

Rediscovering the Resurrection 2010

It is certainly good to be here this morning. Last Friday night we were so blessed and inspired by the beautiful music, went out to eat with Dan and our musical guests, went home and went to bed expecting to get up the next morning and put the finishing touches on the Easter sermon but I didn't sleep well and woke up not feeling too well and that progressed through the morning. By afternoon I was in bed with fever and chills and some kind of virus that knocked me off my feet (and kept me in the bathroom) for about five days. There's just so much gatorade and jello a person can eat, but I'm thankful for all the prayers. Thankful to Brian who received my call about 7:30 Saturday evening and put together an Easter message. Thanks to everyone.

I didn't even really walk into my study at the house until Thursday morning so that let's you know how bad I felt for a few days. I wanted to share the message I had prepared for last Sunday and since I couldn't I wondered if I should save it for Easter. Brian actually touched on some of the parts so I thought maybe we got the message across, but I finally decided the Lord gave me this word so I'm going to share it with you this morning. So one more time we will do a little rediscovering of the resurrection.

What a glorious thought: Death is destroyed. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. There is no more glorious day, there is no higher cause for celebration than that of the resurrection. Christ who was slain on the cross for our sins has risen from the grave, he is alive and well, he has ascended to the Father, he lives to make intercession for us and soon and very soon he is coming again.

From an Easter Homily by Hesychius of Jerusalem in the early to middle 400's. He wrote, "Hidden first in a womb of flesh, he sanctified human birth by his own birth. Hidden afterward in the womb of the earth, he gave life to the dead by his resurrection. Suffering, pain and sighs have now fled away. For who has known the mind of God, or who has been his counselor, if not the Word made flesh who was nailed to the cross, who rose from the dead and who was taken up into heaven? This day brings a message of joy; it is the day of the Lord's resurrection when, with himself, he raised up the race of Adam. Born for the sake of human beings, he rose from the dead with them. On this day paradise is opened up by the risen one, Adam is restored to life and Eve is consoled. On this day the divine call is heard, the kingdom is prepared, we are saved and Christ is adored. On this day, when he had trampled death underfoot, made the tyrant a prisoner and despoiled the underworld, Christ ascended into heaven as a king in victory, as a ruler in glory, as

an invincible charioteer. He said to the Father, 'Here am I, O God, with the children you have given me.' And he heard the Father's reply, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.' To him be glory, now and forever, through endless ages, amen."

Turn to Mark 16 and let's read this account of the resurrection and then I want to talk with you about the meaning of all this. **Mark 16:1-7.**

I think most everyone would get that if we had a test over Easter this morning. **Q: What does Easter celebrate? A: The resurrection of Jesus from the dead!**

But what if I asked another question? **Q: What difference does Jesus' resurrection make?** Some of you know, some of you have an idea, some of you aren't really certain and don't know why any of us should really care. Most folks in Tulsa could tell you what Easter celebrates, but they couldn't tell you why the reality of Jesus' resurrection would be important to them.

Let me take you to the beginning and show you why the resurrection is so absolutely important to your life.

Turn with me to **Romans 5** and as you do, let me tell you a little story about the beginning. Brian took you to this same beginning last Sunday. In the beginning, God created man. Adam was his name and his name means man or mankind or humankind if you prefer. God created this perfect man and placed him in this perfect setting – in a perfect garden-like environment. The Garden of Eden. Adam wasn't happy because he was lonely so God created a companion for him and named her Eve. These two people had a perfect life in this perfect garden. No sickness, no disease, no death. It was a perfect existence and then came the introduction of a foreign element: the serpent. The devil entered in to the garden through the serpent and began to tempt Eve and then Adam to rebel and go against God's instructions to them. These two people, God's creation who had known the most intimate and undisturbed fellowship with Creator God, believe the lie of the devil and eat of the forbidden tree in the center of the garden. By doing so they rebel against God and his instruction, they sin against God and his divine order, and when they did that, they infected the whole planet with this agent of sin and because sin came into the world death came into the world as well. The bible says the wages or consequences of sin is death (Romans 3:23).

Why is that so bad? I mean, that's a shame for Adam and Eve, but what does that have to do with me. I didn't eat from a tree in the garden. I don't even like fruit.

If you have found Romans 5, look at verse 12. **"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all**

sinned...” Romans 5:12. Whoa, look at that. Death spread to all men - this sin nature, this death producing agent. (How many understand that it is sin that produced and produces death?) Death spread to all men because all sinned. (“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God...” Romans 3:23).

(I need a volunteer to be Adam). You are the culprit. God told you not to eat of that tree that was in the middle of the garden but you did it anyway, and then blamed the whole thing on your wife. And through your act of sin, through your act of disobedience to God’s instruction, you were infected and then infected the whole world with sin and its’ consequence which is death -both physical death here at the end of our now abbreviated existence and a spiritual death which includes a total and complete separation from God, the giver of life. (“The wages of sin is death”...Romans 6:23; “the soul that sins must die”...Ezekiel 18:20) Because of you Adam, all of us must die.

But listen: It’s not just because of you and your sin. Let me say it again - you infected the whole world with your sin. And because of that, we have all sinned too, like Adam. The Scripture says, “Death spread to all men because all sinned.” That’s us in that “all sinned.” You ask, “How did we sin? We weren’t even born yet? How can you say we sinned?” Because we are connected with Adam. Hebrews 7:10 refers to someone who was yet unborn as being “still in the body of his ancestor.” That’s the way all of us were in Adam. He is the representative head of all humanity. We all got infected with this sin nature because we were in him. We hadn’t been born yet, but we were going to be – we were still in the body of our ancestor but we would be born and when we were – we are all sinners. We are all sinners because we are connected to Adam by blood, by nature, by choice.

Because we are all connected to Adam, then the bible says we all share in the bad stuff that resulted from Adam’s sin. Look at what the bible says about this.

One man sinned and infected us all and now we all share in...

Adam’s sinfulness - v12, 19

Adam’s death - v15

Adam’s judgement and condemnation - v16, 18

The whole world and all of us have been contaminated by sin and death. Even our planet is dying because of our sin and the sins of humankind. There is nothing but death and hopelessness and sin on this side of things.

But there came one who was able to save us. Jesus was God in the flesh. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin so he came to this world without being infected by a sin nature. He was pure and unstained by sin in his nature and in his practice. In other words, Jesus was uncontaminated by sin in any way. (I need a volunteer to be Jesus).

He was conceived without sin, lived a perfect, holy, sinless life. He died as the perfect, spotless and eternal sacrifice, once and for all bearing the punishment for sin. Through his death upon the cross, he secured salvation for all who would come to him in repentance and in faith. Then, to show that he was truly God and to take back what Satan stole in the garden, Jesus rose from the grave, having triumphed in life and in his death over Satan, over sin, over hell and over death.

Now look at this.

Paul says through the trespass, the sin of one man, Adam, death came to many but now, through the obedience and sacrifice of one man, Jesus Christ, whom Paul calls the 2nd Adam, God's grace and forgiveness and eternal life overflows to the many and that includes us. **"For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Romans 5:15**

His grace, the gift of eternal life, has been given to us through his death and resurrection. How can that be? We weren't even alive when Jesus died upon the cross and rose again. No we weren't. But if we come to him in repentance and in faith, he allows us to be connected to him. What does the bible say? **"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come!" 2 Corinthians 5:17**

Just like we were in Adam and consequently were infected by his sin, his death, his condemnation, so we are in Christ and instead of being infected by the old sin - we are cleansed by his saving blood. Remember I said we were connected to Adam by blood, by nature and by choice. Well, we are connected to Jesus by blood - His blood that was shed for us so that we could be free from sin and guilt and shame. We are connected by nature because if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation. The bible says we have become partakers of his divine nature. And we are connected to him by choice. We exercised our free will and repented of our sins and placed our trust and utmost belief in Christ as our Savior and Lord.

One man sinned and infected us all and now we all share in...

Adam's sin - v12, 19 all of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God

Adam's death - v15 all of us will die. The whole planet is groaning, being used up, dying
Adam's judgement and condemnation - v16, 18. we all stand condemned and sentenced to die because we have all sinned and the soul that sins must die - the wages of sin is death. But...

One man obeyed and gave himself as the sinless sacrifice and now we share in...

Christ's forgiveness and grace - v15

Christ's life - v17 whereas in Adam death reigned, in Christ it's not life that reigns, it is us that reign in life with his life within us. V17 - death can't frighten us or intimidate us anymore.

Christ's justification - v16 - we are declared to be the righteousness of God

As Adam was the representative head of the human race and his sin was imputed to us because we are connected to him, so Jesus is the representative head of a new humanity - a new creation - and his righteousness is imputed to us because we are connected to him by faith.

Why have I told you all this? And how is this all tied to the resurrection and Easter? If Jesus hadn't lived, died and rose again, we would all be living on Adam's side, all enslaved by sin, condemned and waiting to die without hope. But because Jesus died for us and rose again, we can come to him in faith and we can grab hold of him and stay connected to him and be in Christ and then there will be no fear. We will be forgiven of our sins, made to reign in this life and assured of eternal life in Christ yet to come. This is the amazing grace of Jesus Christ that is offered to all of us. Undeserved, unmerited favor and it is your choice to make. How can it be?

D. Martyn Lloyd Jones said, **"Look at yourself in Adam; though you had done nothing you were declared a sinner. Look at yourself in Christ; and see that, though you have done nothing, you are declared to be righteous."** ... D. Martyn Lloyd Jones

What grace. What incredible mercy extended to us. Dr. Lloyd Jones also wrote, **"The whole story of the human race can be summed up in terms of what has happened because of Adam, and what has happened and will yet happen because of Christ."** ... D. Martyn Lloyd Jones

I think he is partially correct. It is about what Adam did and about what Christ did. But there is one more really important person involved in the history of the human race. You. It matters what Adam did, what Jesus did at Calvary and rose again - but it matters what you do about this as well. You have to make a decision, an eternal decision.

Stay connected to Adam and you stay connected to sin and death and you die without hope. Get connected to Jesus and stay connected to him and you are connected to life - to eternal life.

There are so many verses I could share with you today. Paul wrote in Romans 6, and this is from the Message paraphrase, **“What we believe is this: If we get included in Christ’s sin-conquering death, we also get included in his life-saving resurrection.”**

Did you notice that word: included? It’s a word we’ve heard about in the last few years as the so called “gospel of inclusion” has been preached. If we are all in Christ, then we have nothing to worry about, right? But that’s not what the bible says. Not “because” any man is in Christ but “if” any man is in Christ he is a new creation. You had no choice but to be born “in Adam and in Adam to face death.” But you must choose whether you will be “in” Christ.

You were connected to Adam when you were conceived. But you connect to Jesus when you surrender in faith. His salvation is full and complete, but you must choose to come to him in repentance and faith. You must choose to embrace the life of Christ and his kingdom and leave the kingdom of death behind.

The choice is up to you. Christ is risen and you can have life. But you don’t have too. That’s what Jesus’ resurrection did for you. That’s what his suffering and death upon the cross has done for you.

Does all of this matter? It does to anyone here who might die someday while they are still connected to and in Adam rather than in Christ.

What I’m telling you is Jesus is alive and well and he wants to save you and change your life forever. You need to come up here and grab hold of Jesus and never let go. Stay connected to Jesus and the life that is found only in him. In Adam there is only sin and death.

Hear the apostle Paul’s words once again, this time from 1 Corinthians. **“...if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins...But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive...” 1 Corinthians 15:17, 20-22**

Are you ready for life? For eternal life? The choice is yours... If so, you have to come to him. Leave Adam’s side and connect with Jesus and the life he offers. This is the word of the Lord to our hearts today. He longs to give you life. Isn’t it time you got away from that disease called sin and death and come to Jesus and his eternal life?