

April 17, 2022

*I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.*

Act 26:22–23

In Scripture, the *Book of Acts* tells the exciting history of the first efforts of Jesus' disciples to tell the world about His resurrection. In the ancient pagan world, the idea of a resurrection of the body of a dead person was a very strange idea. To most, the human spirit was all that really mattered; the body was usually thought to be an unwanted burden we are better off without.

The conversion of St. Paul stands out in *Acts* as one of the most remarkable accounts in that early history. Luke, the author of *Acts*, finds it so important to the story that he relates it three times. Earlier in the story, Paul is seen to be the most dangerous enemy of the Christians, torturing and killing them, trying to stop this preaching about Christ's resurrection. Then one day as he is traveling along, Jesus Himself appears alive to Paul with heavenly brightness. Immediately, Paul has to reconsider the whole course of his life. Everything he was doing had been based on his belief that Jesus was dead and the Christian message was false.

But Jesus was not dead. He was alive. That changed everything! Immediately, Paul sought to join the Christians in telling everyone that Jesus was alive and had brought salvation to the world. In the end, Paul who first tried to kill Christians becomes a martyr for his testimony that Jesus is indeed living again.

It is easy for us who have heard about the resurrection so many times to forget that the resurrection changes everything. Already, we who believe in Christ are accepted by God as beloved children—only and completely through the perfect holiness and righteousness of Jesus. Already, a new and godly heart glows within us, guiding us to love God and love our neighbor. Already, we are united with other believers in the strongest bonds of Christian love and service.

True, some changes from the resurrection of Christ are still to come: our new, perfect, Jesus-like bodies; face-to-face fellowship with the Risen Christ; a perfect, heavenly home to dwell in with other believers. But that doesn't alter the simple fact that the resurrection changes everything!

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AFLC Promotion for April is the Seminary