



March 31, 2024

“Resurrected.”

Open House at 9:30, Service at 11:00.

News:

Wednesday Evening Classes at 6:30

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“Why are you seeking the living One among the dead?”

John 1:4 ~ declares that the eternally existent Word of God through Whom God created all things had within Himself ζῶή (dzō-ā). It is the life force...

Jesus proclaimed, “I AM the Resurrection and the Life – the one who believes in Me will live forever” (John 11:25). And He said, “I AM the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, no one comes to the Heavenly Father except through Me” (John 14:6).

Last week we celebrated Palm Sunday... Jesus entered as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, yet humble and gentle...

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

Luke 24:1–9 ~ 1But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. 2And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in gleaming clothing; 5and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why are you seeking the living One among the dead? 6He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, 7saying that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise from the dead.” 8And they remembered His words, 9and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest.

It's very difficult for us to live by faith and not by sight, isn't it?

One day our faith will be sight, but then it will forever be too late...

We want a money back guarantee before we're willing to believe. Well, that's not faith.

You've been given that requisite faith, you just need to act upon it. In order to actually do that you must humble yourself...

All manmade religion seeks a solution to fear...

True Biblical Christianity is not ever about what God can do for you...

Physical death is the result of sin. When Jesus defeated physical death, He proved that He had eradicated the power and effect of sin.

In Him there is entire forgiveness for all sin and so there is in Him eternal life.

Will you stop struggling and surrender?

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

Name _____ Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____



Today is a celebration of the single most important event in human history – an event that proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that God exists, that God cares, that God Saves. God Saves mere human mortals into right relationship with Him through Jesus Whom He raised bodily from the dead, which is to His eternal glory.

VIDEO: HE HAS RISEN

Empty



“Why are you seeking the living One among the dead?”

What makes Christianity unique among all other belief systems is that it is True. It is true because our God has defeated death. Our God is Alive. Our God is Life – the Creator and Sustainer of all life both physical and eternal.

The profound opening of John’s Gospel declares that the eternally existent Word of God through Whom God created all things had within Himself ζωή (dzō-ā) (John 1:4). ζωή as in zoo, the place we keep the live animals as opposed to a museum where we keep the dead ones. It is not merely being alive or possessing life it is

the ability to bestow and uphold life... it is the lifeforce... the life generating, nourishing, and continuing force.

My friends, the fundamental reality is that apart from God there is no life, either in this world or the next. Life is neither self-created, nor is it self-sustainable even in the mortal sense, let alone the immortal sense.

Jesus proclaimed, "I AM, I AM that which I AM, I exist as the Resurrection and the Life – the one who believes in Me will live forever" (John 11:25). And He said, "I AM the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, no one comes to the Heavenly Father except through Me" (John 14:6).



That Lifeforce, that Word of Life, that Message from God, took on flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). Jesus was a man, a flesh and blood, physical, mortal man. That fact allowed Him to actually experience human life like us. He personally knows our temptations, He knows our pain, He can directly relate to our plight. More than that, it allowed Him to suffer, to bleed, and to die.

Jesus was simultaneously God, the Instrumental Message of Almighty God. That fact allowed Him to live a perfectly sinless life earning Him a rightful return to His throne in Heaven. Yet, instead of taking His due, He allowed God to impute your sin, and my sin to Him

as though it were His sin. He “Who knew no sin, became sin, so that we might become righteous in Him” (II Corinthians 5:21). God, born a man, in the shadow of the Cross... For us.

A man cannot pay for his own sins, let alone the sins of others, let alone the sins of the world, and God cannot bleed. So, the preexistent Word of God took on flesh and became man in order to sacrifice Himself for all who would believe in Him. For all who would embrace Him for Who He is and accept Salvation as He has provided it.



Last week we celebrated Palm Sunday, the day that Jesus, as the Anointed Messiah came to his Own in

triumph. It was an act of extreme intentionality. Jesus orchestrated everything, knowing full well that it would paint the Jewish Leaders into a corner. After thousands of people declared Jesus at the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, the rulers would have no choice but to either bow down and worship Him, or to eliminate Him.

No middle ground remained and for the wealthy elites, in love with their status and position, it was a foregone conclusion as to what they would choose.



In fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies Jesus was betrayed, brutalized, mocked, and murdered.

The man Jesus bled, and the God Jesus relinquished His Spirit trusting in God the Father and God the Holy Spirit to restore Him. Thus, He died.

Dozens and perhaps hundreds of people watched Him die. Dozens and perhaps hundreds of people heard Him say, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do,” and “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:34, 46). Dozens and perhaps hundreds of people experienced the dread, the darkness, the icy breath of death as He gave up His life.



Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus who came to Jesus by night were both dissenting voices on the ruling council and they quickly provided for the burial of

Jesus in a tomb freshly cut into the bedrock near the Crucifixion site.

The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee and had been witnesses to His crucifixion went with the men and saw where the body of Jesus was placed. The women included Mary the mother of Jesus, her sister Solome the mother of James and John, as well as Mary from the village of Magdala from whom Jesus had cast out many demons.

With just minutes to spare before the Great Sabbath began that Friday evening the tomb of Jesus was sealed with an extremely heavy cover stone.



Since we are studying Luke's Book of Acts, we will read from Luke's Gospel:

Luke 24:1–53 ~ 1But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. 2And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in gleaming clothing; 5and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why are you seeking the living One among the dead? 6He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, 7saying that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise from the dead." 8And they remembered His words, 9and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest.

Jesus was harangued, beaten, tortured, crucified, dead and buried on Friday. Saturday was a Great Sabbath meaning that it was the normal Sabbath day of rest that happened to coincide with a high feast day, in this case the Passover. It started at sunset, which was roughly 6

pm, on what for us, was Friday evening. For Jesus, this Great Sabbath was the second day of His death.

Now, after the Great Passover Sabbath was over, again at sunset, it was too late, as in too dark, to attend to Jesus body inside an unlit tomb. This began the third day dead for Jesus.

As early in the morning as they could, as the sun began to rise on Sunday, the first day of the week, Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Salome, and some other women made their way to the tomb.

They brought with them spices that they had prepared with the intention of anointing the body of Jesus more carefully and thoroughly after the hasty burial He was given on Friday.

As the women approached the new rock-cut tomb where Jesus had been laid, they wondered aloud, "Who will roll away the stone from the entrance of the tomb for us?" (Mark 16:3). Mary Magdalene went ahead of the rest of the women and, while it was still somewhat dark outside, she was the first one to arrive at the tomb.



As she was approaching, there was “a severe earthquake... for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the extremely large entrance stone, and then sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow” (Matthew 28:2&3). Then the other women arrived.



The men guarding the tomb “shook from fear of the angel and became like dead men” (Matthew 28:4). The women “were amazed” (Mark 16:5), but the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying.” (Matthew 28:6).

Adding the other three Gospel accounts to Luke’s, we get a much fuller picture of the events. One of the things that people struggle with is the differences in those four accounts. What we have to remember is that the morning lasted a few hours, and a lot of things were going on. There were events, reactions, thoughts,

announcements, interactions, conversations, and emotional responses.

Each author, under divine inspiration, recorded a tiny snippet of the overall historical proceedings that best made their particular Theological and Christological point. None of the accounts are at odds with each other, they just convey different elements of the same momentous morning.

As I said earlier, the greatest, most wonderfully beneficial, gloriously profound event of all time. The ladies saw the stone covering the entrance rolled back and an angel sitting on it. They were astonished and perplexed.

The angel spoke to them, and Mary Magdalene wasted no time, she immediately ran off to get help. Mary found Peter and John, told them what had happened and those two immediately ran to the tomb to investigate.

In the meantime, the angel sitting on the cover stone went into the tomb where the remaining ladies saw him sitting at the right end of the raised platform where Jesus had been laid. He spoke further to the women

and as he did a second angel appeared sitting at the opposite end of the platform creating in the enacted image of the Ark of the Covenant.



Remember the Ark that God had the Israelites fashion to hold His Word? There were to be two brightly shining

angels at either end of the Ark forming what was called the Mercy Seat of God. Here we see that played out with actual angels on the true Mercy Seat. Instead of human priests annually sprinkling the blood of animals on the mercy seat to gain forgiveness, the blood of God made man was once and for all shed upon this final mercy seat.

The angel instructed the women to go and tell the others what they had seen and while they were confused and initially frightened to tell anyone, they eventually spilled the beans and all the disciples, at the time, about a 100 people in Jerusalem, were made aware.

My favorite line is what the angel said to the women in Luke's account, "Why are you seeking the living One among the dead?" Jesus had repeatedly told them that He was going to suffer and die, but that on the third day He would return, yet people being people, every one of His Apostles and other disciples went about their business as though Jesus was never coming back.



We do that don't we? No matter what great blessing we receive, or how often we receive them. No matter how many miracles and other supernatural interventions in our life and the lives of those close to us. No matter how well we know the Bible and how close our walk with Jesus... We constantly operate in full human mode, as though the physical is all there is. It's very difficult for us to live by faith and not by sight, isn't it?



One day our faith will be sight, but then it will forever be too late to be a man or woman of faith. Once we see, we can never unsee and so the opportunity of demonstrating great faith in the Lord will be lost to us. If you want to have an eternal legacy of being a person who really believed, then this life is your only chance (II Corinthians 5:7).

It's the entire enchilada – faith. The very simple Truth is that no one can be Saved apart from faith. The Bible clearly tells us that it is faith that enables a person to seek God in the first place because a person must believe that there is a God and that God is a rewarder

of those who seek Him in order to ever actually, genuinely seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

I'm not saying perfect faith, or even solid faith, but at the very least a hint of faith is required to take the first step. Well, where does this initial faith come from? Again, according to God's written Word it comes from God Himself. The Holy Spirit grants to a person that spark of initial faith and the person then responds by seeking, by being somewhat open to the idea of God as a blesser of those who seek (Ephesians 2:8).

We modern folks are very pragmatic and proof oriented. Meaning that we want to know how it all works and we want to be totally convinced before we commit – before we sign the contract. We want to be certain that there aren't any better options out there. That's why Christian apologetics is all the rage and why apologists like the now disgraced Ravi Zacharias, the legendary John Lennox, along with outfits like the Institute for Creation Research, and Ken Ham's Answers in Genesis are so popular.

We want all of our questions answered and we want iron-clad evidence, and we want a money back

guarantee before we're willing to believe. Well, that's not faith.

No person will ever have that level of assurance and proof in this life, which means that for everyone it will require a leap of faith. You've been given that requisite faith, you just need to act upon it. That brings up the other essential element. In order to actually step out in that faith that you've been given you must humble yourself.



No matter how strong your faith you cannot demand an audience with the Creator God. He's not your associate, it's not a job interview, nor is it a blind date. He's the One and Only, Almighty, Eternal, Omniscient,

Perfect God and you are not. Reality demands contrite humble submission in your search. Just because God is Love and Jesus comes to you humble and gentle does not mean that you should assume that you're equals. We don't like that submission and self-humbling bit much. That's why the Bible says pride leads to death.

Trust me if you are hearing my words, you have the requisite initial faith from the Holy Spirit. You can humble yourself before God, and you already know more than enough, have had more than enough of your questions answered and have seen more than enough proof. It is time to humbly step out in the faith you've been given so that you can meet Jesus. It's simply a question of whether you will choose to respond positively or negatively.

You might think that you'll hold some middle ground, delay the choice, think about your options a little longer. Maybe you think being on a first name basis with Jesus will be enough. You know, have a little Jesus in your pocket as a backup plan, but continue to act as the lord of your own life. To have your cake and eat it too.

Well, it doesn't work that way. There is a constant impulse from the Holy Spirit directing you towards accepting Jesus and when that impulse is resisted it is in fact rejected – at least for the moment. It is, in effect, a repudiation of the Holy Spirit's counsel and an outright rejection of Jesus, to Whom He points. Beyond going backwards away from God, the effect of that distancing choice, diminishes the faith impulse. In other words, the still small voice of God continually gets softer, harder to hear, easier to ignore.

Choose today Whom you will serve. That's what the Bible declares. Choose today, while it is still called today, Whom you will serve. Please know that, at the end of the day, there are only two possible choices, you either choose to serve the Lord, or you choose to remain a faithful servant to your own desires.



Today is the celebration of the single most magnificent event in all of history. That's the third time I've said that this morning and by now you may be thinking "what's all the fuss." Let me do a little groundwork... Let me preface my answer.

Without going into all the technical details let me assure you that there can only be one reason that a timeless all-powerful Being would create matter and the spacetime to go with it in the first place, and that is a desire to share Himself with His creation.

That desire implies love. Not fickle human love here today and gone tomorrow, but the kind of love idealized

by the Greek philosophers a pure and perfect selfless and self-sacrificing love. A love that is a choice rather than a feeling and so a love that is altruistic and unconditional. The Bible calls it Agapê.



Two issues quickly arise. 1) First, if we humans are the object of God's love, why is the universe so immense that we cannot even see the edges of it? As Louie Giglio said, "If the universe was made for us, it is way too big, but if it was made to show God's power and wisdom, then it's about the right size."



2) Second, if God loves us why evil, why pain, suffering, violence, and death? Why war, why premature babies, why abortion, why road rage? That was the cost of giving human beings sentience and from their individual perspective, free will.

To give a better answer would again require dipping our toes into the technical and the abstract. Probably not for today. The short answer is God orchestrates all things for the best possible good. Giving us the freedom to reject Him came with a consequence. Even though we suffer with evil, pain, and death, if God was not Love, things would be far worse, and if God was not love, He would not have provided a way out.

How could God provide a way out of the mess that we've made for ourselves? First, we must recognize that every human person, with a single exception, is so self-interested that we are full of, and driven by, fear. The fear that things will not unfold the way we think that they ought to unfold.



All manmade religion is essentially a solution to that fear. Appease the universe, or God, or gods, or your dead ancestors, be nice, do good, wish blessings upon others, love animals, gain wisdom, sacrifice something, hug a tree, and you can improve your chances of getting the outcome you desire.

All human belief systems serve the purpose of helping the adherent to deal with their innate fear, which means that if you strip away all the distractions, the smoke and mirrors, the fluff, and get down to the essential core, you will find man in the middle. It's always all about me. We make God in our own image.



Even we dedicated Christians do that. We have done that here today. The church service and especially the service honoring the Resurrection of Christ Jesus is supposed to be all about Him. We call it a worship service for a reason. A reason that most people today have largely forgotten.

We make going to church services and functions all about us – don't we? I was going to give you enough examples that you'd have to admit that it was at least partially true for you. I won't. It's Easter. I'll simply let you mull it over.



Easter is the name of a pagan goddess, call it Resurrection Sunday...



Yeah, using the name of the pagan god of the sun is much better. They're just words.



My point is not to depress or irritate you, it is to demonstrate that even devout Christians naturally fall into the self-focus of manmade religions. But Biblical Christianity is not at all like anything that men dream up.

Biblically accurate Christianity is all about Christ. It's about realizing that He deserves your entire devotion and faithful fealty even if He were to reject you and send you into "the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth," because of Who He is... He is worthy and deserving of more than we could ever give.

True Biblical Christianity is not ever about what God can do for you, but always what you can do for God... Which is nothing that He needs. But it is the attitude of selfless and self-sacrificing service to Him because that is what He has already done for you.

Back to the question... What's the big deal about the Resurrection? The God Who exists as pure love sacrificed Himself on our behalf while we were actively opposing Him. While we were yet sinners, while we were still His enemies, God sent and handed over what

was most precious to Him. The very Word of Almighty God became a human man and dwelt among us.

He lived a perfectly sinless life even though He was tempted in every way that we are and instead of taking what was His He emptied Himself even further and took on the sins of the world. It is the most phenomenally amazing love possible.

Jesus died for you and me. On the third day He was bodily resurrected never to taste death again. It is the proof that God was satisfied. Physical death is the result of sin. When Jesus defeated physical death, He proved that He had eradicated the power and effect of sin.



In Him there is entire forgiveness for all sin and so there is in Him eternal life.

Will you stop struggling and surrender to the Master, embrace Jesus as your King, obey Him as the Lord of your life and rest in the mercy and grace that He offers you? If you do, what you'll find, is an omnipotent God Who has humbled Himself to your level so that He can gently and lovingly welcome you into His family forevermore.

