



SPECIAL LESSON EASTER SUNDAY
“The Significance of the Resurrection”
March 31, 2024
Instructor: Steve Schmutzer

Introduction:

- A. Today is a special day.
1. For millions of true Christians around the globe, today is that day we remember in gratitude for the resurrection of Jesus Christ
 2. For our nation’s depraved leadership, it’s a much different occasion. President Biden just issued “an official” White House Proclamation declaring today, March 31, as “Transgender Day of Visibility.”
 3. There may be more churches applauding this announcement than you may know. I’ve noticed around our region several prominent churches advertising their Easter services in the strategically designed colors and schemes of the rainbow flag.
 4. I guess that I watch for these kinds of things, and I’ve seen an uptick in the number of local churches that have also promoted their Easter services with tag lines of being “inclusive” or “affirming.”
 5. They feel mainstream when they advance woke phrases and terms which suggest anyone can “come as they are and leave as they were.”
 6. But again, this day is all about remembering the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Today, I want to look at the significance of this event and what it means for you and me.

NOTE: My outline today is basic. I want to look at some of the past, present, and future implications of Jesus Christ’s resurrection. We’ll wrap up today’s lesson with an all-important challenge.

I. The significance of Jesus Christ’s resurrection from a PAST perspective:

- A. We cannot consider the significance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ without considering why He was born, and why He came into this fallen world in the first place. That truth is: Jesus came to die.
1. He came to die in payment for the sins of YOU AND I. He came to pay a price we could not afford to pay.
 2. Today, both INSIDE the church and OUTSIDE the church, this purpose of Jesus Christ, more specifically, the celebration of Easter, has been reduced to a series of retail objectives, lowest common denominators, and now very depraved government proclamations.
 3. This purpose of Jesus Christ, that He came to die, but also that He rose again is something many people do not believe.
 - a. They believe that Jesus Christ lived and died, but they don’t believe He rose back to life on the third day.

- b. They believe that Jesus Christ was a good man, but they don't believe he was a perfect man.
 - c. They believe that Jesus Christ was a great prophet and teacher, but they don't believe He was God incarnate.
 - d. They don't believe He is the Creator of the Universe, the ONLY way to heaven, nor that He is coming back to earth in judgment as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

- B. However, this was His purpose the first time He came He came to die, and that truth goes against all the constructs and philosophies of life as we abide by those things today.
 - 1. The world tells us to experience life, to acquire, to achieve, to be successful, and to make the most of our time on earth.
 - 2. Everything we take into our senses in the 'here and now' reminds us to conclude our lives having gained as many toys as we can.
 - 3. However, Jesus Christ came to die. That was HIS purpose. He came to pay a price you and I could not pay, and that meant He would die FOR us. He came to die!
 - 4. He knew it was the only way you and I could gain salvation. Jesus Himself said this.
 - 5. In talking with His disciples a few days before His crucifixion, Jesus stated His purpose, and he framed it in the full expression and trepidations of His human nature: **(Cf. John 12:27)** - *"Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour."*

- C. This purpose of Jesus Christ, this reason He came into this sinful world the first time, this was something His disciples could not grasp. They didn't understand what He was trying to tell them.

NOTE: Jesus told them several times that He would suffer. He told them He would be put to death AND He also told them that He would be resurrected.

NOTE: His disciples not only did NOT understand, but they told Jesus that this was inappropriate for Him to talk this way.

NOTE: While Jesus' disciples were with Him all the time, when we dig a little deeper, we see behavior patterns in them that are not unlike behaviors we display ourselves.

 - 1. Let's take a brief running start to see this **(Cf. Matthew 16:13-17)**. A couple points to highlight:
 - a. Here, Peter had his own personal "awesome moment." Spiritually speaking, he stood tall, and he proclaimed the truth about Jesus Christ.
 - b. In context, he saw and believed what many others did not see and did not believe.
 - c. But it didn't take long from this high point for Peter to then 'crash and burn.'
 - 2. **(Cf. A few verses later: Matthew 16:21-23)**

- a. So, Peter goes from a high point to a low point. He goes from being praised by Jesus Christ to being rebuked by Jesus Christ.
 - b. Peter is not unlike you and. We waffle wildly. We go from having our good days to our bad days (spiritually speaking). We are strong in our faith one moment, and then we are weak.
 - c. The fuller text makes clear that Peter did not fully understand what Jesus' purpose was: Jesus came to die for our sins, to offer us eternal life. Vital to that gift of salvation was His own resurrection.
 - d. The disciples were looking for Jesus to set up His kingdom – to fulfill the promises given to Israel in the Old Testament, and they were looking for Jesus to rule and reign. What was this talk about Jesus dying? Even more obscure to them was Jesus' reference to His resurrection.
3. This was just the first of three occasions that **Matthew** records Jesus telling His disciples about His death AND His resurrection (**Cf. Matthew 17:22-23**)
 - a. Here, His disciples seem to be grasping the purpose of Jesus a little bit more....perhaps.... maybe(?)
 - b. The result is they grieve over Jesus' words. It's not what they wanted to hear.
 - c. They had their own ideas for Jesus, and for themselves. And still, they could not fully comprehend the death AND resurrection that Jesus was talking about.
 4. The third time was in **Matthew 20:17-19**;
 - a. Repetition is an important part of the learning process, and if you are learning directly from Jesus Christ Himself, it would seem that, by now, the disciples would be reassured.
 - b. It would seem they would have had a quiet comfort in what Jesus was promising: that He would die, but He would also be resurrected.
 5. But the Gospels make it very clear that His disciples did NOT expect the tomb to be empty on the third day.
 6. Also, it wasn't just His immediate disciples that did not expect this. The two Mary's that came that Sunday morning to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body didn't expect the tomb to be empty either.
 7. Nobody around Jesus had grasped the truth that Jesus would be resurrected. He had told them this would take place, but they were unable to believe it.
- D. It was not until AFTER Jesus rose, and AFTER the message of His resurrection was delivered by an angel to the two Mary's, that the big picture started to gain some focus to those who were closest to Jesus (**Cf. Matt. 28:5-8**;)
 1. Even though Jesus had told His followers and His disciples three times that this would happen, they struggled to believe it.
 2. Even after the two Mary's told the disciples what had happened, even after some of them went to the tomb to see for themselves, there were still some like Thomas who had to have his own version of personal proof (**Cf. John 20:26-29**;)

3. The Scriptures go on to record multiple historical proofs of Jesus' resurrection (***Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:3-8***).
4. Here is the bottom line: There are two solemn and profound facts that we all will be held accountable to believe: (1.) Jesus died for our sins, and (2.) He rose again on the third day.

NOTE: This establishes some PAST foundation. What about the PRESENT implications of Jesus Christ's resurrection? What significance does His resurrection hold for you and I today?

II. Let's now consider the significance of Jesus Christ's resurrection from a PRESENT perspective:

NOTE: It is very important for several key reasons. (I'll give you four reasons, but there are others):

A. First, the resurrection of Jesus Christ proves that He was God.

1. Jesus stated this proof very clearly to the religious leaders of that time (***Cf. Matthew 16:1-4***)
 - a. Like many people today, the religious leaders of that time wanted evidence. They could not take Jesus at His word; they wanted a sign.
 - b. Jesus chided them strongly for this tendency, and He went on to say they would see "*the sign of Jonah.*"
 - c. The book of Jonah records that Jonah was in the belly of a great fish for "*three days and three nights,*" after which Jonah was vomited up on the beach.
 - d. In the same way, Jesus would be dead, in the 'belly of the earth' for three days and three nights, after which He would be resurrected.
 - e. So, His resurrection was what Jesus gave to the Pharisees and the Sadducees as a sign. It was proof that Jesus Christ was God.
2. You cannot disconnect these two elements without creating a personal and profound dilemma for yourself.
3. If you believe in the resurrection, then you believe Jesus Christ is who He said He is: He is God. If you do not believe in the resurrection, then you cannot believe that Jesus Christ was God.
4. Jesus Christ demonstrated that He has the power to raise the dead, and He demonstrated his own power over death by returning to life.
5. If Jesus does NOT have this power, then He is not worthy of our faith, our trust, and our worship. Only He who created life itself can also resurrect life after death.
6. In Jesus Christ's resurrection from the grave, we are reminded of His absolute sovereignty over life and death.
7. In the opening part of ***Revelation***, this point is made very clear (***Cf. Revelation 1:18***). Jesus states there, "*I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever!*"

- B. Here is a second reason the resurrection of Jesus Christ is significant from a PRESENT perspective: It proves He was sinless, absolutely perfect and holy.

NOTE: There is a lot of effort spent out there in the media, entertainment, and even within some liberal denominations to make the case that Jesus was not sinless.

1. The Scriptures prophetically tell us God's "Holy One" would never see corruption (**Cf. Psalm 16:10**). This means the processes of irreversible decay.
2. Here, the state of being "perfectly holy" is tied to the condition that Jesus would not see decay.
3. Jesus' body, being in the grave for the short time it was, never saw this degree of corruption.
4. This was a key point Peter made when he preached the first sermon at the start of the church age in **Acts 2:29-31**, he said:

"Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay."

5. Paul made this very same point when he was preaching to the Galatians (**Acts 13:32-37**).
6. It was prophetically stated that Jesus, being perfect, sinless, and holy, would die, but not see the decay of death. Instead, He would be resurrected before that point.

- C. A third reason the resurrection of Jesus is significant from a PRESENT perspective is it validates prophecy. (We've learned a great deal about prophecy in this class, and we know it's importance in validating the divine nature of God's Word and of Jesus Christ).

1. The resurrection of Jesus Christ proves out the Old Testament prophecies that foretold of Jesus' suffering and resurrection.
2. Jesus Christ's resurrection also authenticated His own claims that He would be raised on the third day. (**Cf. prior passages in Matthew; also Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34**).

- D. A fourth reason, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is important right here and right now: If Jesus Christ is not resurrected, then we have no true Savior, no true salvation, and no true hope of eternal life.

NOTE: (Everything we say and do, everything we claim to believe, it's all an empty act apart from Jesus Christ's resurrection.)

1. A very blunt statement in the Scriptures about this comes from Paul in **1 Corinthians 15:14-19**
2. As Paul said, our faith would be "useless," "void," "worthless," "empty," and "in vain." (depending on translation)

3. In other words, the Gospel would be powerless, and our sins would remain unforgiven. We would be damned to Hell for eternity since we are born into sin according to **Romans 5:12**.
4. However, Jesus said in **John 11:25**, *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live"*
5. In that statement Jesus claims to be THE source and THE power of resurrection, the source of both life and death. It's only in Him that we can overcome the power and the penalty of death.
6. The Bible tells us in **Romans 6:23**, *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

III. **Now let's consider the significance of Jesus Christ's resurrection from a FUTURE perspective.**

NOTE: This addresses the question, "What does Jesus Christ's resurrection mean for us looking forward?"

- A. First of all, if Jesus Christ was not resurrected, then we have no hope that we will be either.
 1. There is no promise of our resurrection apart from Jesus Christ, and no eternal life.
 2. As one commentator says, "Jesus does more than *give* life; He *is* life, and that's why death has no power over Him or over those who place their trust in Him."
 3. For those who trust completely in Him for their salvation, Jesus promises that we will share in His victory over death (**Cf. 1 John 5:11–12**):

"And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life."

4. In this class, we have studied The Rapture extensively. (NOTE: All those audio and lesson notes are available online).
 5. The Rapture is that blessed and imminent event, when all those who are a part of the true church will be supernaturally changed into immortal beings, and we will be lifted up from this earth to be with Jesus Christ in heaven.
 6. The Bible tells us that those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ completely, but have died, will personally experience resurrection at the time of the Rapture because, having the life Jesus gives, they have overcome death.
 7. The Bible says It is impossible for death to win over those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ (**Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:53–57**).
- B. Second, the Bible says that Jesus is *"the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep"* (**Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:20**). In other words, Jesus leads the way for us in life after death by personal example.
 1. There are many other religions, but only Christianity has the One True God who was resurrected. Every other religion was founded by men or prophets whose end was the grave. There was no resurrection for them.

2. We know we will be resurrected as Jesus Christ promised. He fulfilled the promise and the prediction of His own resurrection, and we can rest in the full confidence that we will be raised too as well, IF we have placed our full trust and faith IN HIM.

IV. **SO LET ME WRAP UP WITH THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION IN YOUR LIFE.** I'm asking you, "Have you placed your full faith and trust in Jesus Christ for your salvation?" Here is why I ask you this:

A. FIRST, YOU CANNOT SAVE YOURSELF FROM YOUR SINFUL CONDITION

1. As I've already shared, we are all born into sin.
 - a. If you live on this earth, you cannot escape this reality, or the consequences, of this situation:
 - b. **Romans 5:12** tells us, "*Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people.*"
 - c. In **Psalms 51:5**, David writes, "*Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*"
 - d. The plain fact is we are born sinners, and as a result, there is nothing we can do to please a holy and perfect God.
 - e. There is nothing we can do to earn our salvation. **Romans 3:23** tells us, "*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" There are no exceptions to this condition. We are all guilty as charged.

B. SECOND, BECAUSE OF THIS, WE DESERVE PUNISHMENT AND DEATH BECAUSE OF OUR SINFUL NATURE

- a. In its most basic terms, sin is rebellion against God. Sin separates us from God, from the very Creator of life.
- b. **Romans 6:23** says, "*For the wages of sin is death...*" That means, there is a price to pay for sin. It is death.
- c. Not just physical death which the Bible teaches came into this world through sin but spiritual death: eternal separation from God and eternal punishment.
- d. It is an impossible conundrum that we face.
 - We are born into sin.
 - We choose, because of our human nature, to continue to sin.
 - Our sin is in active rebellion against God.
 - There is nothing we can do to please God in our sinful condition. There is no act of goodness or habit.
 - We cannot earn our salvation because we are separated from God.
 - The price to pay for this sin is death, both physical and eternal spiritual death.
 - It seems hopeless, doesn't it? This is where the good news of the Gospel comes into play, because...

C. JESUS PAID THE PRICE FOR OUR SIN

1. He loved us enough to die for us. On behalf of our wretched and sinful condition, Jesus paid the ultimate price:
2. **Romans 5:8** says, *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*
3. We didn't have to go halfway across the bridge as part of this deal. God came all the way across the bridge to US!
4. He did this because, in our sinful condition, we could do nothing to help ourselves.
5. That's why Jesus Christ came to earth--fully man and fully God--and chose to die a horrible death on the cross.
6. He became the perfect sacrifice, and by doing so He paid the price--the penalty due--for our sins. He did this IN OUR STEAD.
7. Jesus Christ did this for you and me because He loves us!
8. **John 3:16** says, *"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."*
9. This is an amazing GIFT! All we have to do is believe this and receive it. This whole situation is not that God condemns us, but rather that He gives us a way to escape our dilemma.
10. **Ephesians 2:8** puts it beautifully: *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God..."*
 - a. Grace is getting what we don't deserve. It's unmerited favor.
 - b. Faith is believing that Jesus DID INDEED pay the price for our sins and that His ultimate sacrifice on the cross, His death **and His resurrection**, SAVES us!
 - c. The "gift" part means we didn't, and we cannot, do anything to deserve it. It's Jesus' gift to us.
 - d. It's something given to us that is above and beyond anything we deserve or have a right to expect.

D. SO, FOURTHLY, WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE OUR URGENT DILEMMA AND REPENT OF OUR SINS

1. **1 John 1:9** tells us, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*
2. To confess our sins, we must acknowledge our sinful condition and confess it to God.
3. This is no time to hide the facts. You are doomed for eternity without the gift of salvation that is offered to you.
4. **Romans 10:9** tells us quite clearly that besides confessing our sins, we must believe fully in the person and work of Jesus Christ. That verse says, *"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."*
5. There is that important, that significant, part of Jesus Christ's resurrection. It is a truth we must believe in.
6. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is our guarantee that we too can have eternal life.