

Resurrection Sunday; April 12, 2020

TEXT/INTRO: Let's take our Bibles and turn to First Corinthians, chapter 15 and v.1 (repeat). This will be our beginning point for our Resurrection Day sermon. We're going to read a lot of Scripture this morning and since you're listening to this sermon or watching the video, you'll be able to pause it and find the Scripture. And for those who would like a copy of my manuscript I will make it available, either by snail mail or email. I hope you have a copy of the word of God with you and will follow along at home.

Has anyone heard the old Easter song, "Here Comes Peter Cottontail" recently? I don't listen to radio stations that would play it so I was just wondering if any of them still play it? It was a fun song for me and my brother like the Christmas song "Here Comes Santa Claus." Christian holiday songs that focus on bunnies and candy eggs and Santa Claus were fun for the little ones, weren't they. Did any of you or will any of you have an Easter Egg hunt? I loved those, too. And as I told some of my brothers and sisters in Christ who are concerned about their kids believing such things, children will not grow up believing that Santa is real or that there is a rabbit called Peter. Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

1 Cor. 15:1. *1 Corinthians 15:1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand,*

² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. Let me say a word about that verse. There are many, many people who will hear the gospel and for a moment will believe it. They may get involved in a local church or even in some kind of ministry. But for one of several reasons they decide to walk away. Remember when Jesus told the parable of the sower and the seed, where the seed was sown on four types of soil? (Mt. 13:3-9). He was referring to four kinds of people who hear the gospel and immediately believe it. In the parable Jesus made it plain that three

of the four kinds of people fell away from the faith. It happens. And obviously from that passage it can be pretty drastic. 1 Cor. 15:2, ² *by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.*

³ *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,*

⁴ *and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,*

⁵ *and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.*

⁶ *After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;*

⁷ *then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;*

⁸ *and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.*

(1 Cor. 15:1-8 NAU)

TRANS: On this Resurrection Day I'm going to focus our attention on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus by making several observations on its reality and how it has affected those who are in Christ.

First, The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a verifiable fact of history.

Do you know what the “scientific method” is for verifying the results of an experiment? It's try it and repeat it and repeat it again. It's the only way you can convince a scientist of anything. Well, what if you applied that to the resurrection of Jesus? How about if it was applied to the resurrection hundreds of times? The apostle Paul said “I've seen Him with my own eyes. I've seen the risen and glorified Son of God. And so have hundreds of others.” This is what Paul wrote in this letter to the Corinthians concerning the reality of the resurrected Jesus.

He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

⁶ *After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;*

⁷ *then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;*

⁸ *and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.
(1 Cor. 15:1-8 NAU)*

This is the gospel. Jesus is the gospel. The word that I preach is Jesus and Him crucified and raised from the dead. That is the gospel.

“But, pastor, I haven’t seen Him. I mean, I believe in Him, but all that happened 2,000 years ago. You’re saying it’s verifiable because hundreds of people saw the resurrected Jesus. Don’t you think it would be better if we could just see Him?”

⁸ *and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,*

⁹ *obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls. (1 Pet. 1:8-9 NAU)*

No one who saw Him believed in Him because they saw Him. They believed in Him by the grace and revelation of God the Father.

That’s you and I. We believe in the One who was raised from the dead by the grace and calling of God, and solely by His grace. And therein lies the necessity of preaching **the gospel. It is God’s chosen way to reveal His Son to those who will believe.**

Romans 10:17,

¹⁷ *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. (Rom. 10:17 NAU)* I believe in the raised-from-the-dead Son of God because none other than God Himself has revealed Him to me.

Now, this is what I want to drive home today in response to a . “Okay, preacher, so Jesus was raised from the dead and you believe in Him. That and a dollar will get you a cup of coffee at any fast food restaurant. So what. What does the resurrection of the Man Jesus have to do with me?” I’m glad you asked that question. Here’s how the resurrection has effected you, including those who don’t believe in the Lord Jesus.

Second, “By the grace of God, those who believe in Christ have been made eternally right with God by God’s decree.”

²⁵ *He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification. (Rom. 4:25 NAU)* We can read that, “He who was delivered over to forgive our transgressions, and was raised in order to accomplish our justification.”

In case you have forgotten or never knew, the word justification means that God has declared us to be right with Him through faith in Jesus. It’s an actual declaration. It’s God literally proclaiming that we are now and always will be right with Him. As I like to say, “Once justified, always justified.” I also like to say, “once loved, always loved. Once called, always called. Once forgiven, always forgiven, once raised with Christ, always raised with Christ, once seated in heaven with Jesus, well, you get the picture.”

If you’re there in Romans 4:25, notice the word “delivered.” It was the term used by a judge back in the Lord’s day that means a prisoner was delivered over to begin his sentence or even delivered over to the executioner to be executed. And that’s precisely how it is being used in this verse. It is God the judge handing over His Son to be executed for our sins in order that you might be forgiven for all your sins, past, present and future.

But that’s not the end of the story. Jesus was raised from the dead that you and I might have life everlasting. And that’s what Easter is all about. It’s all about Jesus.

Third, “Those who believe in Christ are free from the penalties of their sins.”

When a prisoner is released from prison after serving what the law says is fair and just, that prisoner can say “I have paid my debt to society.” He can never be tried for his past crime again. That’s what our Fifth Amendment says. It’s kinda like that with what Jesus has done for us. We will never ever be charged with our sins, ever!

⁴ *Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.*

⁵ *But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,*

⁶ *just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:*

⁷ *"BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.*

⁸ *"BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."*

(Rom. 4:4-8 NAU)

What that verse means, Romans 6:7, is that we are now even as we speak legally free from the penalty of sin. And it's all of God, it's God's doing. ⁷ *"BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.*

⁸ *"BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."*

Beloved, that has to do with God righteously and legally declaring sinners, the ungodly, right with Him and that is the definition of justification.

Happy Resurrection Day!

⁶ *knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;*

⁷ *for he who has died is freed from sin. (Rom. 6:6-7 NAU)*

If you know too well that you sin and you've never understood Romans 6:7 before, know that it is speaking of our legally being right with God, solely by His grace and solely through faith in Jesus.

Fourth, "All who are in Christ have been gifted with the same power that raised Him from the dead."

6

You and I are intimately and powerfully connected to the resurrection of Jesus. If He was raised, and He most certainly was, then you and I are raised, if you believe that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

¹⁸ *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,*

¹⁹ *and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.* These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might

²⁰ *which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, (Eph. 1:18-20 NAU)*

Don't misunderstand, that passage says this, ¹⁹ *and what is the surpassing greatness of **His power** toward us who believe.* Whose power? His power. The power that raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him in heaven is God's power not ours. It isn't ours but it is within us to do the will of God, not your own will.

¹³ *for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. (Phil. 2:13 NAU)*

That, beloved, is the power of the resurrection working in every believer.

Fifth, "All who are in Christ now have 'newness of life.'"

⁴ *Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6:4 NAU)*

We are not the same people we were before God graciously saved us. Whether you feel that way or not, if you are in Christ you can walk in newness of life. **Do not let sin or Satan** discourage you when you

6

sin. God has designed the new life the way He has for His glory that we might be constantly reminded that He is God and we are not. ²⁴

Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

²⁵ *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.* Did you catch that? That is our new life in Christ. This is Paul's conclusion to his argument that runs from Romans 3 to the end of Romans 7. Our deliverance from this body of death is in the future. Meanwhile, we're stuck in a flesh and blood, mortal body that still sins. Our inner man, or as Paul puts it in Romans 7:22, "my mind," loves the law of God and knows that it is good and right and holy. But my flesh does not. And since God designed the Christian life to be like this that He might be glorified by His children while we depend utterly on Him for our daily life, Paul can then conclude,

^{NAU} **Romans 8:1** *Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

² *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. (Rom. 7:24-8:2 NAU)*

When those in Christ sin, it's almost as though God says, "So what?" Almost. ⁶ *For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

⁷ ***But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; (2 Cor. 4:6-7 NAU)***

God has not given us permission to sin, but has made glorious provision for our sins through the death and resurrection of His Son.

1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

² and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. (1 Jn. 2:1-2 NAU)

Can you say “grace?”

Sixth and finally, Those who are not in Christ will experience the ‘second death.’

If you’re wondering how there can be a second death, it’s simply because there is a first death. And that’s the death that all will experience. “It is appointed unto man to die once and then the judgment.” The judgement for those not in Christ is the second death, being separated from God the Father, The Son, the Holy Spirit, and all the saints, including family members who are saved. The second death might be described as a living death. Can you imagine the horror those about to be thrown into the lake of fire will experience? Have you seen the commercial where the man has been asked to jump into the volcano supposedly to end the drought in their land? It will not be like that. These innumerable souls will be gnashing their teeth and crying out as they’re standing there waiting to be thrown into the lake of fire. Listen to this,

¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:14-15 NAU)

⁸ "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Rev. 21:8 NAU)

8

²⁵ *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,*
²⁶ *and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" (Jn. 11:25-26 NAU)*

This is Resurrection Day, Easter. I hope you are enjoying it even while we're isolated from friends and family and we can't go out to lunch at our favorite restaurants after church. I want the same thing God wants for you, that you might be saved and spend eternity with Him and your saved loved ones. My question for you is that question Jesus asked of Martha, "Do you believe this?"