

"The Resurrection"

Does it really matter?

Introduction: Today we gather together to celebrate the Resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. Every year at this time we talk about it and we gather together to read the accounts from the Gospels as we did in our Scripture reading earlier. The celebration does not just take place here within our church but it is celebrated across the globe by those who are the children of God.

But over the weeks as I was praying and preparing for this message there was a question which entered into my mind, "I wonder how many people actually know why the resurrection of Jesus Christ is so important to us who are believers?"

I began to wonder how many people who attend church could tell you why the resurrection of Jesus is so important to the Christian faith?

So with those questions I felt led by God to present to you a message today and answer the question, "Does it really matter?"

Today we are going to look at a message that will really help you to see why the resurrection of Jesus Christ is so important to our Christian faith.

In the 1990's a man by the name of Marcus Borg, a "Jesus Seminar leader", said this of Christ's resurrection: "As a child, I took it for granted that Easter meant that Jesus literally rose from the dead. I now see Easter very differently. For me, it is irrelevant whether or not the tomb was empty. Whether Easter involved something remarkable happening to the physical body of Jesus is irrelevant."

I am fearful that Borg's view of the resurrection would mirror the view of many people who sit in church pews this morning. So today I want to give you 2 questions about the resurrection and then we will answer each one.

I. How can we be sure the resurrection is vital to my Christian faith?

There are really 2 ways we can see the answer to this question.

a. The attacks by Satan.

Over the years Satan has done all he can to cause people to question the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let me show you where it all started.

Matthew 28:11-15

¹¹ Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

¹² And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

¹³ Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

¹⁴ And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

¹⁵ So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

The soldiers were paid a large sum of money to spread the lie that Jesus' disciples had come and stole away his body. Now we know that Satan is the father of lies and therefore we know that he was completely behind this lie. I can say this because Matthew tells us that the lie was still in circulation until the very time of his writing which was somewhere around 20-30 years after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So here is a lie that was started and the lie has at this time been in circulation for 20-30 years. That is a long time! But the lie had stayed in circulation that long because Satan was determined to convince people that Jesus' body was stolen and that He did not raise from the dead.

Listen to this:

JUSTIN MARTYR, who flourished about A.D. 170, says, that the Jews dispersed the story by means of special messengers sent to every country.

Now let me get you back to this lie that was spread by the servants of Satan. If we stop and we think about the lie that was fabricated here we can see that God actually used this lie as evidence to the resurrection.

The lie was that while they were asleep the disciples stole away His body. That means that while they were asleep they SAW His disciples steal His body. So the question is did they see what happened or were they asleep and not see what happened? You cannot be asleep and see what happened at the same time. The lie was ridiculous but many people have accepted it over the years.

Now let me get to the point: if the resurrection was not vital to the Christian faith then Satan would not spend so much time attacking the Doctrine of the Resurrection.

b. The Words of Scripture.

Another way we can know the resurrection is vital to the Christian faith is by looking at what the Scriptures say. Let me show you what I mean.

1 Corinthians 15:17a

¹⁷ And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain;

Here in 1 Corinthians 15 Paul tells us that if Jesus Christ never rose from the dead then our faith is vain. In other words if Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead then we are wasting our time by coming here. If Jesus is still in the grave then we would be better off going out into the world and living for the here and the now. We should just eat, drink and be merry because tomorrow we will perish.

Those are 2 ways we can be sure the resurrection is vital to our Christian faith. This now brings us to the next question.

II. Why is the resurrection of Jesus Christ so vital to my Christian faith?

There are several reasons listed in the Word of God that answers this question. I want to show you 5 of them.

1. The resurrection proves Jesus was the Son of God.

Romans 1:3-4

³ Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

*⁴ And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, **by the resurrection from the dead:***

These 2 verses show the humanity and the deity of Jesus Christ. But it is the deity that we need to see here. Paul tells us the resurrection proves that Jesus was the Son of God. You see when He walked the face of the earth His deity was shrouded but in the resurrection it was revealed that He Truly was the Son of God. Now some would respond by saying that it really does not matter if He was the Son of God or not. But I want you to understand that our entire destiny depends upon who Jesus was.

You see if He was a man just like you and me then His sacrifice on the cross was nothing meant nothing to God. You see God required that there had to be a Perfect sinless Sacrifice that would be offered for the sins of mankind.

This is pictured throughout the Old Testament.

Exodus 12:3-6

³ *Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house:*

⁴ *And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.*

⁵ ***Your lamb shall be without blemish**, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:*

⁶ *And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.*

Here we see that the Passover Lamb had to be without blemish. Jesus Christ was our Passover Lamb and therefore He had to be without blemish which means He had to be sinless.

Now if Jesus was not the Son of God then that means He would have had an earthly father and if He had an earthly father then He would have been born with a sin nature and He would not have qualified to be the Sacrifice for the sins of the entire world. But Jesus did not have an earthly father.

Luke 2:48-49

⁴⁸ *And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.*

⁴⁹ *And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about **my Father's** business?*

Mary referred to Joseph as His father but Jesus quickly corrected her and reminded her that God was His Father.

Now let me get back to the point. The resurrection is vital to our faith because it proves that Jesus was the Son of God and therefore He qualified to be the Sacrifice to pay the price for our sin debt.

2. It is by the resurrection that we are justified.

Romans 4:23-25

²³ Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

²⁴ But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

²⁵ Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Here in Romans Paul tells us that He was raised for our JUSTIFICATION. Now to be "JUSTIFIED" means "TO BE DECLARED RIGHTEOUS".

Let me show you another verse.

Romans 5:1

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Now let me explain something to you. Here we see that Paul tells us we are JUSTIFIED by faith. In other words when we believe that Jesus Christ was our Substitute on the cross and we place our faith in His death, burial and resurrection then we are saved or to be more particular we are DECLARED RIGHTEOUS/JUSTIFIED.

This then brings up a question, "Why does Paul say in Romans 4 we are He was raised for our justification?"

The RESURRECTION affirms that when Jesus died on the cross that He put away sin once and for all. So the RESURRECTION is evidence that because of our faith in His finished work on the cross we are FOREVER JUSTIFIED.

Now let me get to the flip side of this for a moment. If Jesus is still in the grave then we are still in our sins.

1 Corinthians 15:17

¹⁷ *And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*

So the 2nd reason why the resurrection is so vital is because it affirms that Jesus put away sin by His sacrifice and therefore our faith is not in vain and we are JUSTIFIED/DECLARED TO BE RIGHTEOUS.

3. It is in the resurrection that we are given power over sin.

Romans 6:1-5

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

² *God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*

³ *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?*

⁴ *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

⁵ *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*

Now I am going to condense what Paul says here but I want you to grasp onto this. He tells us that we are no longer to be the servants of sin because we have been baptized into Christ and because we were baptized into Christ we have been baptized into His death. Now since we have been planted together with Him in His death then we were also raised with Him in His resurrection.

Now get this: since that is the case then the very power that raised Jesus from the dead is in me and it is in that resurrection power that I can live this new life in Christ and it is in that power that I can say NO to sin.

Galatians 2:20

²⁰ *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Now, if Jesus is still in the grave then we have no power over sin and therefore we are fighting losing battle because we are left to our own strength and in our own strength we are helpless. We would be lifetime servants of sin.

4. It is because of the resurrection that we are assured of a glorified body.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23

²⁰ *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.*

²¹ *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.*

²² *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

²³ *But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*

I wish I had much time here but we are limited. Too many people believe that our bodies are but a shell that our soul abides in. But that is not the case for there is much more. This body is part of who I am and your body is part of who you are. If our bodies were not important then God would have never given us a body. Sin has entered this world and with it death. Death tears apart what God created and joined together. God intended for our bodies to last as long as our souls. We are unified beings. But we cannot live forever in these bodies because sin has caused them to deteriorate. That's why the bodily resurrection of the dead is so vital. And that's why Job rejoiced in Job 19:25.

Job 19:25

²⁶ *And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:*

Now Jesus is the first fruits which means as He was resurrected so will we be and we will have glorified bodies. This body will be changed and I will then have an eternal body.

If Jesus were still in the grave then we would not have this hope.

5. It is because of the resurrection that we have security in Christ.

Hebrews 7:23-25

²³ *And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:*

²⁴ *But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.*

²⁵ *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

March 27, 2016

Easter Morning Service

Jesus intercedes on our behalf at all times. If He is still in the grave then we have no High Priest and we are damned!

Conclusion:

If someone asks why the resurrection is so important you now have 5 reasons to share with them.