2025 Resurrection Sunday Sermon Manuscript

Luke 24

Resurrection Sunday:

“Triumph Over Death”

 You know I was struggling with what exactly about the resurrection I would want to preach to you for today. I thought about different aspects, but really, I thought it was important to remind ourselves of the utterly astounding truth that Christ overcame death. We don’t hear too many sermons on death, but I think because we don’t focus on it enough and focus on the reality that Christ triumphed over sin and death, it doesn’t become a settled conviction in our hearts that we have nothing to fear in death, but rather that death is actually the gateway to eternal bliss! If we were all honest with ourselves, we know that that there is an elephant in the room that everyone is ignoring. We know that the number one most terrifying reality that we don’t like to think about that is coming to all of us is that we are all going to die. I admit I am unsettled by the thought that I am going to die one day too. I don’t necessarily like to think about it because I am still 29 years old! I still have a good half a century to enjoy my life! There’s a certain part of my sinful flesh that is screaming to me “No! Talk about anything other death!..” because it is convicting and uncomfortable to think about.

 But you know? Christ is risen today so that you and I wouldn’t be fearful of death like the rest of the world is. Hebrews 2:14-15, speaking of the work of Christ on the cross says that “*Christ Himself likewise also partook of the same (which is death), that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.*” Isn’t that an amazing and comforting statement? And while we all acknowledge those truths and say an “amen” to that, the reality of our situation and how we feel about death often does not line up how we should feel as Christians about what’s true of Christ’s resurrection.

 And so my goal today in preaching to you the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is that God would use what comes out of my mouth today to make the truth that Christ triumphed over death not just a fact and a truth we acknowledge in our heads, but that He would make it a settled conviction in our hearts. And when you have a conviction of the truth, it enables you to live courageously for Christ in a world that threatens you with suffering and death. It is famously said that courage is not the absence of fear, it is the ability or the determination to overcome fear. You can replace “ability” or “determination” with “conviction.” Courage is not the absence of fear…we all struggle with the fear of death throughout our lives because we are fighting a fight not against flesh and blood, but against evil spiritual forces in this world and we carry this sinful flesh within us. But courage is having that biblical conviction that will help you overcome the fear of death. Because when push comes to shove, it is ultimately your convictions in life that motivate and drive you to do what you do on the daily.

If I could get even your hearts to be pushed 10% more or even 1% more in the direction of this settled conviction that Christ triumphed over your death, then it would be all my joy and it would magnify the glory of God!

 So let’s look at our Christ risen from the grave! Before we look at the resurrection in Luke 24, I want us to not skip a section that is easily overlooked, which is Jesus’ burial. We left off last Sunday at verse 49 of Luke 23. I don’t want to spend too much time here, because our focus is on the resurrection, but we need to know that there are three significant aspects to why Jesus needed to be buried before He arose. So look with me, starting at verse 50 (read VV. 50-56). The first significance is that Jesus being buried proved that He was truly the Messiah prophesied in Isaiah 53. Isaiah 53:9 says specifically about Jesus’ burial “*So His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.*” Jesus was crucified with wicked men, the two criminals on the cross. And He would have been buried with them, yet Luke tells us that a good and righteous Jew, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a Council member asked personally to bury Jesus in His own private tomb. Joseph was the “rich man” prophesied about in Isaiah. We knew Joseph was rich because well…because Isaiah said so!...and being a member of the Council, which was most likely reference to being a member of the Sanhedrin, he was probably wealthy and had power, being able to ask Pilate himself for the body of Jesus. So it was to fulfill Scripture.

 The second significance of Jesus’ burial was the fact that it proved the certainty of Jesus’ death. Martin Llyod-Jones, prior to being a famous preacher of God’s Word was a medical doctor, which is why he was nicknamed the “good doctor,” commented about Jesus’ burial. This is what he said, he said quote “*His burial is absolute proof of the fact that He died, in the fullest sense of the term, on the Cross. It was NOT merely a suspension of life or of animation or of breathing; it WAS a true death*.” Right? You don’t bury someone until you are absolutely sure he is dead. And the fact that Jesus stayed dead three whole days dead and buried showed that He truly died and bore the punishment for our sin. And finally, the third and most significant aspect of Jesus’ burial is that it provides the proof that Jesus really indeed rose from the dead. It shows that Jesus’ body wasn’t just stolen away by His disciples. No he was actually put in the tomb and it took at least two Roman guards to seal it shut. A stone door to a tomb could weigh anywhere from 2000 to 4000 pounds.

 The way in which the entrance of the tombs were designed made it so that it was easier to shut the tomb than open it. It would have been physically impossible for any man by himself to roll open the entrance of the tomb from within. The tomb was in a known location, guarded by soldiers and sealed with a massive boulder. Yet, God caused a great earthquake to occur through an angel he sent to roll away the stone. Matthew 28 describes the angel’s appearance was like “*lightning and his clothing as white as snow.”* And Matthew says in Matt. 28:4 “and the guards quaked from fear of him and became like dead men.” The gospel of John supplies us with even more detail about the linen wrappings that Jesus was buried in. John writes of himself that he peered into the tomb and saw Jesus’ linen wrappings but no body. John (which also Luke records) writes also that Peter came in and noticed in John 20:7 that Jesus’ face-cloth which had been on his dead was not lying next to the linen wrappings but was in a different area folded up in a place by itself. Hmm…I wonder if the face-cloth folded itself up in a neat way. No, it was empty because Jesus rose from the dead and the empty tomb is evidence of that.

 And so we return back to Luke now beginning in chapter 24, starting in verse 1. The Jewish women who followed Jesus return to anoint Jesus’ body with powerful spices and perfumes as was the custom of the Jews to mask the smell of decay and to show honor and respect to the deceased. But they come back to the tomb three days later only to find the massive stone rolled away already and the body of Jesus missing! Verse 4 says they were “perplexed,” they were just at a loss of words of what to say…their minds were not computing what was going on. And then two men in dazzling clothing, which were angels stood near them and the women were terrified, as is typical when an angel appears before a human. And the men says to the women, “*Why do you seek the living One among the dead*? (read on verse 6-7)…” In other words, didn’t your Lord tell you beforehand numerous times that this is exactly what would happen? Verse 8 and the women remember Jesus’ words! And so verse 9 “*and when they return from the tomb, they reported all these tings to the eleven and to all the rest*.” Verse 10 “*Now Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the rest of the women with them were there; they were telling these things to the apostles. But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they were not believing them. But Peter stood up and ran to the tomb; and stooping to look in, he saw the linen wrappings only. And he went away by himself, marveling at what had happened*.” The apostles were like “You are out of your mind!” The apostles did not believe in the women for two reasons; 1) during that culture a woman’s testimony was not considered legitimate like a man’s was. They didn’t trust what women said. More importantly the second reason is that the apostles had a firm conviction that people stay dead and people who have died don’t rise again from the dead. That’s a fairytale, that’s fiction.

 Verses 13-24. “*And behold, two of them were going that same day to a village named Emmaus, which was sixty stadia from Jerusalem. And they were conversing with each other about all these things which had happened. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus Himself approached and was going with them. But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. And He said to them, “What are these words that you are discussing with one another as you are walking?” And they stood still, looking sad. And one of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, “Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?” And He said to them, “What things?” And they said to Him, “The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a mighty prophet in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. But also some women among us astounded us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, and not finding His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also said, but Him they did not see*.”

 What’s crazy here when you read this account is “how in the world did these two disciples not recognize Jesus walking with them? Well if you think about it, what was the last image and memory they would have had of Jesus? It would have been a bloodied, beaten beyond recognition, disfigured, crucified man. So that’s one explanation for why they didn’t immediately recognize Him. But also Luke tells us in verse 16 that “*their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him*!” These apostles or disciples are still skeptical about what the woman claimed. Sure, there were some of them who went to the tomb and found it empty, but they probably found some rational explanation for why the body was missing. Maybe they believed it wasn’t Jesus’ body or whatever. And then Jesus responds to them in verse 25 “*And He said to them, “O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He interpreted to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures*.” Was it not necessary? Was, it, not, necessary? And Christ shows through all the Old Testament Scriptures to these two disciples, these Israelites, all the passages that spoke of Himself. He probably told them, you know Isaiah 53, you know Psalm 16, Psalm 22, you know all these spoke about me, and here’s why…remember verse so and so? Amazing and I love that! Jesus is the master expositor, I mean if Jesus was in seminary He would have gotten a perfect score and grade for every test, assignment and essay about the Bible! But despite explaining all these things about Himself in the Scriptures, the disciples still didn’t recognize Him as their Lord.

And so verses 28—31 “*And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. But they urged Him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is now nearly over.” So He went in to stay with them.**And it happened that when He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and after breaking it, He was giving it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him. And He vanished from their sight*.”

 It was not until Jesus broke bread with them that they finally recognized “This is Jesus!” They remembered what He said to them that He promised He would not drink of the fruit of this vine until He drinks it anew in the kingdom of God. And here is breaking and eating bread and presumably drinking the wine that goes with it. Verse 32 “*And they said to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was opening the Scriptures to us?” And they stood up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those with them, who were saying, “The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon.” And they were relating their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread*.” Within that very hour they were so moved by seeing Jesus risen again that they decided to walk the 7 miles back to Jerusalem in which they just walked to Emmaus to tell the other apostles and disciples the news! And so they make it back in time to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples the news and just as they were telling them these things, Christ appears again this time in front of all of them! Verse 36 *Now while they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and \*said to them, “Peace to you.” But being startled and frightened, they were thinking that they were seeing a spirit.* This was not just a simple Jewish greeting of well-being, “Shalom”!

 No, the gospel of John records that Jesus actually repeated “Peace be with you” to these disciples three times! Jesus walked through the shut doors and said “*peace be with you*.” And Jesus repeated shortly afterwards again to them “*peace by with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you*.” And then after 8 whole days, again the doors are shut and Jesus in His resurrected body walks through the doors and says to the disciples “*peace be with you*.” Of course the first time Jesus appears, it terrifies them because they thought they saw a ghost, because people don’t just walk through wooden doors immaterially. But Jesus corrects their notion and says, look at me, go ahead, touch me and see for yourself that I am not just a spirit! But the disciples were just so caught up in their emotions of joy and fright that they were not yet believing. And so Jesus eats a piece of broiled fish to show that He is not a spirit, because spirits don’t need to eat physical food! Jesus then says to them, in verse 44 “*These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled*.” Still, nothing from the disciples, they’re just giving him blank stares as if Jesus was explaining rocket science to them. So verse 45 “*He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures*,” and verse 46 and He said to them “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day….and the disciples finally are like “Ohhh….that’s what you meant.” Even though Christ was just repeating what He told them numerous times during His ministry. But it didn’t click with them because Jesus did not open their minds to understand the Scriptures. You can give all the proof of the resurrection, you can explain perfectly what Christ had to do this or that in Scripture, but if their minds are not opened by God to understand it and see the glory of it, they will never see it.

 Now that the disciples finally understand the cross and why Jesus had to die, Jesus says to them in verse 47 “*you need to be proclaim repentance for the forgiveness of sins in my Name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem! You are witnesses of these things and behold, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you, but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high*.” Verse 50 “*And He led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up His hands, He blessed them. And it happened that while He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God.*” Christ rose from the grave and then He gloriously ascended into heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father, signifying that the work for atoning for our sins was finished. The only one who has the power and authority to forgive sins is one who can die for sinners and defeat sin and death by rising from the grave. There is only one person who has and will be the only person who can do that. He is Jesus Christ. Jesus says this about Himself in Revelation 1:18 “*the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forever and ever, and I have the keys of death and of Hades*.”

 Jesus controls death…Jesus has triumphed over sin and death…and all those who repent of their sins, who turn away from their sins and turns to Jesus Christ for eternal life will have their sins forgiven. If you have done that, your greatest enemy, death has been defeated. Romans 8 says “*There is therefore now nothing in all of creation that can separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*.” Jesus said to Martha concerning her brother Lazarus who died in John 11:25 “*I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die – ever*!” Ou Mei Apothanei! It is a grammatical phrase that is the strongest way to negate something in the Greek language. It has the idea that it absolutely cannot be even a possibility in the future. If you believe in Jesus, not only are you saved from dying spiritually forever, there is absolutely no chance, no possibility that you might die spiritually in the future! ….

 And my dear friends, that promise from Jesus is either true or it’s a lie from the devil. It is a test of faith, do you trust and hang onto Jesus’ every word or do you doubt His trustworthiness? Well Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead in John 11, and John 11:45 says “*therefore many of the jews who came to Mary, and saw what He had done, believed in Him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them the things which Jesus had done*.” Some responded rightly to Jesus and believed in Him and they crossed over from death to life. But sadly there were others who doubted and remained skeptical of Jesus and as a result they remained in their sins and in their death. Martha responded rightly to Jesus he asked her in verse 26 “do you believe this?” Do you trust MEE???!!” And she said “*Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, the One who comes into the world*.” And Jesus is asking all of you who are in here, and watching online and who will watch online in the future, “Do you believe this? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life? Do you believe He has conquered sin and death, your greatest enemy?! Do you believe that the tomb is empty and that He has risen to be seated at the right hand of the Father where He is sovereignly in control of your life and will not allow your soul to go to Hades? Do you believe that when you die, He loves you enough to never allow sin, the devil, corruption or death to touch you because He is holding you eternally in the palm of His hands? Colossians 2:14-15 says that Christ “*canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us which was hostile to us…and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them in Him*.” You can triumph over death too if you repent for the forgiveness of your sins. And once you do that, you can now proclaim to others to also repent of their sins for the forgiveness of sins. Let’s pray

Scripture Reading: 1 Peter 1 = Les

Benediction: 1 Corinthians 15:54-58