psalm 30 is an incredible allusion to God's work of bringing life from death in Christ's resurrection, the ultimate fulfillment of the Feast of First Fruits. Amazingly, Psalm 30 was sung at the Feast of First Fruits, the very day Jesus was resurrected from the dead. See the Wrap Up below for more insight into the Feast. Now read Psalm 30 in light of these observations. What stands out to you?
2. David said he was spared from going down to the pit. How is this a picture of salvation? Psalm 30:3, 9
3. Psalm 30 is also a psalm of contrasts. What contrasts do you see? How have they been true in your life?
4. Psalm 30 was written for the dedication of the temple. How does that tie into the Feast of First Fruits?
5. Without question, Jesus' resurrection is the cornerstone of our faith. Why does Christianity crumble if the resurrection never happened? I Corinthians 15:13-20
6. When did the reality of Christ's resurrection first impact you? What differences has Jesus' resurrection made in your life and in the way you respond to circumstances? I Corinthians 15:17

Wrap Up: The Feast of Firstfruits took place within the Passover celebration. It reminded the Israelites of God's provision in the Promised Land. It required them to bring a sheaf of the first grain harvested to the priest, and on the same day they sacrificed a year-old lamb without defect as a burnt offering. That reminded them that the firstfruits belonged to God as they were acknowledging that God was their provider.

Like the other Jewish feasts, the Feast of Firstfruits prophetically foreshadowed the coming Messiah. That's why I Corinthians 15:20 refers to Christ and His resurrection as "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep." Just as the first portion of the harvest anticipated the full harvest still to come, Jesus' resurrection anticipated the full resurrection to come for all those who are in Christ.

So it's true—Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep—and He's been changing the world and lives ever since!