

10-30-22

Sermon- There But For The Grace Of God, Go I!

Scripture- 1 Corinthians 15:9-22, CTW: Psalm 138

Hymns- 85, 348, 360

Theme- In every society certain groups of people are considered "untouchable" because of their political views, their immoral behavior, or their chosen lifestyles. True Christians anchored in Christ must not give into the pressure to avoid these people. We must speak to whoever will listen, knowing we have the help of the Holy Spirit who can guide and change their hearts.

I. The most fundamental doctrine that we must hold fast to is that of the resurrection.

A. If there is no resurrection there is no Christianity. It is in the power of the resurrection that we gain our peace and encouragement as we live in this dark world.

The most fundamental doctrine that we must hold fast to is that of the resurrection. If there is no resurrection there is no Christianity. Christianity rises and falls on the empty tomb.

Billy Graham said "if I were an enemy of Christianity, I would aim right at the resurrection because that is the heart of Christianity."

The Sadducees were people in Jesus' day who did not believe in the resurrection.

Luke 20:27: some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question.

There were some in the Corinthian church who although they believed in Jesus' bodily resurrection, did not believe that they would be resurrected when they died. They falsely held to Paul's teaching of 2 Corinthians 5:8: "we are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord."

B. They also held on to a false teaching about baptism.

1 Corinthians 15:29: now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them?

It's a direct contradiction to what they were teaching because they have no answer to the question "why do the dead need to be baptized if there is no resurrection?"

C. Unfortunately, there are theologians today who teach against the resurrection of the dead. I say that to deny the reality of the resurrection, is to deny the reality of Christ in your life today.

The reality of the resurrection is that it is more than just a doctrine of what happens after we die. The reality of the resurrection is something that we can grasp hold of in our daily lives. It can be the anchor we so desperately need today.

II. Always Take Time to Note the Biblical Context.

Paul was a great believer in discussion and debate. He told the Corinthian church:

1 Corinthians 15:11: since, then, we know what it is to fear the lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience.

A. Paul addresses the arguments of the Corinthian church in this passage by looking at both sides of the issue. What does it mean to us if there was no resurrection, and, what does it mean to us to know that there was a resurrection?

In the first 11 verses Paul reminds the people of the gospel that they believed in. The resurrection he states was part of that gospel. The last eleven verses Paul is going to use specific consequences that will occur if there is or is not a resurrection.

He reminds them of the gospel that they believed in when they first came to Christ. It was the gospel of the resurrection. It was

the gospel on which they stood. Could it be that sometimes we need to remember what we stand for, so that we do not fall prey to foolish ideas. **Today we are going to concentrate on verses 11-22.**

B. Point one: because of the resurrection our message has meaning.

1 Corinthians 15:14: "and if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith."

Paul uses a negative argument here and what he is saying is that if Jesus' body wasn't resurrected then what is the point of our preaching.

One writer has said, "the resurrection is either one of the most wicked, heartless, vicious hoaxes ever, or it is the most fantastic fact of history."

The message that we preach, the gospel that you believe finds foundation in the resurrection. It is here that we find the power to have victory in our daily lives.

Because Christ lives, our lives are not futile and we have a purpose, which is to proclaim the gospel. As we live our lives people see the risen Christ in us. Paul said in **Philippians 1:21-24:**

"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 if I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body."

Paul realized though that he had a purpose for his life and that was to be a messenger of the gospel. To proclaim that Christ lives in all of us!

We have that same mandate today. There are times when we would like to just stop and be finished. We can face health

problems, perhaps financial problems, perhaps the death of someone close. We just want to be left alone.

C. Point two: because of the resurrection your faith has a reality.

If our lives have a purpose because of the risen savior, then so too does our faith. You communicate what you believe in. We are not afraid to express our thoughts about God because to us our faith is backed up by the reality of the resurrection.

Faith is meaningless without a direction of faith to believe in.

A six year old boy complained to his mother that he had a stomach ache. His mother said "that's because your stomach is empty; you would feel better if there were something in it." That afternoon the pastor stopped by for a visit, and the little boy said, "pastor how are you feeling?" The pastor said, "well my head hurts," the little boy said, "well, that's because it is empty, you'd feel better if there were something in it."

Our faith feels better and is stronger because the resurrection is in it and all through it!

D. Point three: the resurrection gives value to your witness.

Look at Verse 15 again: "more than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead."

You don't have to put up your hands but I want you to think about these questions. How many of you would say that Jesus Christ has **changed your life?** Now how many of you would say that you have a **living breathing personal relationship with Jesus Christ?**

If you said yes to one or the other or both, and Jesus was not resurrected, then I would have to ask you a **third question: Why did you lie about your first two answers?**

Paul said if we don't believe in the resurrection and say that we do, we are false witnesses "**pseudomartes**". "pseudo" means false, writers sometimes use a "**pseudonym**" which is a false name, and "**martes**" is where we get the English word martyr, which originally meant "witness".

More than that, it makes Jesus out to be a liar himself.

In **Matthew 17:22-23**, Jesus said this to his disciples when they came together in Galilee: "the son of man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. 23 they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life." And the disciples were filled with grief.

I am so grateful today, that I am not a false witness, and neither are you. When we speak of the risen savior **we speak of one who has taken residence in our hearts** and has a relationship with us that will last through eternity.

III. Conclusion: This is our testimony through the risen Christ.

A. A word that Paul uses to speak of the removal of sin is the word "justification". What it means is that our sin debt is paid in full through Jesus substitutionary work on the cross. He paid our debt and took on himself the penalty for our sin. In **Romans 4:25** Paul said: he was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Through the resurrection Jesus now stands as our high priest where he offers the value of his sacrifice on our behalf. Also take a look at the truth expressed in **Hebrews 9:11-12**:

"But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is

not a part of this creation. 12 he did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the most holy place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.”

Only through the resurrection do we truly see Christianity at it's fullest, and it starts here. Through the resurrection we have a new purpose, to live **for** Christ, we have a new identity, to live **in** Christ, and we have a new hope. **Because we have a heaven to gain, we live for Christ.**

B. The resurrection helps us understand issues we all have.

1. The question of loneliness. The resurrection proves that **you matter to God**. Underline and circle this in your heart! Because of Jesus' death and resurrection through the grace of God the Father, He can now meet your deepest need for a relationship with Him.

2. The question of weakness. How can you find the power to change your life? **The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to you today.** The disciples were forever changed because of the power of the risen Lord, and it is available to you, by the grace of God the Father.

3. The question of guilt. How do I get rid of the guilt for all I've done? By the grace of God, you can nail it to the cross. Jesus is the sin-bearing savior of the world – the resurrection validates this transaction.

4. The question of death. What happens when I die? Jesus arose and so will you. By the grace of God the Father, death will never have the last word in your life again.

Dwight L. Moody the famous evangelist and **Robert Ingersoll**, a famous lawyer died in 1899.

Ingersoll was an agnostic who believed in a God but didn't allow himself to develop any serious thoughts to that end. **Moody**

dedicated his life to presenting a resurrected king to a dying people. He embraced the bible as the hope for humanity and the cross as a turning point of history. He left a legacy of written and spoken words, churches and changed lives.

Ingersoll died suddenly. The news of his death stunned his family. His body was kept at home for several days because his wife was reluctant to part with it. It was eventually removed for health reasons. The funeral program left his instruction, "there will be no singing." **No wonder!----no hope, no singing! Think of the words to the song..."I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free...His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me!**

Moody died Dec.22 and his last words were "earth recedes, heaven opens before me." His son hurried to his father's side and asked "father are you dreaming?"

"No, this is no dream, son" **Moody** said "it is beautiful. It is like a trance. If this is death, then it is sweet. God is calling me and I must go. **Don't call me back.**"

At his death many people remembered other words he had spoken earlier that year:

"Someday you will read in the papers that **D.L. Moody** is dead. Don't you believe a word of it. At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now. I was born of the flesh in 1837, I was born of the spirit in 1855. That which is born of the flesh may die. But that which is born of the spirit will live forever."

Because of the grace of God the father for His children, this is the power of the resurrection that can be in your life today. **The question is how real is the resurrection in your life?**

Amen, let us pray...