

ON THE CROSS-SACRIFICE IN THE GRAVE-DEFEAT FROM THE TOMB-VICTORY

Text: John 20:1-31

INTRODUCTION:

This morning as we think about the significance of the Resurrection of Jesus, we are faced with one very simple truth. As human beings, "We live to die, But Jesus died in order for us to live." We don't want to lose sight of the fact that our condition without Jesus was of such desperation and dreadful consequences, that without Christ' redemptive work on the cross, we would be left hopeless.

I have always been astounded by the fact that if you had ten people talking about Jesus, nine would talk about His works, deeds, even His character, but only one would talk about the cross. As important as the cross is to Christianity the resurrection is the finalization of what God intended to accomplish through the cross. I have had the opportunity to visit the graves and burial places of some of the most famous people that have lived. The one difference that has always stood out to me about their grave and that of Christ; is that theirs is still occupied while Jesus tomb is empty.

While the cross was so necessary to the redemptive process (shedding of blood and sacrifice of life), the resurrection was the finality of the redemptive work. There have always been attempts to diminish the significance of the cross. Let me illustrate the point; ***"A woman wrote J. Vernon McGee: "Our preacher said that on Easter Jesus just swooned on the cross and that the disciples nursed him back to health. What do you think?" McGee replied, "Dear Sister, beat your preacher with a leather whip for thirty-nine heavy strokes. Nail him to a cross. Hang him in the sun for six hours Run a spear through his heart. Embalm him. Put him in an airless tomb for three days. Then see what HE HAS TO SAY."***

There is a resounding theme in the Bible about the importance of living a life of self-sacrifice and spirit-filled obedience. Neither one of these can be accomplished apart from the finished work of the cross, or the finality of Jesus' resurrection. Yet many Christians never go beyond accepting the forgiveness brought about by the cross, to living in the power manifested through the resurrection. Let me illustrate this point for you;

“Every year thousands of people climb a mountain in the Italian Alps, passing the "stations of the cross" to stand at an outdoor crucifix. One tourist noticed a little trail that led beyond the cross. He fought through the rough thicket and, to his surprise, came upon another shrine, a shrine that symbolized the empty tomb. It was neglected. The brush had grown up around it. Almost everyone had gone as far as the cross, but stopped there.

Far too few have moved beyond the cross to find the real message of Easter. That is the message of the empty tomb.”

Possibly the most unique aspect of Jesus life was his resurrection. Jesus said, “I lay down my life that I may take it up again.” Jesus stands alone among all the so-called religious leaders throughout the ages. He alone was certified by God to be the Christ, by His resurrection from the dead.

Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God

2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,

3 concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,

4 and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead,

Note: The work of the cross continues in our life just as it did in the lives of the disciples.

[1] WE HAVE SEEN the risen Savior! (John 20:1-18)

➤ He rose according to the Old Testament prophecies.

Psalms 16:10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

Psalms 22:22 I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the congregation I will praise You.

Isaiah 52:13 Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.

Isaiah 53:12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and

He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

- He had prophesied His own resurrection.

Matthew 16:21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

- He rose from the dead over impossible odds.

Matthew 27:62 On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate,

63 saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, **'After three days I will rise.'**

64 "Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first."

65 Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how."

66 So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

- His burial bandages were lying undisturbed in the tomb. **(John 20:6-9)**
- He appeared alive first to women then His disciples. **(John 20: 11-19)**
- He rose on the first day of the week.

Exodus 20:8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.

11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

- By His resurrection He became the first fruits, the basis of our resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

[2] WE HAVE PEACE shown by His compassion! **(Vv. 19-20)**

1. Peace of a restful mind - *“and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7 NKJV)*
2. Peace of a surrendered will.
3. Peace of a hopeful heart - *“For the Lord God will help Me; Therefore I will not be disgraced; Therefore I have set My face like a flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed.” (Isaiah 50:7 NKJV)*
4. Peace of loving fellowship
5. Peace with God - *“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” (Romans 5:1 NKJV)*

[3] WE HAVE A CALLING because He sends us! **(v. 21)**

What we are called from and called to:

- Called from death to life - *“We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.” (1 John 3:14 NKJV)*
- Called from bondage to liberty - *“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13 NKJV)*

- Called out of darkness into light - *“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;” (1 Peter 2:9 NKJV)*
- Called to the fellowship of His Son - *“God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” (1 Corinthians 1:9 NKJV)*

[4] **WE HAVE RECEIVED** the Holy Spirit!

(V.21-22)

D.L Moody said, "I believe firmly that the moment our hearts are emptied of pride and selfishness and ambition and everything that is contrary to God's law, the Holy Spirit will fill every corner of our hearts. But if we are full of pride and conceit and ambition and the world, there is no room for the Spirit of God. We must be emptied before we can be filled."

[5] **WE HAVE THE DOUBT REMOVED** by His presence! **(Vv. 24-31)**

- He appeared over and over to his disciples in various places over a 40 day period of time. **(John 20:27-29)**
- ***. Campbell Morgan had already enjoyed some success as a preacher by the time he was 19 years old. But then he was attacked by doubts about the Bible. The writings of various scientists and agnostics disturbed him (e.g., Charles Darwin, John Tyndall, Thomas Huxley, and Herbert Spencer). As he read their books and listened to debates, Morgan became more and more perplexed. What did he do? He cancelled all preaching engagements, put all the books in a cupboard and locked the door, and went to the bookstore and bought a new Bible. He said to himself, "I am no longer sure that this is what my father claims it to be--the Word of God. But of this I am sure. If it be the Word of God, and if I come to it with an unprejudiced and open mind, it will bring assurance to my soul of itself." The result? "That Bible found me!" said Morgan. The new assurance in 1883 gave him the motivation for his preaching and teaching ministry. He devoted himself to the study and preaching of God's Word.***

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CONCLUSION:

A workman of the great chemist Michael Faraday accidentally knocked a silver cup into a solution of acid. It was promptly dissolved, eaten up by the acid. The workman was terribly disturbed by the accident. The chemist came in and put a chemical into the jar, and shortly all the silver was precipitated to the bottom. The shapeless mass was lifted out and sent to the silversmith, and the cup was restored to its original shape. If a human genius can do a thing like this, why should we doubt that God can raise the dead?