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**The Power of the Resurrection**

**John 19:38 - 20:25**

**Amen Happy Resurrection DAY!**

**I have some good news today, the Tomb is EMPTY! Jesus Christ has risen – say that with me.**

**Jesus Christ has risen! INDEED HE HAS.**

**As we celebrate Easter, this morning, I want you to see that God is faithful. The truth is He is more powerful than we could ever see or experience. He is the one who gives us the true meaning and purpose in life. He is the one we come to celebrate this morning. HE is the who gives us victory over sin, sickness and death as Lamb of God sacrifice reconciles us back to HIM. Easter is all about the power of GOD RESCUING His creation.**

**Let us pray.**

**The most powerful thing about Easter is that through Christ’s resurrection, is the promise of God that grounds us in our faith. The new life that is given through and because of Jesus Christ’s resurrection.**

**If you have your Bible and I hope that you do, open your Bible with me to the book of John Chapter 19, John chapter 19. As many of you know John is the fourth book in the New Testament after Matthew – Mark, and Luke then you will find John. The Book of John chapter 19.**

**Last week we discussed the resurrection of Lazarus as a precursor or a foreshadow of the resurrection of Jesus.**

**Jesus taught Mary, Martha, the Jews and His disciples that He is the resurrection and the life.**

**Friday, we saw on how the road to the cross is our road. And that it was necessary for Jesus to be sacrificed for the tomb to be emptied. A read one day that Dr. Ray Pritchard a preacher, pastor, evangelist, and author said this about Christianity, He said:**

**“There is one fundamental difference, one fact that sets Christianity forever apart from every other religious system. All you have to do is go to the tombs of the founders of the great world religions, and call the roll: Mohammed … “HERE” Buddha … “He is there!” Confucius … “Well, He would have to answer Here!” Jesus Christ. Jesus? There is no answer! Because He is not there. You see the tomb is empty! So which religion is the right? How can you be sure? All you have to do is go to the one whose founder has risen from the dead.”**

**The power of Easter is the empty tomb and out of all God’s miracles this one has the greatest power and the greatest meaning.**

**Well, if you are there in the book of John chapter 19 begin reading with me from the verse 38. This is the Word of God and It begins like this:**

**“After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. 39 And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. 40 Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. 41 Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. 42 So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews’ Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.”**

**Chapter 20**

**Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2 Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.”**

**3 Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. 4 So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. 5 And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. 9 For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. 10 Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.**

**11 But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13 Then they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?”**

**She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.” 14 Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”**

**She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, “Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”**

**16 Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to Him, “Rabboni!” (which is to say, Teacher).**

**17 Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’ ”**

**18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.**

**19 Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.” 20 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.**

**21 So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” 22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”**

**24 Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”**

**Imagine for a moment of how seeing the death of Jesus impacted the disciples. We know that it brought fear as some hid in the upper room. It brought doubt as some scattered wondering what now. Their emotions were so distressed it changed everything for them until that faithful servant came with the greatest news of all, that DEATH DID NOT DEFEAT THE SON OF GOD, RATHER HE DEFEATED DEATH AND IS ALIVE!**

**Which brings us to the take home truth this Easter:**

**The take-home truth is:**

**THROUGH THE POWER OF CHRIST’S RESURRECTION, WE CAN HAVE VICTORY OVER DEATH.**

**Folks, I have to tell you that without the resurrection of Jesus Christ there is no faith, there is no Christianity in the world. There would not be a mission to make disciples of every nation, everything that our faith believes in is hinged on the resurrection of Jesus.**

**Billy Graham once said: “If I were the enemy of Christianity, I would aim right at the resurrection because that is the heart of Christianity.”**

**The death and resurrection is what Easter is all about. It is about God’s great power over death and the resurrection that awaits all those who choose Christ.**

**If you have Jesus as the rule and reign over your life, then there is the power of the resurrection in your life.**

**The Bible says that if you believe that there is a new you. Your life has been resurrected and that the old you is dead and gone, And the new you is alive in Christ.**

**Death and resurrection however doesn’t happen just over your old life. It’s not just the power of resurrection over your spiritual life, but God can resurrect things that are broken and dead in our lives- Broken finances, broken marriages, broken relationships, hurts, past hang-ups and addictions. All things can be made new. I am an example of that. I lived life of sin and death; I did everything wrong. From the age of 11, it all began. Sin, drinking, buying, using, and selling drugs, breaking into homes, stealing cars, pornography, prostitution, destruction followed me around like a bad habit.**

**But what you see today is a by-product of Christ's resurrecting my life. When I finally met my wife, we were both up to our eyebrows in sin, failed marriages, I was an alcoholic, I can’t even list all the things I did wrong, we did everything wrong. But God used our old hurts, hang-ups addictions so that we could begin to live for Him.**

**Many of you today need to remember that leaving behind that old life came at a cost! We had to lose the old life and agree to have our lives resurrected through His blood. Easter has a far greater personal and emotional attachment it is not only we celebrate that Jesus is alive, but we were baptized on an Easter morning and that was the turning point as I began to experience the victory of the resurrection in my life. I know that if I can experience that victory in my life, He will certainly will bring victory to yours. And because of that I am compelled to share with you three ways of how through the power of the death and resurrection of Jesus, you too can have victory.**

**But the truth is, there is no victory without sacrifice. The message of Jesus was of the cost of following Him was everything. Take the rich young ruler for example in Luke 18; He said that He followed all the commandments and the law Jesus said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”**

**But I want you to know that our victory comes from a far greater sacrifice, the death and resurrection of the Son of God.**

**Here is the first way that the power of the resurrection brings us victory is:**

**IT BRINGS YOU OUT IN THE OPEN.**

**What do I mean about that?**

**Well, a lot of times, especially these days people hide their faith. Some even though they are living in sin, secretly want to be saved from it. While others are afraid to show that they are different than the world.**

**We have two examples of that very thing right here in our scripture today. Look back at the 38th verse of chapter 19 with me. After Jesus had died on the cross two men came forward to bury Jesus in the tomb.**

**The first was Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was the highest Jewish tribunal. Joseph was a believer of Jesus secretly because he feared what the Jews or the Sanhedrin might do to him.**

**The other is a man named Nicodemus, a pharisee who came to Jesus at night so that no one would know that he was meeting Him. He asked Jesus how can one be born again? Nicodemus was a rich Pharisee who did not want people to know that he was following Jesus because of fear of losing his prestige, power, and position while the Lord was alive. If he was found following Jesus, he could have lost everything as well, the prestige that goes with the job, the respect of the religious leader. If found out both could lose their positions in society. They had everything to lose if they were found out.**

**These two guys kept their allegiance to the world as they secretly followed Jesus.**

**In today’s terms, you could call people like this closet Christians. I have to tell you that I have been there when I was a first saved.**

**Have you ever felt like that before? I lived that life in secrete. I kept it bottled up. Often, I felt like I was living with one foot in heaven and one foot in hell. I did not tell anyone of the relationship I had with Jesus unless I was with the church people. I had to straighten up my act around the pastor. I had to watch what I said and how I said it, but when I was around my friends it was a different story. I acted nothing like a follower of Jesus. It was a big secrete, I was afraid of what people thought of me, my status would change from this mean, hard sergeant to this soft marshmallow kind of guy.**

**You see just like Joseph and Nicodemus; I kept my allegiance to the world as I secretly followed Jesus. I was a closet believer. I can remember the day I just tired of it and I truly trusted in the death and resurrection of Jesus and I began telling people about Jesus and who I was. Those words that Jesus said in Luke 9:26 worked on me, He said “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of you when He comes in His glory and that of the Father and holy angels” That got to me quick. I read something that CS Lewis wrote: “The almost impossible thing is to hand over your whole self--all your wishes and precautions--to Christ. But it is far easier than what we are all trying to do instead. For what we are trying to do is to remain what we call "ourselves, to keep personal happiness as our great aim in life, and yet at the same time be "good.” Folks the death and resurrection, was God doing the impossible. It was a flare that ignited the night to say it is OKAY to believe, it was okay to come out of the closet and tell people that you are a born – again.**

**Notice that this is what it took for Joseph and Nicodemus, me and many others to stop believing in secrecy and start being a real disciple of Jesus Christ. There are people like that today who live their lives in secrete, but when and here is the key, when you accept Jesus’ rule and reign over your life it brings you out in the open and that is what we see happened here in our scripture. They were secret followers of Christ during His life- but in His death, He made them courageous, and they were out in the open as followers of Jesus. There is a time in everyone’s life that they will have to answer that question do I believe in Christ? And if you have said yes, you cannot live in secrecy because the power of the death and resurrection will give you the power to live out your faith in the open.**

**SECOND, THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION STRENGTHENS THOSE WHO SEEK JESUS.**

**The story of Mary can be rewarding for anyone who is searching for a greater relationship with Jesus. Notice Chapter 20 verse 1 with me: It had been three days and John tells us that “Mary came to the tomb while it was still dark” She was up before everyone and headed to the tomb with her spices and aloes, anticipating the task of taking care of Jesus’ dead body. When she arrives, she finds that the stone has been rolled back.**

**Let me just tell you this, the stone was not removed so that Jesus could get out, but it was removed to let the witnesses in.**

**Struck with shock and fear she runs to tell Peter and John what had happened. They rush back to see for themselves and when they had seen nobody they left. But verse 11 it says that Mary stayed, crying she looked into the tomb and saw two angels and they ask why is she crying? She replies verse 13“They have taken my Lord away and I don’t know where they have put HIM” Notice with me that Mary was there to take care of the dead body of Jesus and she still calls Jesus her LORD.**

**In the hardest times of her life, Jesus had been there for her and this day would be no exception. She calls Jesus MY LORD because she had a great devotion to Him, even though she believes He is dead. She thought it was over all His teaching, preaching and healing was done and the one she loved as her Lord is dead and gone. We find Mary is the one who is still seeking Jesus, she did not anticipate Jesus being raised from the dead. She did not understand the power of God. then Jesus reveals Himself to her.**

**Folks listen to me; Jesus wants to reveal Himself to you today. He wants you to see that the tomb is empty and that through Him, HE can bring victory over your life today.**

**Jesus asked her: “Who you are seeking?” She spent a good part of her three years with Jesus. The One who healed her and took her in, now broken and in despair of having no body in the tomb, Jesus doesn’t wait for long to tell her who He is. Jesus strengthens her with life while she was seeking the dead. DO YOU SEE IT?**

**Jesus has been right where you have needed Him to be all this time, He wants to strengthen you in times of despair.**

**You see folks no matter who you are or what you have done, every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future in Christ Jesus.**

**Mary was the woman that we know was the one with the worst past. Yet she was the first person to see the risen Jesus. She was the first one to spread the good news of a resurrected Savior.**

**After three dark days of discouragement and fear, her day of hope is here. Jesus was no longer in the tomb HE HAS BEEN RAISED.**

**When we have the power of the resurrection in our lives it strengthens us to do God’s work, it strengthens in troubled times, it strengthens us in times of distress. Even in these dark times of life, we can rest assured that He is with us to encourage and strengthen us with the hope and victory of life.**

**We have victory through the power of the death and resurrection because: It brings those who secretly follow Jesus out in the open. It strengthens those who seek HIM. And Third,**

**IT TAKES AWAY ALL DOUBT AND DISBELIEF.**

**Has someone ever doubted something you have said that was true? Maybe you have said, “I just have to see it with my own eyes”. That is what the disciple named Thomas said, now many scholars have dubbed him as doubting Thomas because he would not believe the others as they told Him that Christ was alive.**

**Look with me at verses 24- 25 read that with me: But one of the Twelve, Thomas (called “Twin”), was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples kept telling him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “If I don’t see the mark of the nails in His hands, put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will never believe!”**

**There are people today who need that first-hand Jesus experience to see Jesus as the King of all Kings as the resurrected Messiah. They are in doubt or disbelief until they see for themselves.**

**We have a lot of believers who doubt and the only thing that will make them stop doubting is seeing Jesus face to face. Is to see His signs wonder and miracles for themselves. This type of person is searching for proof that Jesus Christ is alive. The Latin word for doubt comes from the Aryan root word meaning two- you believe in one mind then you don’t believe in another- doubt comes when your waiver between the two.**

**We must never forget that the word impossible is one of God’s favorite words. He can and will do the impossible in your life. But many people who doubt, doubt that God can do the impossible. Thomas gets a bad reputation for saying he wanted to see for Himself. So, what did Jesus Do?**

**For Thomas, Jesus appeared through a locked door and told him to touch His hands and feel the hole in HIS Side. Jesus said verse 27 “Don’t be an unbeliever, but a believer.” Thomas responded to Him in verse 28, “My Lord and my God!”**

**In a church or a fellowship of believers, some doubt, some who are waiting to see for themselves the mighty works of God firsthand. Many of us have come to this part of our spiritual life or have been there at some point or another.**

**I don’t see this as a weakness, but of Growth, what I see is when people are in this phase they begin to grow and that is when Jesus comes in and says “Here I Am”.**

**There had been times that I had doubted, I felt as, if I was a good believer going to church on Sunday working in the ministries of the church, I was good, however, there was some doubt because the circumstances I was going through at the time. But I wasn’t letting the death and resurrection change me---- I wasn’t putting God first in my life.**

**Can you relate to that today?**

**But listen to these words Jesus tells Thomas in verse 29 of chapter 20 in our scripture “Because you have seen me you believe- those who believe without seeing me are blessed.”**

**What Jesus is saying for those who have not doubted and believe that God raised Him from the dead- who have yet to see Him resurrected but still believe are blessed. The Bible also tells us that we are to take God at His word; Hebrews 11:1 says “Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.”**

**God calls us into a trusting faith relationship. To trust in Christ based on His Word. Jesus took Thomas and did the impossible with him and put your fingers here- do you believe now? How do get that power of the resurrection? We get it by believing the Bible says in Romans 10:9- 10 “If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation.”**

**Folks the power of the resurrection meets us right where we are today at an empty tomb. And as such: Jesus takes those who are secretly following Him and makes them known to the world. He takes the weak and the worn and strengthens them. He takes those who doubt and helps them move to greater faith.**

**The resurrection means that Christ is who He said He was in John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” That is a pretty strong claim Jesus said I am the way, He did not say, I am one way, I am a good way, I am one of the ways, I might be the way- I am a big way.**

**But rather He said I am the way. The very moment Jesus removed the stone from the tomb, He has removed all reason for anyone to doubt.**

**Folks God wants to do the impossible with your life, Christ came for one reason to help us back to God by giving His life. He sacrificed Himself to give us a second chance and this morning He invites you to receive the victory that comes from that empty tomb.**

**Invitation.**