

Nikolai Bukharin was a Russian Communist leader and he was the editor of the Soviet newspaper Pravda. In 1930, he gave a speech promoting atheism, and he spoke out against Christianity hurling insult and argument against it. When his speech was over he looked out at what seemed to be the smouldering ashes of men's faith. *Are there any questions?* Bukharin demanded. Deafening silence filled the auditorium until one man approached the platform and shouted Christ Is Risen! The crowd arose as one and the response came loudly: *He Is Risen Indeed!*

Regimes and kingdoms come and go and two thousand years after the resurrection I can say to you this morning: Christ Is Risen! I'm convinced and have faith that Christ was dead and He rose from the dead and will come again in glory. This Easter Day I stand and proclaim that Christ Is Risen. But some may ask, how do you know that the resurrection is real? How do we know that this is true? I could say that I believe in resurrection because somebody told me about it, but that's not very reliable because people tell me lots of things and not all are true.

Our starting point to believing the resurrection is faith, but we have the historic testimony of countless people throughout the ages who have declared the validity of the resurrection. When Mary stood at the entrance to that tomb weeping, she meets the gardener who calls her by name. Do you remember her response? She joyfully says *Rabboni!* and she rushes to Jesus. Now I want you to listen to this next thing ***Jesus tells Mary what amounts to the job description for the church. Jesus tells her: Go to my brothers and tell them.*** My friends I believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ because someone told me about it.

Some people who are troubled by the fact they cannot prove that when Mary told the disciples *I have seen the Lord*, she spoke the truth and it can't be proven. All we have is the testimony of those first century witnesses. There are no photographs. Resurrection cannot be proven or disproved, all we know is what people have told us about it.

***The second reason that I believe in the resurrection is that it has stood the test of time.***

A lot of things start off well but soon fizzle out. I remember being shocked when The Beatles broke up because I thought they would be around forever. Who thought that the great Rangers team of the nineties would struggle to get promotion from the championship two years ago? Sportsmen, singers and actors are catapulted into the spotlight but their star soon fades. Fame fades and new fads and fashions emerge. In the industry songs come and go so fast we barely have time to learn them. But take the song Amazing Grace. Now there is a song that has stood the test of time. John Newton became a Christian and subsequently renounced his slave trading and wrote this great hymn: ***Amazing Grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind but now I see.*** People have been singing this hymn since the eighteenth century and people continue to sing Amazing Grace. Why? It authentically conveys faith in Christ and it has stood the test of time.

The Bible has been the world's best-selling book since sales records began because it tells the amazing Gospel story which has stood the test of time. I believe that the resurrection is genuine because it has stood the test of time. It was not something that was here today and gone tomorrow. As long as there's life on earth, people will be talking about the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Third: ***I believe in the resurrection, because I've experienced it.*** The first century disciples didn't believe in the resurrection because they could explain it; they believed because they had experienced it. Jesus who they'd known alive and had seen die was alive again and was with them. ***The most effective proof of the resurrection is not in what the witnesses said that they saw, but in their response to what they saw.*** Before the resurrection, the disciples were just frightened men huddled together with their door barred. And after Jesus appeared to them they became a powerful band of mighty witnesses thrust out into the world. The resurrection changed these men dramatically and it's been estimated that by the end of the first century over a half million people had come to believe in Christ. That's the power of resurrection!

How do we disregard the testimony of witnesses who are ready to die for their words, and every one of the first disciples met a violent death. People may lie to perpetuate a myth, but people will not give their lives over a myth. These disciples knew what they had seen and they believed so passionately that they were willing to put their lives on the line to share the Gospel with others. They were resurrection people! The Apostle Paul wrote: ***I have died to sin and have been raised with him.*** This is what I am talking about. The resurrection is an historical event but it must become an event that we participate in. We are to become resurrection people, and then we will be able to echo the words of Paul: ***All I know is Christ, and the power of his resurrection.***

We can sing the hymns of Easter and listen again to the familiar stories of Easter in scripture. We can enjoy the eggs and the lilies for Easter can be experienced in these ways. But the real power of Easter is that people's lives are moved from death to life, from despair to hope, from old ways to new opportunities. This is Easter and that's resurrection. I believe in the resurrection because I have seen the God of resurrection at work. I have seen the risen Christ raise people from the death of despair to the joy of new life.

That's Easter. The Risen Lord comes back to life, and assures the disciples that they are forgiven and they can have new life. Peter had denied Jesus three times, Thomas had doubted and all the disciples had forsaken Him. But Jesus came back and forgave them and resurrected them. He came back to share with them, and He comes this morning to share with us the joy, the encouragement and the forgiveness of Easter.

Why do I believe in resurrection? I believe in it because somebody told me about it. I believe in it because it has stood the test of time. But supremely I believe in it because I have seen it in the life of others and I have experienced it myself. It is why I can stand here this morning and shout: Christ Is Risen! **Amen.**

*(1174 words)*