

Sermon Notes for April 20, 2014

Easter Sunday
“Are You Confident In The Resurrection
Of Jesus Christ?”
1 Corinthians 15:3-19

Four friends were talking about death. One of them asked the other three, “When you are in your casket and people are mourning you, what would you like to hear them say about you?” The **first man** said, “I’d like to hear them say that I was a fine Physician in my time and a great family man.” The **second fellow** said, “I’d like to hear that I was a wonderful husband and a school teacher who made a huge difference in our children of tomorrow.” The **third man** replied, “I’d like to hear them say, ‘Look, I think he’s moving!’”

Introduction

A. WHY WOULD ANYONE BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST CAME BACK FROM THE DEAD?

1. Why would any rational, well-educated person believe that a man could come back from the dead?
2. We are talking about **REANIMATION HERE!**
 - a. Jesus was killed
 - b. He was buried
 - c. He was in the grave for 3 days
 - d. and THEN HE CAME BACK FROM THE DEAD!
3. J. T.

B. There Are OBVIOUS IMPLICATIONS IF JESUS DID OR DID NOT COME BACK FROM THE DEAD.

1. It is not “all right” if Jesus did not come back from the dead
 - a. It is not “enough” to think that Jesus came to this earth to be a “good example”
 - b. It is not “enough” to think that Jesus “meant well”, but did not come back from the dead.
2. **James Cameron**, the director of such movies as “Titanic” and “Avatar”:
 - a. Created a TV special called “The Lost Tomb of Jesus.” In this special, Cameron makes the claim that Jesus’ bones were found in a tomb near Jerusalem.
 - b. Well, if this were true, it would call the end of the movement that is called Christianity.
 1. If you have no resurrection of Jesus Christ, you have no Christianity.
 2. **Dr. Henry Morris** – “The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the **crowning proof of Christianity**. Everything else that was said and done by Christ and His apostles is secondary in importance to the resurrection. **If the resurrection did not take place, then Christianity is a false religion.**”
3. Let us look today at the implications of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I. The IMPLICATIONS OF JESUS CHRIST NOT BEING RAISED FROM THE DEAD

A. OUR PREACHING IS A WASTE OF TIME

Vs. 12 – 14a – “But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And **if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless**”

1. If Jesus Christ did **not** come back from the dead, the Apostle Paul said that our preaching is useless
 - a. if Jesus Christ did **not** come back from the dead, every preacher of the Christian faith is simply making noise, saying nothing, wasting his time
 - b. for, if Jesus Christ did **not** come back from the dead, **PREACHERS DO NOT have a MESSAGE!**
 - c. **FOR, WHAT OTHER MESSAGE IS THERE FOR THE CHRISTIAN?**
 1. Christianity is not simply about being a good person
 2. Christianity is not only about following the rules
 3. **NO, CHRISTIANITY IS THE MESSAGE ABOUT A SAVIOR WHO CAME TO THIS EARTH TO DIE FOR THE SINS OF MAN AND CAME BACK FROM THE DEAD!**
I Corinthians 15:1-4 – “Now, brothers, I want to remind you of **the gospel** I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.” **By this gospel you are saved**, if you hold firmly to the Word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that **Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,**
 4. If Jesus Christ did **not** die for the sins of man and then resurrect to take His finished work to God the Father, **WE HAVE NO MESSAGE TO PREACH!**
2. Therefore, all of the Preachers . . .
 - a. and all of the seminaries
 - b. and all of the preparation
 - c. and all of the commentaries
 - d. and all of the effort to communicate the Christian faith **HAS BEEN A COLOSSAL WASTE OF TIME!**

B. OUR FAITH IS USELESS

Vs. 14 – “And **if Christ has not been raised**, our preaching is useless **and so is your faith.**”

1. It is important to know that Jesus Christ died and came back from the dead, but, we must have **more than knowledge** of this event.
 - a. FAITH is the “method” by which a person “receives” the work that Jesus did on the cross for our sins
 - b. however. . . if Jesus Christ did **not** come back from the dead, **THEN WE HAVE FAITH IN NOTHING!**

- c. for, what would people have faith **in**?
 - 1. If Jesus Christ did **not** come back from the dead, He would have just been another, “well-meaning person who wanted to help people.”
 - 2. but, just like all of those other “well-meaning people”, they died and are **STILL IN THE GRAVE!**
- 2. That **“KIND OF FAITH” GETS YOU NOTHING**
 - a. what is your “faith” in?
 - b. is your faith in Jesus based on His being:
 - 1. a good model?
 - 2. a good example?
 - 3. a good teacher?
 - c. the “kind of faith” that we all need is a faith that **SAVES US FROM OUR SINS!**
 - 1. how can a “mere man” save us from our sins?
 - 2. no matter how kind, or how thoughtful or how wise Jesus was, if He did not come back from the dead; He simply lived, and died and that was it!
 - 3. this is really no different than Buddhism:
 - a. Buddhism is based on the life and teaching of **Siddhartha Gautama,**
 - b. he lived in Northern India, around the 4th century B.C.
 - c. Buddha, as he was called, was seen as a wise and “awakened” teacher
 - d. however, Buddha died at the age of 80 and was buried **AND HE IS STILL DEAD!**
 - e. what difference is there between a “well-meaning” Jesus who did not come back from the dead , and a “well-meaning” Buddha, except in what they taught?
 - f. **BOTH OF THESE “WELL-MEANING” TEACHERS WOULD STILL BE IN THE GRAVE!**
 - 4. **Warren Wiersbe** – “A dead Savior cannot save anybody.”
- 3. That **“KIND OF FAITH” is ACTUALLY HOPELESS**
 - a. If you were in a hospital room and heard your Doctor say that you have inoperable cancer; and someone in the room responded; “I have faith that you do not have cancer.” What would that person base their faith on?”
 - b. If you had been on the Titanic and someone said that the ship had hit an iceberg but someone said; “I have faith that we did not hit an iceberg.” What would that person base their faith on?

- c. “true faith” is actually based on “reality”
 - 1. There is a Spallation Neutron Source in Oak Ridge that has spent some 1.4 billion dollars based on their “faith” that neutrons that actually exist.
 - 2. Every time we get medicine from the Doctor, we have faith that it will make us well.
 - 3. We have faith that there is gravity, although none of us have ever seen it.
 - 4. When we have “faith” that Jesus came back from the dead. We have “faith” that this event actually happened!
- d. Otherwise, our faith is in a “fairy tale”

C. WE ARE SEEN AS LIARS

Vs. 15 – “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. **But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.**”

- 1. The Apostle Paul says that if Jesus Christ did not come back from the dead, not only are those who believe in Jesus saying nothing and believing in nothing, **WHAT THEY ARE SAYING IS ACTUALLY A LIE!**
- 2. If Jesus Christ did **NOT** come back from the dead, and we teach and preach **THAT HE DID, THEN WE ARE LIARS!**
 - a. please do not be so kind and gracious . . .
 - 1. if Jesus did **not** come back from the dead, then every preacher is a liar
 - 2. every missionary is a liar
 - 3. every Sunday School teacher is a liar
 - b. if Jesus Christ did not come back from the dead, **THE BIBLE IS FULL OF LIES!**
- 3. In actuality, not only are preachers and missionaries liars, if Jesus Christ did not come back from the dead, **JESUS CHRIST IS HIMSELF A LIAR!**
 - a. after all, what did Jesus Christ say **HIMSELF** about His Resurrection?
 - 1. **Matthew 16:21** – “From that time on Jesus **began to explain to His disciples** that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed **and on the third day be raised to life.**”
 - 2. **Mark 14:27-28** – “You will all fall away,” Jesus told them, “for it is written: ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’ **But after I have risen**, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”
 - b. **MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT, JESUS CHRIST CLEARLY TAUGHT THAT HE WOULD COME BACK FROM THE DEAD!**
 - 1. and if He did not come back from the dead. . .
 - 2. He was a **LIAR!**

D. WE HAVE NO SALVATION

Vs. 16-18 – “For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; **you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.**”

1. For those who are trusting in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to pay for their sins; if JESUS’ RESURRECTION DID NOT HAPPEN, then all of these people have no hope of salvation and will spend their lives in hell.
2. thus, all of the people throughout all of history will have the same fate:
 - a. all churchgoers, Pastors, missionaries: all of the children who went to Vacation Bible School, every single person who was trusting in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to save them will be lost and go to hell.
 - b. all of those people who lived “Christian lives” on this earth will be in the **same hell** as:
 1. Hitler, who was responsible for some 17 million deaths
 2. Stalin, who was responsible for some 20 million deaths
 3. and Mao Tse Tung, who was responsible for some 40 million deaths

E. WE ARE TO BE PITIED

Vs. 19 – “If only for this life we have hope in Christ, **we are to be pitied more than all men.**”

1. You would **have** to agree with Paul:
 - a. that if there are those who are depending on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to save them
 1. and Jesus Christ DID NOT come back from the dead.
 2. and is still in the grave
 - b. THEN, “THESE PEOPLE” ARE, OF ALL PEOPLE OF THE EARTH, TO BE PITIED.
 1. the sense here is “**bless their hearts**”
 2. “bless their hearts” is a Southern term that allows Southerners to “say anything that they want to”, as long as they say, “bless their hearts”
 - a. “That’s the ugliest baby I have ever seen. . .bless his heart”
 - b. “That person is the stupidest person I have ever met, bless his heart.”
 3. those people think that they are going to heaven because Jesus died for their sins and rose again . . . BUT DID NOT . . . “bless their hearts” for being so stupid and gullible!
2. If Jesus Christ **DID NOT** come back from the dead, all of us who are basing our lives on that resurrection **SHOULD ACTUALLY BE PITIED!**
 - a. what a waste of time our lives have been
 - b. they could have spent their lives so differently
 1. we could have gone to the beach instead of going to church
 2. or sit around on Sundays and watch the news and drink coffee
 3. we could have spent our money elsewhere than the church.

II. The IMPACT OF JESUS CHRIST BEING RAISED FROM THE DEAD

A. JESUS CHRIST DIED FOR YOUR SINS

1. however, before we get to the necessity of the resurrection, let us understand the reason why Jesus came to this earth in the first place.

Vs. 3-4 – “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that **Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures**”

 - a. The Apostle Paul wanted you to know the **COMPLETE REASON** that Jesus Christ came to this earth
 - b. what he was about to say was absolutely critical about the reason Jesus came to this earth – **“of first importance.”**
 1. what Paul was about to say was primary; it was absolutely essential
 2. if you miss what he was about to say, don’t miss this
 - c. what he was about to say, was based on the Scriptures
 1. so, not only was it important, **IT WAS SCRIPTURAL!**
 2. this truth, this concept was of primary importance and it was **BIBLICAL!**
2. and the reason is this: **JESUS CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS!**
 - a. **THE REASON** that Jesus Christ came to this earth was to die for our sins
 1. this was the announcement from the **angels in Bethlehem:**
Luke 2:11 – “Today in the town of David a **Savior has been born** to you; He is Christ the Lord.”
 2. these were the first words that **John the Baptist** said when he saw Jesus Christ for the first time in
John 1:29 – “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “**Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!**”
 3. Jesus, Himself, declared this reason about the reason He came
Matthew 20:28 – “just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, **and to give His life as a ransom for many.**”
 - b. you may say, however; I don’t know why I need Jesus to die for my sins
 1. I am a pretty good person; I am not “as bad” as some other people that I know
 2. well, your problem is that you are looking “horizontally” instead of “vertically”
 - a. if you are looking horizontally at other people on this earth, then I would agree that you are not “as bad” as other people
 1. yes, there are worse people on this earth than you
 2. murderers, thieves, adulterers
 - b. however, you are looking in the “wrong place” to justify yourself; for, you need to look vertically, at God
 1. in God, there is no sin
 2. and God requires perfection, not goodness
PERFECTION

3. and, the only way that you could enter God's perfect heaven would be that **you ARE** a perfect person
 - a. let me read **I Corinthians 13:4-7** in the New International Readers Version
I Corinthians 13:4-7 – “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not want what belongs to others. it does not brag, it is not proud. It is not rude, it does not look out for its own interests., it does not easily become angry, it does not keep track of other people's wrongs”
 - b. let me also remind you of “some” of the Ten Commandments
 1. if you have even thought more of yourself, your job, or your stuff more than God; you have broken the **First** Commandment
 2. if you have even hated someone or wished them evil; you have broken the **Sixth** Commandment
 3. if you have even lusted after another person; you have broken the **Seventh** Commandment
 4. if you have even talked negatively about another person behind their back; you have broken the **Ninth** Commandment
 5. if you have even wanted your neighbor's Corvette, golf-game, wife or bass boat; you have broken the **Tenth** commandment
 - c. Scripture teaches that there is **NO ONE WHO IS HOLY!** There is **NO ONE** who does **NOT** need a Savior
Romans 3:10-12 – “As it is written: "**There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.**"
 1. do you really believe that you are the exception to this rule?
 2. are you willing to gamble your eternity against the Word of God that you are “holy enough” to get into heaven on your own goodness and holiness?
3. **BUT, HEREIN IS THE GOOD NEWS! THE SCRIPTURE SAYS THAT JESUS CHRIST DIED ON THE CROSS FOR OUR SINS!**
 - a. **DID YOU GET THAT?**
 1. the word of God is **CLEARLY** saying that Jesus died on the cross “for our sins”
 2. that means that you do **not** have to pay for all of your sins
 3. that means that you do not have to go to hell forever because of your sins
 - b. **THE WORD OF GOD IS TEACHING THIS!**
 1. that is why Jesus cried out to His Heavenly Father while He was hanging on the cross
Matthew 27:46 – “My God, my God, **why have you forsaken me?**”

2. during this time of darkness, God the Father placed your sins and mine upon Jesus”
3. **JESUS BORE OUR SINS ON THE CROSS!**

B. JESUS CHRIST WAS BURIED FOR SINS

Vs. 3-4 –“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **that He was buried**, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,”

1. **Notice that Paul then adds in verse 3; “that He Was buried?”**
 - a. wasn’t it “enough” that Jesus suffered on the cross; if so, why did He need to be placed in a tomb?
 - b. **THE REASON THAT JESUS WAS BURIED WAS THAT HE TOOK OUR PLACE ON THE CROSS AND HE TOOK OUR PLACE IN THE TOMB**
 1. in **Genesis 2:15-16**, God clearly said to Adam and Eve that the penalty for their disobedience was death
 2. it would not have been “enough” for Jesus Christ to merely take our sins upon Him on the cross
 3. the ultimate payment for becoming our Savior was to die in our place
 - a. death would be the **only payment** for our sins
 - b. and, either we would have to die for our sins, or “another” would have to die for our sins
 - c. **Dr. Burchette** – “That’s your death.”
 2. Jesus died so that we did not have to
 3. so, as a believer who trusts in the death of Jesus Christ, you will **not** have to suffer death because of your sin; He died in your place

C. JESUS CHRIST ROSE FROM THE DEAD FOR YOUR SINS

Vs. 3-4 –“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, **that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,**”

1. now, as wonderful as the death of Christ on the cross was to pay for our sins; as wonderful as it was that Jesus suffered death on our behalf
2. we **MUST** go to the most critical “**next step**” in the ministry of Jesus Christ on this earth; **HIS RESURRECTION!**
3. But, oh, how we as believers overlook the resurrection:
 - a. **Hymnals**
 1. **The Trinity Hymnal**
 - a. 49 hymns on the cross
 - b. 23 hymns on the resurrection
 2. **The Hymnal**
 - a. 56 hymns on the cross
 - b. 20 hymns on the resurrection
 3. **The Celebration Hymnal**
 - a. 67 hymns on the cross
 - b. 16 hymns on the resurrection

- b. Every year, thousands of people climb a mountain in the **Italian Alps**, passing the “**stations of the cross**” where they will eventually stand at an outdoor crucifix. One day, a tourist noticed a little trail that led beyond the cross. He fought through the rough thicket and, to his surprise, came upon another shrine, **a shrine that symbolized the empty tomb. But the empty tomb was neglected. The brush had grown up around it. Almost everyone had gone as far as the cross, but they had stopped there.**

Far too many believers have come to the cross and have been overwhelmed with the pain and the suffering. However, far too few have moved beyond the cross to find the **real message of Easter**; the message of the empty tomb.

4. **NOW, WHY IS IT SO CRITICAL THAT JESUS CAME BACK FROM THE DEAD?**

- a. **one**, if **Jesus** was crucified and did NOT come back from the dead, He just becomes just another **well-intentioned martyr**.
- b. **two**, **Jesus had** to come back from the dead to keep His Word
1. **John 2:19** – (to the religious leaders) “**Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."**
 2. **Matthew 16:21** – “**From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.**”
- a. **three**, **Jesus had to take His finished work to the Father in heaven**
1. we must understand the “**entire ministry**” of Jesus Christ on this earth
 - a. Jesus **had** to be **sent as the sinless one from heaven** to this earth
 - b. Jesus **had** to be **born of a virgin** so that we would not be a sinner
 - c. Jesus **had** to **live a sinless** life so that He would be able to go to the cross to die in our place
 - d. Jesus **had** to be **beaten and crucified on our behalf**
 - e. Jesus **had** to **die and represent us in His death**
 - f. **AND, JESUS HAD TO COME BACK FROM THE DEAD SO THAT HE COULD GO TO THE FATHER AND PRESENT HIMSELF AS THE RISEN SAVIOR**
 2. we cannot “stop at the cross”
- d. **SO, IF WE DO NOT HAVE A RESURRECTED SAVIOR. . .**
1. **WE DON'T HAVE A SAVIOR WHO HAS PRESENTED HIS FINISHED WORK TO THE FATHER**
 2. **AND, AS BELIEVERS, WE DON'T HAVE A SAVIOR WHO IS INTERCEDING FOR US IN HEAVEN!**

- a. **Romans 8:34** – “Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is **also interceding for us.**”
- b. **Hebrews 7:25** - Therefore He is able to have completely those who come to God through Him, **because He always lives to intercede for them.**”

Conclusion:

1. **DO YOU NOW REALIZE WHY THE RESURRECTION IS SUCH A BIG DEAL?**
 - a. If Jesus came to this earth and died on the cross but did not come back from the dead
 1. He was simply a liar
 2. and, we are all wasting our time coming to church
 - a. so, let’s stay home on Sunday and sleep late
 - b. let’s stay home on Sunday and read the Sunday paper
 3. **ULTIMATELY, believers have NO HOPE of going to heaven – BECAUSE WE HAVE NO LIVING SAVIOR WHO HAS PRESENTED HIS FINISHED WORK TO THE FATHER**
 - b. This is how **we have** to view the Christian life; if Jesus came to this earth and died on the cross but did not come back from the dead
2. **BUT, JESUS CHRIST DID COME TO THIS EARTH AND DIE ON A CROSS AND COME BACK FROM THE DEAD AND GO TO THE FATHER TO PRESENT HIS FINISHED WORK AND INTERCEDE FOR US.**
 - a. **THAT IS A BIBLICAL FACT THAT TRUE BELIEVERS IN JESUS MUST EMBRACE**
 1. He suffered **for you**
 2. He died **for you**
 3. He was raised **for you**
 - b. these are the Biblical facts that we must “count on”
3. **HOWEVER, PLEASE DO NOT MISS THE APOSTLE PAUL’S WORDS IN: I Corinthians 15:1-2** – “Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, **which you received** and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.”
 - a. **IT IS NOT ENOUGH “JUST TO BELIEVE” THAT JESUS CAME BACK FROM THE DEAD**
 1. Paul says that this good news is to be “**received**”
 - a. the word: received
 1. greek – **paralambano**
 2. to make a companion
 3. to take in order; to carry away
 4. to seize; lay hold of
 - b. not only is this truth to be taken into your mind but also into your heart
 - c. you are to “receive” the risen Savior if you are to “receive” the benefits of His work on this earth on your behalf

- d. The medicine that our Doctors give us must be “taken;” we don’t put it on a shelf and merely “believe” that it can heal us
 - e. **THIS IS THE GOSPEL** of Jesus as seen in;
 - John 3:16** – “ For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever **believes** in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”
2. Paul says that this good news is to be a “**resolution**”
- Vs. 1** – “– “Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, **which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you.**”
- a. the word
 - 1. greek – histemi
 - 2. to make firm
 - 3. to establish a thing
 - b. the person who accepts Jesus must also take his or her “stand” on Jesus
 - c. so, that mere belief or intellectual assent is not enough to become a Christian
 - 1. we must receive and rest upon Him alone
 - 2. we must give ourselves to Him
 - d. and, trust me, if the risen Jesus Christ comes into your life, **HE WILL CHANGE** you.
 - 1. so, if you have not been changed
 - 2. as the Apostle Paul says: your faith has been in vain
- b. **UNLESS YOU BELIEVE “THIS WAY,” YOU HAVE DONE NOTHING AT ALL**
- I Corinthians 15:1-2** – “Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, **which you received** and on which you have **taken your stand**. By this gospel you are saved, **if** you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. **Otherwise, you have believed in vain.**”
- 1. greek - eike
 - a. it wasn’t successful
 - b. it didn’t work
 - c. nothing really happened
 - 2. **HOW IN THE WORLD CAN THE RISEN JESUS CHRIST COME INTO ONE’S LIFE AND NOT CHANGE THAT PERSON?**
 - a. how else can you explain the **disciples of Jesus?**
 - 1. the men who “became invisible” with fear when their Master was arrested
 - 2. and yet, after Jesus’ resurrection, they all gave their very lives for Him
 - b. how else could you explain the **Apostle Paul**, who, before He met the risen Christ, killed Christians?
 - c. How else can you explain **me**; or those of us who live our daily lives in the presences of the risen Christ?

2. UNLESS THE FAITH IN THE RESURRECTED JESUS CHANGES YOU, YOU DO NOT HAVE REAL BIBLICAL FAITH

Vs. 1-2 – “Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.”