

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Resurrection of Our Lord

John 20

PowerPoint Presentation: None

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SermonAudio blurb:

- I. Introduction.
 - A. In the 20th chapter of John we the account of the resurrection Jesus Christ. It is this event that makes Christianity exist.
 - B. This is the crowning moment.
 1. All around us is the constant stench of sin and death. But for many of us it is something we become numbed to until it leaps up and assaults us personally.
 2. Death is something that is part of our lives. We think of premature dying, of accidents, of sickness and of wars. But for everyone in this room, given enough time you shall die.
 3. But our Lord went out onto a battlefield to do war against sin and death. Not His battlefield, but death's.
 - a. And as Paul writes in 1 Cor. 15, Death is swallowed up in victory.
⁵⁵ "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"
 - b. Now those words are yet future, speaking of the time when the Lord returns and all who believe in Him are raised from the dead and given immortality.
 - c. But the basis of those words are found in the defeat of death by Christ.
 - (1) He reigns in Heaven.
 - (2) God has established when He will return in triumph. And when the trumpets of heaven sounds and we are raised from the grave then we will rejoice in a way that we cannot fathom.
 - (3) Finally every atom of sin and death will be gone. Every corrupt thing that still clings to us will be done away with.
 - (4) Our minds will be pure, our eyes shall gaze upon the glory of the Lord, our ears shall hear the thunder of the angels in

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heaven and our mouths will pour out pure, continuous shouts of praise.

(5) Finally the weak will be strong, the lame will walk, the blind will see, the simple will become wise.

d. All of this is because the sting that is death is taken away. No more power to touch us, no more ability to kill.

(1) Its power is in its ability to corrupt, but the bible says that we will be incorruptible. We who were one mortal will put on immortality.

(2) Why can this be so certainly spoken of? Because of the resurrection of our Lord. The bible declares that all who are 'in Him' shall live. Our lives are hidden with Christ awaiting that day when he comes again.

4. The chapter we will look at today is simply an account of the events related to the resurrection.

a. It does not say what specifically happened, rather it focuses upon the people involved in it and how they each one came to see that Christ was the Risen One, that He has spoken truly and that they must believe in Him for salvation.

b. And why? Because He had won the victory, death was conquered.

c. Christ did not bribe death. Death was not able to sneak away and hide.

d. He went forward and faced death and openly triumphed over it.

e. How?

(1) By allowing himself to first be humiliated at the hands of His enemies.

(2) It was through the cross that our salvation and our life is secured. But much more.

C. My outlines will break down into three parts:

1. The depth of unbelief even in believers (1-10).

2. The reward in seeking the right thing (11-18).

3. The way Christ helps our unbelief (19-31).

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II. The Resurrection and Us.

A. The depth of unbelief even in believers (1-10).

1. Our story begins in the earliest of morning on the 3rd day. It is still dark. Mary has arisen to go to the tomb.
 - a. The other gospels mention that other women came too, around 4-5 women in total. The timing of all the events is hard to place but for John the focus is upon this one woman.
 - b. There is a bit of a surprise in this. We would tend to expect that the first person to see the Risen Lord would be one of the disciples, or His mother.
 - c. Why she went was to help put more spices upon His body. She did not come with the thought that he would be gone and the tomb empty.
 - d. But she loves her Lord and we see it in this diligence to serve Him even in His death. Why? Mark 16:9 “Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons.”
2. She sees the stone rolled away and assumes that the tomb has been raided.
3. Runs back to tell the disciples (2b).
 - a. John arrives first but is reluctant to enter the tomb. Why, we don't know.
 - b. Peter, true to his character, goes into the tomb. I believe this is out of the genuine love that he had for Christ.
 - (1) Remember that he was not yet reconciled to Christ. For Peter, the last time he saw Christ was just after he had denied Him the third time.
4. The empty tomb (6-7).
 - a. All the gospel accounts point out that the tomb no longer had Jesus within it.
 - b. The scene is one of orderliness. The clothes were not torn away, rather they are simply lying there. The head cloth is actually folded up and separate. It is almost like when a person would arise from sleep and make his bed.

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- c. When John enters the tomb he sees it empty it says in vs 8, “he believed.”
 - (1) Believed what?
 - (2) Some say that he believed that Christ was risen.
 - (3) Others say that it was not the fact that Christ was risen, but nonetheless John’s faith was made more full to trust more in Christ.
 - (4) However I believe that context shows that what John believed at this moment was the story of Mary. Jesus was missing, someone had taken His body away.
- 5. Note verse 10 for it is the key point in this first part of the story.
 - a. Over and over again the all the gospels we find Christ showing the disciples out of the OT the things that must be.
 - b. But this does not mean that they grasp these things, even after repeated teaching.
 - c. This is the constant issue behind all instruction and preaching. The understanding that unless the Holy Spirit opens up the mind to understand, no understanding will take place.
 - d. On one level all these people believed in Jesus. They loved him and there is no reason not to believe that they were not saved. They were His, but they did not yet see everything.
- 6. They had the best teacher and the fulness of instruction, yet they still did not see everything clearly.
 - a. How much more is that true of us.
 - b. Let us all press on seeking to understand and learn. Let us be aware of what Paul Tripp calls our blindness to our blindness.
 - c. Let us remember that the bible often warns us to not be deceived. Therefore, let us be wary of our ability to understand.
- 7. There is a depth of unbelief in us all, and we must learn to know it is there. But this passage also tells us. . . .
- B. The reward in seeking the right thing (11-18).
 - 1. Mary encounters angels as she is filled with grief.

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2. It is here Jesus comes to her. Why she did not recognize Him is not told to us, but it is not the only time.
 - a. While speaking to the men on the road to Emmaus He was not known.
 - b. In John 21.4 the disciples did not know it was Jesus when he told them to cast their fishing net to the other side of the boat.
 - c. And on a mountain in Galilee when the disciples saw Jesus they worshiped Him, but in Mat. 28:17 it says that some of them were still doubtful.
 - d. Regardless, she assumes he is the gardener, probably due to the time of the day.
3. The question defines the issue, “Whom are you seeking?”
 - a. Notice that Jesus helps her define her problem. He doesn’t even just ask, “what are you seeking” but makes it “whom.”
 - b. But what is key here is that he knows her heart. He knows that though she thinks he is still dead, that nonetheless her love for Him is causing her to still follow and seek Him and He knows that.
 - c. All believers have a level of communion and relationship with their Lord, but there are those who keep their hearts fervent for the Lord who seem to be like Mary here, enjoying a fuller and more delightful communion.
4. “Mary.”
 - a. With this one word recognition floods her mind.
 - b. As John 10:3-4 reminds us, the Good Shepherd calls His sheep and they recognize His voice and follow Him.
- C. The way Christ helps our unbelief (19-31).
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 2. Vs. 19. Notice how the Lord must appear to the men.
 - a. Doors are shut, probably locked or barred.
 - b. So Jesus miraculously appears in the midst.

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- c. But note why the doors were shut, “because of the Jews.” This is unbelief. Vs. 18 shows that Mary had given the news. Yet it was not received.
 - (1) Possibly this is due to the fact that she was a woman and the Jewish belief was that a woman could not function as a witness.
 - (2) If so, then this is a rebuke against that type of thinking.
 - (3) Or, more probably, it is simply the reality that our faith is very weak. They knew that their lives were in danger and they could easily see soldiers, but it was much harder to believe that Christ was risen.
- 3. But how does the Lord respond to these men who abandoned Him and who would not believe that He had arisen?
 - a. Not with a rebuke, not with a harsh word, but with grace and gentleness.
 - b. The greeting is one that is still used by Jews today. . . *shalom alekem*.
 - c. But there is much more to this than merely a greeting. He is not just saying “Hi.” Notice the repetition in vss. 21 and 26.
 - (1) There had been a promise of peace by Jesus to his disciples:
 - (a) John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.
 - (b) John 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."
 - (2) It is interesting that Paul picks this up in His letters and starts them with this statement, Romans, 1:7, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - d. Christ comes gently and is announcing to them that they can believe and that there is no need to fear any more. The true enemies were defeated and He has come to preach peace.
- 4. Notice how he builds their faith in vs 20.

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5. Now when they are rejoicing He begins the preparation of sending them.
 - a. This is the basic meaning behind “apostle
 - b. They are the Apostles, they are to continue the work that the Son had been sent to do. He has accomplished the key part, the conquering of sin and death. Now His Church continues.
 - c. The message is the same, “repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand.” And at the center of that message is the God who sent His Son that we might find forgiveness of sins.
 - d. Look at Luke 24:36-48 (key is vs 47-48, the message to be preached and the fact that they were witnesses that this was true).
6. Then to continue to strengthen their faith He gives them the Holy Spirit (22).
 - a. Now there are many views on what is going on here, but they all center on the issue that in Acts 2 the Spirit came upon the people there. Therefore, many struggle with this passage.
 - b. Some, like Calvin, say that this was like a sprinkling of the Spirit, but not fully saturated with Him.
 - c. But there is no need to stumble here. We ought to not make Acts 2 define this verse. That is seldom wise (explain this concept of circular reasoning).
 - d. It is here that the Spirit indwells these men. But that did not make them powerful or bold. That came and went throughout their lives as the Spirit would manifest Himself upon them over and over again.
7. Notice then what He says about sins being forgiven.
 - a. This verse is used by the RCC to argue that the Apostles, and therefore priests, can absolve a person of their sins. Much of the practice of going to the confessional is the result of this.
 - b. We need to be careful, however, and not let that fact control how we look at this passage.
 - (1) Let us look at this carefully.
 - (2) First, it is not speaking in a private, personal, or singular sense. It is plurals sins and plural any. It is speaking of classes of people whose sins are forgiven or not forgiven.

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- (3) The verbs are in the passive and this indicates that the power does not lie within these people, but in another. And it would be wise to see that other person as God. For God is the one who truly forgives sin.
 - (4) The context itself indicates that it is all part of the commissioning of these people to go on with the message of Jesus. As you read the Gospels you over and over see Jesus speaking of sins being forgiven or not forgiven.
 - (5) And it is here that we can give meaning to the verse. The Church has a powerful message. It is that in Christ there is forgiveness of sins. We are to be about that message. And in doing so we are able to look to people and say that if their faith is in Christ for salvation then their sins are forgiven. And we can just as confidently say that if their faith is not in Christ for salvation, that their sin remains.
- D. Thomas now enters the picture. Again we come back to unbelief that ends up in belief.
1. Vs. 24, time has passed and Jesus is not there.
 2. 8 days later Jesus comes to Him. Note the greeting of peace again.
 3. But then we see Him focus on just one person in that room.
 - a. BTW, I would like to think that if Jesus was to appear suddenly in a room with doors that were shut, that I would believe. But that is not that reality of unbelief.
 4. Note the omniscience of our Lord. He knew what Thomas had said 8 days earlier and so He immediately calls him to touch His wounds.
 - a. Notice though there is a purpose behind this act...27b, it is to bring Thomas to belief.
 - b. And that is exactly what happens (28).
 - (1) JW's try to say that this is simply Thomas saying "my God" as in being shocked that He is alive.
 - (2) But this would never occur with a Jew of that day. For that would be too casual with God's name.
 - (3) Also the grammar does not allow for it. He acknowledges two things of Christ, He is Lord and He is God.

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- (4) For Thomas his journey came to an end at that moment, He saw and believed. Never again would there be a question of who Jesus was, He was both Master and God.
- c. And note that Jesus receives these terms without comment. He is comfortable with them for they are His to possess. He is the Lord of Lords and He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- E. Jesus helps unbelief and weak faith. But there is the promise of greater blessing for those who believe on the testimony of the Lord.
 1. The word, “blessed” is here one of two times that a beatitude is spoken of in the book of John.
 - a. NAS John 13:17 "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them." There he is washing their feet then after that He questions them on what just occurred.
 - (1) If He is Lord and yet He served them in such a way, then so too ought they server one another.
 - (2) The reason is that the slave is not greater than his Master.
 - (3) Then He pronounces this beatitude.
 2. Here Jesus gently rebukes him in his weak faith. Others had believed the testimony of the disciples without having seen Jesus (note the tense, “they who did not see”). These people were more blessed of the Lord.
 3. And this becomes true of all who come to Christ after the ascension of the Lord. It is true of you and I.

III. Conclusion.

- A. John then gives the purpose of this book.
- B. We tend to think of Jesus as being ‘Christ’ and ‘Son of God’ as the same thing, but they are not, and most certainly were not for the Jews of that time.
 1. They did not realize that the Messiah (Christ) would be so closely connected with God.
 2. Much less that He would BE God.
 3. Note that both must be present for salvation.
 - a. Do you believe that Jesus is the savior? The only savior, that there is salvation in no other person or thing?
 - b. Do you believe that He is God?
 - c. It is in these two things that heaven and hell hang.