

#### **4.12.20 ~ The Good News of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ...**

Today is the Day of Good News, the Best News! Jesus Christ was crucified on a Friday (paying the penalty for our sins); and on the following Sunday, He rose from the grave (demonstrating His authority to provide eternal life).

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important event in all of Christianity, actually, it is the most important event in the history of the world. Without the resurrection of Christ, we have no hope of forgiveness or eternal life, for there would be no proof that Jesus' death really freed us from sin's condemnation.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all record Jesus saying to His disciples, He [the Son of Man] would be rejected by the religious leaders, betrayed and delivered and put to death, but He would rise from the grave on the 3rd day.

**Matthew 17:22-23**, *"The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day."*

**Matthew 26:45**, *"Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners."*

The resurrection is central to Christianity - you cannot be a Christian and not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**Romans 10:9**, *"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."*

The biblical and historic record concurs, that Jesus of Nazareth died on a Friday afternoon and was placed in a tomb, but Sunday morning His body was missing!

**Read Matthew 28:1-15...** If Jesus' body was missing, either He did rise from the dead, as He had said He would, or someone took His body away:

**1. The Jewish Leaders** didn't want Christ's body removed from the tomb; a missing body could be a resurrected body, that would look bad for the Religious Leaders; for this reason, they pressured Pilate to put a seal on the tomb and a Roman guard unit there to keep the body in the grave (*see Matthew 27:62-65*), for Jesus had said (**verse 63**), *"After three days I am to rise again."*

**2. The Roman Guards** were stationed at the tomb to make sure Jesus' body stayed put; moving it or allowing it to be taken, was punishable by death; therefore, they made sure Christ's body remained in the tomb, at all costs, against all foes, but it is very doubtful that any of these soldiers had ever faced one of God's angels before (**Matthew 28:2-4, 11-15**).

**3. Jesus' Disciples** wouldn't dare move His body and falsify His resurrection; for if they knew Jesus did not rise from the grave, they had no hope of eternal life, and it would have been better for them to get out of town as fast as they could, and never tell anyone that they had been followers of Jesus.

So, why did the Disciples continue to proclaim the risen Lord? And why did the Jewish authorities bribe the Roman soldiers to spread the "stolen body" story?

There can be only one explanation: Jesus Christ rose from the grave, just like He said that He would. And everyone who believes in Him, repenting of sin, confessing Him as Lord, will receive eternal life, just like He said that we would.

Read **1Corinthians 15:1-2...** Paul is not saying anything new here, but is restating the gospel he had already preached to them, the gospel of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, for it is by this gospel that they [and all true believers] are saved.

Our faith in Christ is based on the fact that He not only died for our sins, but He sovereignly rose from the grave by the power of God to prove He has authority over sin's penalty and death itself.

Read **1Corinthians 15:3-4...** Of first importance is the fact that Jesus had to die for our sins, and this was according to the Scriptures; that He would be buried, and on the third day He would come out of the grave alive, according to the Scriptures.

Repeatedly in the OT (Genesis, Psalms, Isaiah, Hosea) the death, burial and resurrection of God's Son, the Messiah is foretold. In the NT, Peter, Paul and Jesus all quote from those OT passages, i.e., "according to the Scriptures."

Read **1Corinthians 15:5-7...** Eyewitness testimony is considered to be the most reliable testimony in a court of law. Here we have the recorded testimony of those who saw the resurrected Christ.

Jesus' first appearance was to Cephas (Aramaic) or Peter (Greek). He was the leader of the twelve, the main preacher at Pentecost, and the leader of the church in its early years; Peter was a prime witness for the resurrection.

Paul tells us Jesus appeared to the "twelve" next, although there were only eleven, as Judas had already died and a replacement hadn't been selected yet; it would seem that the eleven were still referred to as the twelve.

Paul records that Jesus then appeared to a group of more than 500 brothers (and sisters) at one time. This is awesome, as Paul is now writing 20+ years after that happened, and he is saying that although some of those witnesses have died, most of those who witnessed Christ's resurrection were still alive, able to testify to the resurrection.

Paul then tells us Jesus appeared, "to James [most likely the Lord's half brother], then to all the apostles." We know that Jesus, between His resurrection and His ascension back into heaven (**Acts 1:3**), "presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God."

The resurrection of Jesus Christ sovereignly demonstrates and declares that Jesus, through His own shed blood on the cross, did in fact take our punishment for sins upon Himself; therefore, we have forgiveness and eternal life!

**1Peter 3:18**, "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit."

Read **1Corinthians 15:8-9...** Paul says, "last of all [Jesus] appeared to me also, as to one untimely [abnormally] born." All the others to whom the Lord appeared, had seen Him before His death, and then again after His resurrection;

*but the Lord appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus, several years after the Lord had ascended back into heaven.*

For Wednesday's Bible Study this coming week, I want to take you through the Biblical accounts of Jesus' post resurrection appearances, it will be a great study; but for today, let's keep our attention on the Resurrection of our Lord.

Read **1Corinthians 15:20-23...** Jesus is the "first" fruits of those who have died - meaning, there will be more "fruit" after Him; just as He was raised, so all those who believe in Him, will also be raised to new life [eternal life in a new body]. **John 11:25-26**, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die."

Christ was raised first, all those who belong to Him will also be raised, according to Scripture (**1Thessalonians 4:16-17**), "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord."

Although we die, we will be raised in a new body like Jesus was, a perfect body that will last for eternity; we are presently in our earthly bodies, but we will be given our heavenly bodies to enjoy forever.

**1Corinthians 15:50-53...** Paul reveals that before Christ's return, some of the Lord's people will not die from physical death, but that they we all will be "changed," "in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye," at Christ's return in the air.

]When Jesus comes for us, we will be changed instantaneously, all those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation will be given their eternal heaven bodies, i.e., Jesus is coming for those who belong to God, God's children, those who have been (cf. **John 1:12-13; 3:3-7**) "born again," meaning, "born from above," "born of the Spirit of God," "born of God."

If you are not sure that you have received forgiveness for sin and eternal life, if you are not sure that you are saved — you need to get right with God, right where you are, right now!

Every person who has been or ever will be born, is a sinner (we all are); and the penalty for sin is death [an eternity of being tormented in the darkness of Hell apart from all things God]; but Jesus Christ, the Savior, offers forgiveness and eternity in Heaven with all God's Blessings [Life, Light, Love, Joy, Peace, Happiness, Hope and Family] to all who believe in Him (**Romans 6:23**), "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is absolutely and verifiably true, and He alone has the authority to save you, so, what must you do to be saved?

**ASK** God to forgive you (**Acts 3:10-12, 23**), "There is none righteous, not even one... ..There is none who seeks for God... ..There is none who does good, ...not even one." "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

There is no other way, He turns no one away (**Acts 2:21**), "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord [for the forgiveness of sins] will be saved."

**BELIEVE** that Jesus died for your sins (**Hebrews 9:26**) "Jesus appeared once for all... to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

He wants to be your Savior but you have to trust in Him.

**CONFESS** Jesus as Lord (**Matthew 10:32**), "Those who acknowledge Me before men, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven."

Ultimately everyone is going to bow and confess Jesus Christ as Lord; but only those who do so willingly are saved and granted eternity in heaven with God.

**DEMONSTRATE** your new life in Christ (**2Corinthians 5:17**), "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come," (**Galatians 2:20**), "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

Everyone who is genuinely saved, born again into God's family, will demonstrate this new life in Christ, as they are nurtured by, grow, and obey God's Word.

God's Son came down from heaven, put on flesh, lived a perfect life, died on a cross, was buried, and rose from the grave on the third day, just like He said He would. He conquered all our enemies - sin, death, and judgment - victoriously demonstrating His power and authority by His resurrection from the grave.

### ***Because He Lives...***

*God sent His Son, they called Him Jesus,  
He came to love, heal, and forgive;  
He lived and died to buy my pardon,  
An empty grave is here to prove my Savior lives.  
Because He lives I can face tomorrow,  
Because He lives all fear is gone;  
Because I know He holds the future,  
And life is worth the living just because He lives.*

Today is the day of Good News, the Best News! Jesus Christ has risen from the grave, and He has granted eternal life to everyone who believes in Him, and although He is now in Heaven, He is coming back to take us to be with Him forever.

**Christ is Risen!** I know many of you are responding, **He is Risen indeed!**

That is the **Good News of Easter Sunday!**

"Good news, good news, for you and for me:  
*Jesus arose and He lives; don't you see?*  
*Good news, good news, let's tell it to others;*  
*That they too may know, of this wonderful Savior Who loves us all so."*

*Pastor Mike*  
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