

Dear Dr Sng, Mun Wai, Yak Beng

I have attempted a test edit of Dr Bobby Sng's message dated 20 Nov 2016 ('Message 54').

1. My edits are highlighted in yellow. Clarifications of intent/rationale are presented in brackets. Edits in brown are Edwin's.
2. Regarding quotemarks, which style would the team prefer:
  - ☐ Style 1: And he replied, "No, I like Jesus Christ very much, but it is Christians I don't like. Because Christians are so unlike Jesus Christ".
  - ☐ Style 2: And he replied, "No, I like Jesus Christ very much, but it is Christians I don't like. Because Christians are so unlike Jesus Christ."

*[Note: Both are commonly used.]*
3. Fact-checking will not be attempted. But if I come across something that I can immediately recognise as inaccurate, I will point it out.
4. A possible presentation concept for each Message is given on the last page.
5. While at Book Editing stage, the team may wish to reconsider if all 54 sermons will go into the book. I have estimated as follows:
  - ☐ 54 sermons ~ 656 pages ~ 3.75 cm thick
  - ☐ 36 sermons ~ 440 pages ~ 2.5 cm thick (for comparison)

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts and suggestions.

Shuphay

## Test edits

Bobby Sng

20 November 2016

Theme: What does Christ's resurrection mean to us?

~~Bible Verses – English Standard Version (ESV)~~ [To mention just once on Copyright page]

### 1 Peter 3:13-15

<sup>13</sup> Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, <sup>15</sup> but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.

### John 10:33

<sup>33</sup> The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."

Acts 1:1-3 [Corrected spacing issue – closed gap between colon and 1]

<sup>1</sup> In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, <sup>2</sup> until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. <sup>3</sup> He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. [Standardised verse numbering – use superscript for all]

§§§

Greetings to you once again and I thank the Lord for your prayers over the past months. I think I have recovered sufficiently well to be able to come this morning and to share with you from God's Word.

About five months ago, someone sent me an email with a request. That person had heard me preaching in church. He said, "Can you give me a list of the 25 books that you have read over the years that have influenced your life most?" And so, over the next one month, I really sat down and from time to time, just tried to reflect on what these books were. And I realized that there might have been dozens and dozens, maybe hundreds of books and magazines that I have read that have shaped my life in one way or another. But in the end, I decided to focus on the books that I read in the 1950s because that was when I entered the university. That was a time when I was encouraged to read more widely as a young Christian, being exposed to a new world and to other people who were non-believers. And even then, I found that there were about 15 books that have really shaped moulded my thinking. Among them was one that I think some of you may have read. A book by a man called Frank Morison, "*Who moved the stone?*" [By convention, title of book is italicised, and do not use quotemarks.]

Frank Morison was an Englishman, a journalist and a writer. He lived in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when there was a lot of scepticism concerning the person of Jesus Christ. He was a non-believer. And he realized that the reason why so many Christians were confident to place their faith in Christ was because they believed in the resurrection. [Standardised – use British spelling, except for quotes] And so, He decided that he would study carefully the last few days of Christ's life, thinking to himself that and if he could write a book to disprove the resurrection story, then he could demolish the belief in Jesus Christ. And so he read through the last few days of Christ's earthly life, and the more he read, the more his ideas began to change as the evidence And he found was overwhelming that the evidences there were overwhelming. A So he began writing. so he wrote this book. It is was a book that described traced his journey from unbelief to belief in Jesus Christ. The book became an instant success. It was published in 1930, so it was many years before my time, and it became an instant bestseller. And it has since been was printed and reprinted over a dozen times - right up to even today, you find that it is still available in the SKS bookshop. Many people were converted as a result of his writing. Now the thing that impressed me was not just the evidences [delete 's'] he produced, but the manner in which he examined it them.

You know Peter, in 1 Peter 3:15 said that “we must always be ready to give a reason to anyone who asks us to account for the hope that is in us”. Sometimes, when we share the gospel with others, we say that all you need is that you have faith in Jesus Christ and the gospel story. It is almost like it doesn't matter if there are good reasons or not, so long as you just believe. Now you and I live in a multi-racial, multi-religious society. But why are we Christians? Why do we accept Jesus Christ as saviour and not another religious leader?

I have told shared with you before, how I became a Christian. It was because of my grandaunt. We were living next door to the Liok family. They were a Godly family. And she became a Christian, and as a result of that, I became a believer in Jesus Christ. For 10 years, we were living in Wilkie Road, side by side with each other. And sometimes I thought, what if we have lived next door to a Buddhist family, to a very devout monk, a very, I was going to use the word 'godly', a very saintly monk. And what if my grandaunt had decided to become a nun and lived a nun's life and began to influence me? Then maybe I would be a monk living in a monastery today. Or maybe if we had lived beside a very fine Muslim family, she would have become a Muslim and maybe I would have become a Muslim today.

And so, during those days when I entered university, this was one of the questions I really asked myself, “Why am I still a Christian?” Not when I was a little kid and influenced by my grandaunt, but why did I, in the 1950s, still believe and accept Jesus Christ as saviour? That is why Peter wrote to these believers. He said we must be prepared to give a reason for the hope that is in us. Frank Morison was prepared to examine his own heart and to read the scriptures by himself, so that he might know if this man is truly the eternal Son of God. We take the resurrection of Jesus Christ for granted. But what does the resurrection of Jesus Christ really mean to us?

First of all, it means that Jesus Christ, if He really rose from the dead, must be taken seriously. In a way, if we were to think through the gospel story, about this person Jesus Christ, it could come across as possibly the most incredulous story. a most unlikely, a most absurd story. of a person became the saviour. Here was a person born in the midst of a strict Jewish society, with its many cherished traditions and beliefs. Why should anyone really believe Him to be the Messiah? You think about it, from birth, indeed even before birth, He was an illegitimate person. That is why when Joseph heard that Mary was going to have a child, he felt so ashamed that he said he would have nothing to do with her. He knew that in Jewish society, when news got around that they were

not yet married and Mary was going to bear a child, that from the beginning this child would be rejected by society.

As this person began to grow, When He grew up, He did things that offended many. He began to break all the traditions and norms accepted ways of life among the Jews. For instance, He began to eat with the sinners and the publicans. He began to welcome Gentiles and even Samaritans, who were hated among the Jews, into His midst. And Furthermore, He was prepared to touch the lepers and those who were unclean. Remember in Luke 7, there was this woman who had morally failed in her life, and yet Jesus was prepared to allow her to touch Him. There were so many traditions in the Jewish society, and Jesus broke almost every one of them.

As He went around teaching the people, He began to make claims about Himself that would sound ridiculous. He was not just satisfied telling people that they must be honest, upright and righteous in their ways of living. These are things that almost every other religious leader would have said. But He made claims that no other person dared to make. He said to see Him was to see God. To believe Him was to believe God. To honour Him was to honour God. In John 10:33, you will find that the Jews, when they heard some of these claims that Jesus made, were so angry with Him. This was blasphemy to the Jews. They decided to stone Him. No other religious leaders since that time has dared to make claims such as Jesus made. Of course, from time to time, you and I meet people who make such claims, but they are all in the mental hospital.

And then you have the manner of His death, His death on the Cross. Today, we find that the cross is like a haloed symbol, something that is very meaningful and very precious to believers and found in almost every church building. But 2000 years ago, when Christ died on the cross, this was not so. It was a form of death that was shameful and despised. When we go back to the teachings of the Old Testament, the Mosaic Law, in Deuteronomy, it is said that anything that hangs on a tree, on a wood, is cursed. Paul knew this, and he quotes in Galatians 3, he said that, "Jesus Christ therefore, by dying at the cross, became a curse for us". And so, in Jerusalem, at the time of His death, when they saw Him hanging on the Cross, it was a sign that He was under the curse of God. And not only in the Jewish eyes, but the eyes of the Romans themselves, crucifixion was the worst form of punishment. And so, there was nothing amazing about the Cross. We sang about 'The Amazing Cross' just now. In the eyes of all those who saw Him die, it was the most humiliating shameful, despicable way to die. Why should anyone, therefore, believe in this man?

Nowadays, we see people, such as those in extremist Islamic groups who are willing to sacrifice their lives and die for a cause. The Japanese kamikaze pilots in the Second World War were prepared to fly their planes packed with explosives to crash them onto enemy boats and ships, not because they had done something wrong, but that they were ready to die to honour their emperor. In the eyes of the Japanese people, these were honourable people, dying for their country and emperor. No one at Calvary at that time could have said that this man was doing something honourable. He was dying in a most shameful, a most cursed way. Now if He was such a person, from the time of His birth to the time of His death, why should anyone, especially during the time of the New Testament period, believe in Him?

Dear friends, the only answer is this – the Resurrection. Jesus rose from the dead! That is why Thomas, who was among the Twelve, and who did not see Christ the first time, said, "Unless I can see Him, unless I can put my hands into the wounds on His own hands and His side, I will not believe". Same thing with Paul. He said that "if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then your faith is in vain, my preaching is all in vain". That is why after Christ's resurrection, He spent another

40 days to be with the disciples. We read through Acts 1:1-3, and there it says that He continued to reveal to them convincing proofs of His resurrection. Jesus knew that the only thing that could open the eyes of the people, and to convince their hearts and change their minds, is to impress upon them that He really rose from the dead. That is why Frank Morison, initially a ~~skeptic~~ **sceptic**, accepted Christ as saviour. **There remains not a lingering doubt in him that because he saw the reality of Christ's resurrection is real.**

When I was working among students in university, I was often confronted with many questions about the Christian faith and Christian life. The students asked a lot of questions. I tried to read widely to anticipate the kind of questions they would ask. But I realized that there were still many other questions that I could never, and would never, be able to fully answer. Even today, after so many years **being a** as God's servant, there are still questions that people ask, and in my own heart I know I cannot give a full answer. Questions like: "Don't you have doubts? Don't you have questions in your own heart?" Then what is it that holds my faith? The Resurrection! Jesus is alive! If Jesus really rose from the dead, then He must be taken seriously. Yes, there are things concerning the Christian faith and Christian life that I still have not found the answer. But of this person, Jesus of Nazareth, I know who He is because He rose from the dead.

I always like to quote this example of a man called C. E. M. Joad. I read his biography in the 1950s. He was the professor of philosophy in London University at that time. And he wrote very widely about the Christian faith as a non-believer. But in the 1930s, he began to undergo a conversion. And then in the 1940s, he began to write and give interviews over BBC concerning the Christian faith. Once he was asked this question, "If you could interview somebody from the past, who is the one person you would call back to interview over radio?" He said, "Jesus of Nazareth". And then they asked him, "if there is only one question you can ask him, what is that one question?" He said, "Did you or did you not rise from the dead?" In the astute mind of this philosopher, he realized that everything concerning Jesus of Nazareth hangs on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So if Jesus rose from the dead, **he** **He** must be taken seriously.

Secondly, if Jesus rose from the dead, then death is not the end of human existence. You know we are all different and **we** go through different experiences in life. Some of us are more sickly than others, while others are very healthy. They never get sick until the last day and then they just drop dead. Some of us here are very bright, very clever, the young people especially. They can work the computers and solve all these problems. But some of us who are older, are slower mentally. Some of us are very gifted musically, when we hear some of these young people making music, I realized the wonderful gifts God has given them. Some of us who could not play a musical instrument **and** can only sing. But there is one experience that is the same for all of us, which is, we all have to die one day. I can guarantee you, I can bet my last dollar, that all of us will die one day. Even the girl who died, the 14-year-old girl who froze her body so that she will not die, so that she can be raised to life again later on. Death is the most fundamental experience everyone has to go through. That is why this question comes up, "What is there after death?"

There are many eastern religions that say that after death, there is an afterlife. We are reborn again. You may be reborn into a higher form of life or you may be reborn into a lower form of life, depending on the kind of life we have lived here. There are others who say that there is nothing after death. We just cease to exist, nothing after that.

I remember again, another book that I read, that also influenced my thinking. A book by **p**Professor Blackham. He was a philosopher and he was a non-believer. And he wrote this book in order to convince people we don't need faith of any kind because there is nothing after death. And he

called this chapter that he wrote, “The Bridge to Nowhere” [Chapter title is contained within single quotemarks. Double quotemarks are reserved for conversations and quotations]. He said many people are climbing this bridge, the bridge of religion, thinking that it is going to lead them somewhere. But alas, when they reach the top of the bridge, they find that suddenly it doesn’t continue, there is nothing, it is just a drop into nothingness. The bridge leads to nowhere.

How then can we know whether there is a bridge to somewhere, or nowhere? We will not know unless there is somebody who has been there, and has come back and told us. That is the Resurrection. Jesus Christ Himself. He told the disciples because they were concerned when Jesus said He was going away, that He was going to die. They said, “Where are you going?” He said, “I go to prepare a place for you. That where I am, you will be with me too”. You remember too about that dying thief, how he told Christ, “Remember me when you enter into paradise”.- Jesus said, “Today, you will be with me in paradise”.

For ourselves as God’s people, it is not the bridge to nowhere, it is the bridge to be with Jesus and with the Lord. And we know it is so because He rose from the dead. It is just like somebody who has gone overseas. You just think of it, in the olden days, when people set out, whether from China or Europe, on a sailing boat, it must be quite a bold adventure daring for them. They say, “You keep on sailing, sailing until the ocean just drops into nowhere”. And then they come back, they say, “Yes, we found a continent over at the other side”. In Jesus Christ, we have someone who has shown us, that there is somewhere; it is to be with the Lord. And so the resurrection of Jesus Christ is to tell us that death is not the end of human existence.

Thirdly, it tells us that Jesus is alive today, very much alive. No other religious leaders can say and make the kind of claims that Jesus made. To be a Christian is more than just to accept a set of beliefs. It is more than the adoption of a code of conduct that sees us coming to church every Sunday, getting baptizsed, breaking bread. It is to have a living relationship with our savior, because He is alive. No other religious leader can say that we can have a relationship with them. But Jesus did. He said that He is the vine and we are the branches. We must abide in Him and He in us. That is why we sang the song just now, “He lives, He lives. You ask me how I know He lives, He walked with me, He talked with me, because He lives within my heart”. That is right, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is to assure us that we have a living relationship with Him, day to day.

Every year, in November and December, we find the streets, especially Orchard Road, fully decorated, a reminder to us of the the birth of Jesus Christ. That there was a time this person came, when the Word became flesh. Once a year, even non-Christians are reminded that this event did take place. But then every week we are reminded of the resurrection because we meet together on Sunday. Not on Monday, not on Tuesday, not on Wednesday, Friday, but Sunday, because it is the day of Christ’s resurrection. For us as Christians, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is foundational to our faith. If Jesus rose from the dead, then He must be taken seriously, and we must take His Word seriously. If Jesus Christ rose from the dead, then it means that death is not the end of everything.

Every other week, we see news reports of people dying by earthquakes, disasters, diseases, senseless killings or starvation. That is why the writer in the book of Ecclesiastes says that, if that is all life is about, that today we are alive and the next day we are dead, then it is all vanity, vanity of vanities! What is the purpose of life, when you know that the hard work of nurturing a person would come to naught ends in his death sooner or later? Think about this – you put in so much effort to nurture a babybring the child up, educate him, go through the anxiety and heartaches each time he falls ill... The list is endless. You may at times ask in frustration: “What’s the point



of all these? Nurturing a life that is going to end one day, that all seems so futile!" [Keep Dr Sng's examples as he wanted to illustrate the extent a parent goes through, giving his all to bring up a child. Edited for clarity, preserved the meaning.]

No, the resurrection tells us that life is not meaningless. There is a purpose. We are made to be with the Lord. **Our struggles and trials are not in vain.** Then lastly, if Jesus is the life, then it means He wants to live His life through us, through you and me. And I think this is something that all of us should always ask ourselves, "In what way can others see that Christ indeed is alive in my life and your life?"

I end with this example I have always liked. Mahatma Gandhi was once asked this question. It says, "You had so many Christian friends and missionaries who try to convert you. When you were in England, you even read the whole bible, and you thought that the Sermon on the Mount was wonderful".—And so, one day, one of the missionaries asked him, "Why are you still not a Christian? Why do you not like Jesus Christ?" And he replied, "No, I like Jesus Christ very much, but it is Christians I don't like. Because Christians are so unlike Jesus Christ".— He could not see the life of Christ, the wonder of Christ, the beauty of Christ flowing out from their lives. God helps us because Jesus is alive, and He wants to live His life through you and me that others may see Christ in us. [Standardise both instances – place closing quotemarks before fullstops as per preceding instances.]

Let's sing in closing this Hymn 115 again, just the last verse.

### **He Lives (I Serve a Risen Saviour)**

[Stanza 3]

*Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian,  
Lift up your voice and sing  
Eternal hallelujahs  
To Jesus Christ the King!  
The Hope of all who seek Him,  
The Help of all who find,  
None other is so loving,  
So good and kind.*

[Refrain]

*He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!  
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.  
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!  
You ask me how I know He lives?  
He lives within my heart.*

[Italicise reproduction of poems, hymn lyrics etc.]

## Structure

20 Nov 2016

## What does Christ's resurrection mean to us?

*<sup>13</sup> Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, <sup>15</sup> but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect. **1 Peter 3:13-15***

**[Start of Message]** Greetings to you once again and I thank the Lord for your prayers over the past months. I think I have recovered sufficiently well to be able to come this morning and to share with you from God's Word.

[The Message]

**[End]**

**For further readings/ See also: John 10:33; Acts 1:1-3**