

4.04.21 ~ Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life...

(Various Scriptures)

Read **Mark 2:1-11...** As Jesus is proclaiming the good news in a crowded room, we are told that four men carry in a paralytic but they can't get to Jesus through the crowd, so they go up the outside stairway to the roof, dig through the thatch and earth roof, remove the tiles, and then lower the man in front of Jesus to the room below.

It says (**verse 5**), Jesus "saw their faith," and said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." It was clear to everyone that the man's greatest need was to be able to walk, to be healed of his paralysis; but Jesus basically says, 'I have healed your spirit, forgiving your sins.' This man has just received eternal life, but he still can't walk.

Some religious leaders hearing Jesus' statement about forgiving sins, consider this to be blasphemy, for only God can forgive sins.

Many of the Jews at that time, believed diseases and afflictions were the result of one's own sin, i.e., this man's paralysis was caused by his sin. Jesus confronts the Jews (**verse 9**) saying, "Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'?"

Anyone could say to you, "your sins are forgiven," but who could verify whether or not it had happened? But to say, "Get up... and walk" that miracle was proved and witnessed by all who were there.

By healing the paralytic, Jesus validated His claim and authority to grant forgiveness; for just as sure as there was physical healing, there was also spiritual healing, the forgiveness of sins.

The emphasis in this event is not the healing of this man's body, but the healing of this man's spirit. So, how does this relate to the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

Well, we are told in the Scriptures that Jesus came to take upon Himself our punishment for sin's penalty.

Read **Isaiah 53:3-12...** He was despised and rejected by men... pierced for our sins; the punishment that brought us peace with God was poured out on Him, and by His shed blood we are spiritually healed, for He has paid the penalty for all our sins. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. He was put to death; and yet He came out of the grave alive.

What if we only had proof of Christ's death, but no resurrection? If you had been the paralytic man spoken of in Mark chapter 2, it would be like Jesus saying to you, "your sins are forgiven, really, trust Me!" But there is no way for you to know if that is true, until after you die and wake up either in heaven or in hell.

But, if along with saying to you, "your sins are forgiven," Jesus also said, "now, to prove that you have received forgiveness, and that I have such authority, 'I say to you, get up and walk, you are healed of your paralysis,'" if indeed you could now walk, you would also know that you had received forgiveness for your sins.

In John's vision (**Revelation 1:17-18**), he records the Lord's words, "I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore."

The resurrection of Jesus Christ sovereignly confirms and declares that Jesus, through His own shed blood, did in fact take the punishment for our sins, and 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."

Listen, Jesus died on a Friday and was placed in a tomb before sundown, and on Sunday morning His body was missing; He had risen from the dead!

Read Matthew 28:1-15... If Jesus did not rise from the grave, as He said He would, yet His body was missing, then, someone had to take His body away. But who could have done that? There are three groups of men we must consider:

1. The Jewish Leaders: They didn't want Christ's body removed from the tomb; for a missing body could be perceived as a resurrected body.

Read **Matthew 27:62-65...** The Jewish leaders pressured Pilate to put a seal on the tomb and a Roman guard unit there to keep the body in the grave, for Jesus had said (**v. 63**), "after three days I will rise again."

2. The Roman Guards: These elite soldiers were stationed at the tomb, to make sure Jesus' body stayed put. Moving the body or allowing it to be taken, was punishable by death; therefore, they made sure Jesus' body remained in the tomb, but then, they had never faced one of God's mighty angels, like the one who rolled away the stone, and at this sight they fainted with fear.

3. Jesus' Disciples: This group of mostly fishermen wouldn't dare move the body and falsify Christ's resurrection; for if they knew Jesus did not rise from the dead, they had no hope of eternal life, and it would have been better for them to quickly and quietly get out of the area, and deny ever knowing Him.

So, why would the Disciples continue to proclaim the risen Lord, if it were not true? And why would the Jewish leaders have to bribe the Roman soldiers to spread the "stolen body" story, if it were indeed true?

Jesus had told His disciples on several occasions, that He would be rejected, arrested, put to death, buried, and on the third day He would rise from the grave, according to God's sovereign plan, purpose, and foretelling.

Mark 8:31, "And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."

Matthew 17:22-23, "And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "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." And they were deeply grieved."

Luke 24:44-48, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the

Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.' Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.'"

John 14:1-3, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." **29** "Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe."

After His resurrection, before ascending back into heaven, Jesus appeared many times to His followers; we will study those events next Sunday morning.

The only reasonable explanation for the empty tomb is that which is repeatedly taught in the Scriptures: Jesus rose from the grave, by His own divine power and authority (**John 10:17-18**), "I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

Christ's death provided forgiveness; His resurrection demonstrated eternal life (**John 11:25-26**), "Jesus said to [Martha], "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. Do you believe this?"

Moments later, going to where Lazarus lay buried, Jesus said (**John 11:39-44**), "Remove the stone.' Martha, the sister of the Lazarus, said to Him, 'Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?' So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, 'Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me.' When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth.' The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'"

Do you see what just happened? Jesus loosed Lazarus from the bonds of death, demonstrating that he indeed had eternal life, for Lazarus belonged to the Lord.

Hebrews 9:27, "it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment," in **Matthew 25:46** Jesus says, that those who reject Him, "will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous [those who receive Him, go away] into eternal life." Let that sink into your mind and heart for a moment.

Listen, the resurrection is not just an event, it is a Person. Jesus is the Son of God, and all authority rests in Him. Resurrection to eternal life is through Him. The greatest hope that we have, and that we celebrate today, on this sacred holiday, is that Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior, is the Resurrection and the Life.

1John 5:11-13, "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

Christ alone is "the Resurrection and the Life," He experienced death for us, bearing our sins on the Cross; and yet, He now lives, having been raised from the dead on the third day; and so we can know that we have eternal life in Him!

Today, we celebrate the resurrection of our Savior from the dead. Our celebration isn't only looking back at some event in the distant past, or looking forward to some event in the distant (or maybe not so distant) future —Christ's resurrection should impact our lives every single day.

God wants us to know that Jesus Himself is the divine hope for everyone who places their trust in Him. Jesus said, "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."

Remember, after He made that declaration, He asked Martha, "Do you believe this?" And so today, on Easter Sunday, as we end our study, I need to ask you a similar question:

Do you believe in and confess Jesus Christ as Lord?

Do you have the assurance in your heart [your spirit] that you belong to the Savior and that you will live, even if you die, before He returns?

Take a moment, earnestly consider your relationship with God through Christ.

For [God] says (**2Corinthians 6:2**), "'At the acceptable time I listened to you, And on the day of salvation I helped you.' Behold, now is 'the acceptable time,' behold, now is 'the day of salvation.'"

If you know that you have eternal life, praise God, Hallelujah!

But if you are unsure that you have salvation through Jesus Christ, please, I urge you, settle this issue right now, right here.

Admit to God that you are a sinner (we all are).

Repent of your sins, asking God to forgive you (He turns no one away).

Believe in Jesus Christ as Lord & Savior - that He died for your sins, and rose from the grave to proclaim victory over death and judgement.

Having **received** forgiveness for your sins and eternal life, **follow Him** by prayerfully reading God's Word daily, obeying what you understand, as you **live your life for Him**.

Participate in a Bible Believing, Teaching, and Practicing Church, as a member of Christ's Body, serving through word and deed, as if serving the Lord Himself.

Jesus Christ, is the Only Way, the Only Truth, the Only Life, from God!

He is the Resurrection and the Life, for He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!

Pastor Mike
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