

Remember the Risen Christ

Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: 2 Timothy 2:8

Dear congregation, this morning we have read from the second epistle of Paul to Timothy. He writes it when he's sitting in prison. He has been in prison more often. But this time, as he writes a letter, whether it's himself or whether it's dictated to another, he realises that His end is near. He says in chapter four, I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown. Something isn't it, to read the words of one who realises, soon I'm about to die. And in that situation, every word is important, isn't it, weighty? And what is he going to say to his spiritual son, Timothy, that young minister in Ephesus? Remember that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead. Remember that, Timothy. Is that so important? Does he have to stress that to Timothy? Timothy is not a liberal theologian who denies the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you had asked Timothy, what did the Lord Jesus do? He certainly would have said, what all the children here would say as well, what did the Lord Jesus do? He was born, He lived, He died, He rose, He ascended. There could be a young person here who says, remember, that Jesus rose from the dead? That is so simple. We all know that He arose. And yet it is so very important for us to remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David has been raised from the dead. Why? Let us listen this morning to verse eight of 2 Timothy chapter two. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.

Our theme is Remember the Risen Christ.

1. First, this is a needed call.
2. Second, a glorious call.
3. Third, a beneficial call.

Remember the Risen Christ, a needed call, a glorious call, and a beneficial call, or a blessed call. To understand why Paul writes this to Timothy, it's good to recognise the situation in which Timothy was. Timothy lived in Ephesus. He was a pastor there. And the first thing we know is that he encountered hostility, opposition, and persecution in Ephesus, where he ministered.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul said about himself when he was in Ephesus, I fought with beasts at Ephesus. It wasn't an easy place to be. Do you remember who they worshipped there in Ephesus? Diana. And do you remember Demetrius, the silversmith? He made those little statues of Diana. And when people were converted and they no longer bought his statues, he became upset and he stirred up the whole city against Paul and the preaching of Jesus Christ. That was Ephesus. And opposition hadn't stopped when Paul left because we read here that those who will live godly shall suffer persecution in chapter four, verse 12. It's not easy to be a Christian, and especially not easy to be a pastor in the midst of hostile

conditions. And in the midst of those pressures, it's so easy just to be focused on the enemies, on the dangers, on the threats, and forget that Jesus is risen indeed. Isn't that so? Today we may not be persecuted like the early church, but we can find increasing hostility in the midst of the world, and there can be powerful agendas to silence Christianity, to marginalise the church and to set aside the word of God. And it's so easy to come together and to talk about this bad news and that bad news and that alarming event and that leader's terrible thing that they said, and forget that Christ is raised from the dead. And if only that was the only problem that Timothy faced. If only there was just opposition from outside the church, and that the church stood filled with the power of Christ in the midst of a hostile world. But when we read these letters to Timothy, then we realise there were problems also within the church of sin, division and error. As Paul was travelling back to Jerusalem in Acts 20, he met with the elders of Ephesus, and he also warned them that grievous wolves would enter their flock. They would be teachers who would teach errors and would destroy and seek to destroy the flock. And Paul now writes to Timothy, warning of these things. Notice in verse 16, he speaks of profane and vain babblings. And this is a talk that leads to ungodliness, and it eats away, as doth a canker, words of Hymenaeus and Philetus, who erred from the truth, he says, saying that the resurrection, verse 18, is past already, and overthrow the faith of some. They denied the bodily resurrection. They taught that the resurrection Christ spoke of was only a spiritual resurrection and not a physical resurrection. All that matters is spiritual life and your soul. And some went so far as to say it didn't matter really what you did with your body because that's just physical and that's just going to go to the grave, and all that matters is your heart. As if you can separate what you do with your body and your heart. Timothy had to deal with those errors and that confusion in the church. And when there is confusion in the church, it is so easy to be all focused on what he said, and what she said, and what he did, all focused on people, and we talk about people, and we forget Christ, who has been raised from the dead. Amid this all, Paul is there telling of his departure being at hand, and Timothy would be left behind in the midst of the difficulties that were in the church. And as he's there, surely, he would miss Paul. And he would think, if only I could write to Paul and get a letter back again, and he knew that soon he wouldn't be able to do so. It can be hard when someone you respect passes away, and you can no longer go to them, you can no longer talk to them. And also in such circumstances, it's so easy to forget that Christ is raised from the dead and lives. It wasn't only the world, and it wasn't only the things going on in the church; Timothy also had his own struggles, his own character, his own weaknesses. He was a child of God. In 2 Timothy 1.5, Paul says, he often remembers the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in thee also. He knew Timothy was a believer. And he calls him his spiritual son. But receiving the grace of God doesn't mean that suddenly you are all full of strength and zeal and godliness and humility and holiness and everything is well. Timothy doesn't come across as a naturally strong leader. Paul stresses in chapter one, verse six and seven, God hath not given unto us a spirit of fear, but the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind. Maybe because Timothy did struggle with a spirit of fear. He said, be not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, perhaps because Timothy was naturally prone to draw back when attacked. As a result, Timothy also appears to be prone to discouragement. He also suffered physically. Paul says in his earlier letter, drink a little wine for thy stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities. He had a

weakness. And so, realising Timothy was faced with persecution and error and knowing Timothy's own weakness, Paul writes to him. And he writes many exhortations. He says in chapter one verse six, stir up the gift of God which is in thee. Or in verse eight, be not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. Or verse 13, hold fast the form of sound words in faith and love. And chapter two verse one, be strong in the grace that's in Christ Jesus. And verse three, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Or verse 15, study to show yourself approved unto God. Or verse 22, flee youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. And aren't these calls fitting? He calls Timothy to do what's needful and to do what may be difficult for Timothy to do, but he is to do it because God calls him to do it. In the midst of his weakness." Is that you? You find your weakness, and in the midst of it, you hear the calls of God: be strong, be a soldier, fight, flee sin, follow righteousness. These are the things that you are to do. You must. Where does that bring you? Can you be content this morning simply to hear of what you are to be and what you are to do? And say this week I'm going to try. I'm going to try to do better than last week. To be, to do. Sometimes you're discouraged with who you are. Other times, you're content with your obedience. All you need to hear is what you need to do, and that's all. Then you have to fear that you're living in self-reliance. Self-reliance is not faith. And self-reliance gets you nowhere. It could be someone else in church who hears what he needs to be and hears what he needs to do. And he wants to. You want to be that. But you find yourself so weak. You find you are failing. Where does that leave you? It can leave you discouraged. Yes, it can. Where does it bring you? Remember that Jesus Christ is raised from the dead. When your own heart is your worst problem, what are you to remember? Jesus Christ is raised from the dead, and he lives, he lives as a Saviour, he lives as a King, he lives as a glorious one. Amid all the discouragement about yourself, have you forgotten? Have you been living as if it's just you who's been living and it leads you nowhere? Have you forgotten that Jesus Christ lives right now? Do you see how needful this call is after all? To remember that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead, because you can't do it without him. You can't do it without remembering him, because of who he is. That's why this is not only a needed call, but it's also such a glorious call. This text literally says, remember Jesus Christ, having been raised from the dead. Do you catch the difference? Remember, not just a fact that 2,000 years ago there was a grave and in it was the Lord Jesus Christ, and then that moment came when that grave was empty because he rose from the dead and he left that grave behind. Not just remembering a fact, but remembering Jesus Christ himself, who was raised from the dead and lives. You see what the focus is in this text? It's not just an event, but it's a person. Jesus Christ. Jesus, whose name means Saviour, who shall save his people from their sins. Remember Jesus Christ. And you've learned in Catechism what that means. Christ the Anointed One, ordained by the Father, anointed with the Holy Spirit to be a prophet and a priest and a king. Remember Jesus Christ. That's the call this morning. So basic, so fundamental, but also so glorious. There's no one who can fill your mind and fill your heart like this Jesus Christ. Remember Jesus Christ amid all the things that fill your mind and fill your heart. Whatever you've come here with, remember Jesus Christ. And then Paul becomes more specific, not just Jesus Christ in general, but the Jesus Christ who has been raised from the dead. Often, when we think of remembering Jesus Christ, we may think of remembering him in his death. After all, in the Lord's Supper, what does he say? This is my body, which is broken, my blood that's

been shed. Do this in remembrance of me. In my brokenness, in my death. And that is indeed so important to remember him in his death. But if we were only to remember him in his death, and if that was the last word, what good would that do for you or for me today? A dead Saviour who hung on the cross and cried, why hast thou forsaken me and died? If Christ had not risen from the dead, there would be no hope, there be no salvation, there be no life, there be no victory, there will only be death and sin forever. Remember, Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Notice that it doesn't just say that he arose, but Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, raised by another, raised by God himself. Isn't that what Peter preached in Acts 2.24? Him God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden by them. It's true, Jesus spoke of taking his life up to himself again, but the main proclamation in the preaching of Paul is that God raised up Christ. Why is that important? Because it means that the same God who sent his son into this world, the same God who laid on him that burden of iniquity, that same God who poured out on him his wrath of sin, that same God who forsook him in his agony, that very same God raised him from the dead to live forever. And what does that tell us? that tells us that this God was so perfectly pleased with the work of his Son, so pleased with the sacrifice of his Son. that when he offered up himself as a sacrifice for sin, as he paid that price for sin with his own blood, that price was perfectly acceptable to God, such that he could not remain in death. He could not remain in the grave. God had to show his pleasure with that sacrifice by raising him from the dead and setting him at his right hand to live forever. Remember, Jesus Christ, having been raised from the dead, he lives because God is pleased with the sacrifice of his son. Remember that. When your conscience accuses you that you've sinned against all the commandments of God, And when you come before God with my burden of transgression, heavy, laden, overborne, and when you have no words of defence anymore, and when you cannot excuse your sin anymore, and when you're there with your guilt and with your sin, and you can't just shake that burden off, Remember, God has raised him from the dead. God has been pleased with the sacrifice of Christ as a full payment for sin. For those who say, God be merciful to me, the sinner, then remember, God has raised him from the dead, as that foundation for salvation. As Paul says in Romans 4, he was delivered for our offences, and he was raised for our justification. What a glorious, glorious thing to remember and to know. And that's not all. Notice also that it says, remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead. It stresses that he is of the seed of David. Why is that important? You remember, right? Children, you remember what God said to David. He said, your son shall reign forever. There came Solomon, and he died. And there came Rehoboam, and he died. And there came all those other kings, and they died. Your son will reign forever. Who is that? Who is the son of David who would reign forever? Is it not the Lord Jesus Christ himself? And so, when it says here, he is of the seed of David, it is saying that he is the great Messiah. He is the great king. And as king, he's the one who reigns forever. Remember, Jesus, of the seed of David, has been raised. And that means that he has been raised to be at the right hand of God as that King forever. What a glorious reality that is, that he reigns. In the midst of all the persecution, in the midst of all the opposition, he reigns. all the persecution will never be able to overturn his throne. In the midst of all the assaults of Satan which can be so strong, remember the seed of David the king, reigns on the throne with all power over his people to preserve, defend, to provide out of his royal bounty in the midst of their helplessness and need.

Remember, the seed of David is raised from the dead to live forever. What a message this is. Oh, have you forgotten that he lives as king? Lives as king, so full of power. Lives as king, so worthy of submission. He lives as king this morning. Are you pushing that away? Are you trying to be king of your own life? Are you trying to just do your own thing? Paying lip service to him as king, of course he's king, we all know that. but in your life, not bowing the knee for him. Really? He's been raised from the dead to live forever as king, and you cannot overcome him, and he will overcome you. You can think you can go through life without him as king of your life. And you can think you can be successful. But in the end, you will see him as that glorious king and your knee will bow before him and you will confess that he is Lord. How much you try to push that thought away today. Remember, this morning, He is raised as King. You can't escape Him. You must bow for Him. And you may bow before Him because He's not only King, He's also the living Savior today. That's a third aspect here. Not only has he secured that salvation, not only does he reign as king, but he's also the savior today who works. Paul says, remember Jesus Christ was raised from the dead according to my gospel. It's a remarkable expression. And someone can say, well, did Paul have his own gospel? My friend, if you have your own gospel that is different from the gospel that other people have, then your gospel is made up by your own mind and your gospel is worthless. Paul said, if any man preaches another gospel, let him be anathema, let him be accursed. No, Paul did not have his unique gospel that he invented in his own brain. Why does he call it my gospel? It's such a remarkable expression if you turn the clock back to years before, and there was this message going around that Jesus of Nazareth died and he rose again from the dead, and Paul heard that. He said, that's blasphemy, and he wanted to kill those who claimed that Jesus rose from the dead. That's not my gospel; that's not good news for me. No, that's their blasphemy, that's their lies and deceit. Why does he now call it my gospel? Is it not because it is indeed good news for sinners of a Savior who lives in order to save? And that's why this living Savior who rose from the dead; he met Paul as he was there on the way to Damascus and he stopped him and he showed him that he's alive. And then Paul began to not just speak about those who talk about Jesus, he began to speak to Jesus because he knew he lives. Who art thou Lord? And he was convinced in the depths of his soul that Jesus lives. And then that gospel became Paul's gospel. It became the best news that Paul could ever hear because it was the news of a Savior who died in order to satisfy the justice of God that demanded Paul's death so that Paul could live. It was about the Savior who lives in order to give life to Paul. My gospel. Oh, is that what you say when you hear the gospel of this Christ, this glorious Christ, who lay down his life and who ever lives today to find sinners in their sin and to save them and to give them that new life and that true comfort? That's my gospel. Not just good news for others, but also for me. How else can you explain that then from the fact that this Jesus lives to be the Savior and fulfill the promises of his gospel by his grace? Oh, remember, remember, Jesus Christ is risen, raised from the dead according to my gospel, Paul says. Remember, that gospel has power, power to save, because Christ lives to do so. Have you forgotten? Have you forgotten the power of Christ to save? When it comes to yourself, so discouraged, have you forgotten? He lives to save. Have you forgotten as you've looked around at others and their spiritual state, it burdens you, it troubles you, and sometimes you feel and you live and you talk as if Jesus doesn't live. Have you forgotten? Remember Jesus Christ was raised from the dead according to my gospel. What glorious truths these are to remember. Doesn't true spiritual

life involve continually remembering Christ not only crucified, but also raised from the dead? Does not all spiritual life shrivel up into self-dependence when we forget that Jesus is risen indeed? Doesn't it hollow just into empty forms when we lose sight of Him? what a needful call this is, and what a glorious call this is, but also finally what a blessed call this is, what a beneficial call this is. What is it, congregation, to remember, to remember that Jesus Christ is raised from the dead. What is that remembering?

Let's sing first from Psalter

We began by saying that's so easy to do. You just remember, yes, Jesus rose from the dead. But this isn't just about having a fact in your mind. This is about having that reality of who Jesus Christ is so fill your mind, so fill your hearts, that you come to live in light of this reality that Jesus has been raised from the dead. Really, that's the test, whether we live as if he is risen. When you or I live as if other things are more important than Jesus Christ, we've forgotten him and stretched out our hands to idols as if they're more important than him. People, possessions, enjoyments, sin. We've forgotten then the glorious risen one. When we live as if others are stronger than him, the world's temptations and Satan's assaults and the subtleness of error and corruption of our own heart, when we live as if those things are greater than him, then we've forgotten that he's the living, glorious King. When we live, if our own weakness and sin are too great for Him to overcome, or our character is too set for Him to change, or our heart is too hard for Him to soften, then we have forgotten that He is the risen, living Saviour. Remember, it's about living a life convinced of the reality that Jesus Christ lives. So, remembering is a deeply spiritual activity of living out of this resurrected Christ. That's why it's so important to remember. that we may live in light of this reality. And to live in light of this reality, this reality must be there in our minds. There are so many things that fill our minds, or not? All the things other people say, all the scrolling on your phone, so much can fill your mind, but it's also empty. He says this morning, remember, Jesus Christ is raised from the dead. If we're to remember him, then we are to open the word of God, which speaks of him every day again. Young people, are you doing that? Are you opening the Word of God and searching the Word of God? Because that's where God shows the one of infinite glory, Jesus Christ. The one full of grace, Jesus Christ. We open that Word of God, not just because that's our duty, but we open that Word of God with that desire that we would see this Jesus. and that, that's why we also meditate upon that Word of God, that we would see Him as He is revealed in the pages of Scripture, and that's also why we engage in the study of the Word of God, and that's why we come to the house of God, and that's why we also do so every Lord's Day again, remembering that Jesus is risen indeed on the first day of the week. What a glorious thing. to remind ourselves when our thoughts go this way and that way. But remember, Jesus is a living Savior. We can be so prone to forget. Also, Martin Luther's wife, Katie, she realized that she saw her husband at times, so discouraged in the midst of all that was going on. And one day she called for a stonemason to come. And she said, you see the stone there above the doorway? Chisel in

that stone five letters. V-I-V-I-T. Vivit. He lives. So that every day Martin Luther would leave the house, wherever he had to go, whether it's to preach or whether it's to visit or whether it's to this or that, he would see above that reminder, he lives. Remember, remind yourself, he lives. This is such a blessing to live in light of this reality, also this reality as it's revealed in the Word of God that makes you busy with the Word of God. And yet it's not just about being busy with the Word of God in itself, but it's also that this goes together with a trust in this living Savior. Because in the word of God, to remember the Lord is bound up in trust in the Lord. For example, in the psalm it says, some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of our God. Remembering means that you go out to him and cry out to him and put all your trust in him. That's a life of remembering. If we hear about Him and it doesn't drive us out to Him, draw us out to Him, then we don't really see who He is. Because to see who He is, then you cannot but go out to Him in trust. Your need is so great that no one else can help you in your deepest need. But you see He lives as the King, as the Savior, and you remember Him in the midst of all your sin and need, and so you go out to Him, trusting in Him to do what He has said, to be what He has said, He would be, to trust in Him. Is that you? I will remember the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, who's been raised from the dead. In this week, so many things will come upon me, but I will remember him. How's that possible? How's that possible? It's only possible because he lives. And the proof that He lives is the grace that He gives to draw your heart away from all those other things, and draw your heart out unto Him. So that He becomes greater than everything else, He becomes supreme. And you have no desire to forget Him, but to forget all else. and to remember Him. That's His grace. And that's the very evidence that He lives to change hearts and renew hearts. And therefore, whoever you are and why you've come here and whatever the condition of your heart has been, if your heart is still so dull to Christ, so dead to Christ, and alive to all those other things, remember, He's been raised from the dead. to give spiritual life. Where else will you go for true life than unto this Lord Jesus Christ and knowing that life. How can we be so caught up in so many other things and forget him? And yet we do. And the prayer is, Lord, remember me. Remember me in grace so that I would ever, ever remember thee. For he calls, remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel. Amen.