

**MY REDEEMER LIVES!****Matthew 28:1-10****(Read Matthew 28:1-10)**

**Intro:** I know my redeemer lives! Job said that. Let me read it to you, *For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.* Job 19:25. It sounds like a victorious proclamation, and it is. But its background is that it is a statement of faith in the midst of a hammering of relentless criticism, unbidden advice, and outright abuse from men who were Job's friends. Yes, I agree, with friends like that, who needs enemies?

The bad part was it was undeserved. Job was a very good man, a faithful man of God. So it was all the more puzzling to him because God had allowed everything he knew and loved to be swept away from him. Everything! And what is his response to it all? I know my redeemer lives! Now, this isn't a sermon on Job. Instead it's a proclamation of hope and faith that no matter what, our redeemer lives. We need this fact in our lives when we experience loss and frustration and the future looks bleak. The ladies in our text went to the grave at dawn expecting to hold vigil at the tomb of their Lord and when they arrived, they found THEIR REDEEMER WAS ALIVE!

That is why Easter is the most significant holiday for Christianity because the entire faith stands or falls on the issue of the resurrection. When the two Marys found an empty tomb on that first Easter morning they discovered that God cannot be laid to rest. God cannot die and stay dead. Instead the resurrection proves that God is greater than even hell itself.

Well, I did a funeral yesterday and so the resurrection, which is really on my mind at Easter is REALLY on my mind. I spoke about the reality of the resurrection to people who were desperate to find meaning in their sense of loss. So it's good to be reminded what does it all mean for all of us? Why is Easter so important? What does the resurrection really mean for you and me? Well, let's look at it.

- Easter had to happen because God the Father had to raise his Son from the dead or a part of God would have died eternally which is an impossibility. You see, if God is life eternal, he can't die eternally. You can't kill God.
- The resurrection was also necessary because God had said through his prophets that it would happen. In fact the Psalmist proclaims *For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.* Psalm 16:10. God's son would not rot in the grave. He would be raised.
- Paul tells us that Jesus . . . *was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.* Romans 4:25. In other words, Jesus was the payment for our sins and the payment would not have been complete without him being raised from the day. And in another place Paul writes, *And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.* 1 Corinthians 15:17 – so you see his raising is necessary for our raising, *because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* Romans 10:9.
- Believing in Jesus's resurrection is necessary for our very eternal salvation. Death needed to be conquered and Jesus was the one to do it, *We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.* Romans 6:9 In other words Jesus's resurrection is a picture of our future: *But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.* 1 Corinthians 15:20. And this: *Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.* 1 Corinthians 15:51-52. And it's all because of this: . . . *he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.* 2 Corinthians 4:14. Here's the truth: Because of his resurrection we have the same promise because we have friends in high places – actually, it is a singular friend – Jesus, the risen Lord. Our redeemer lives.
- Mary and Mary came to the grave and as they did there was an earthquake, an angel of the Lord arrived and rolled back the stone and the guards went into a catatonic state with fear. God was at work. The resurrection was, plain and simply, a display of the power of God. Paul encourages the Christ Followers in Ephesus with these words, . . . *having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above*

*all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.* Ephesians 1:18-21. God's raising of his Son from the grave reveals this power for all to see.

- I've already hinted at it with a couple passages, but 1 Corinthians 15 gives a wonderful picture of what Christianity would be without Easter – actually, there would not be Christianity without Easter. I've already thrown a lot of scripture at you and the chapter is 58 verses long. So while it is a powerful piece on what the resurrection means I will only use snippets of it. So, make sure you read it in this coming week to follow-up this talk.
- First of all, Paul makes no attempt here to explain the resurrection. There is nothing natural or inevitable about it, the resurrection is a direct act of God. So what Paul does is to simply point out what Christianity would be like without a resurrected Christ. Here we go:

**If the resurrection had not happened everything we teach about Jesus would be a lie.**

- *And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.* 1 Corinthians 15:14-15. That's strong language and its spot on! If we are teaching Easter when Christ was not resurrected – we are liars!. I love the way Eugene Peterson puts it . . . *if there's no resurrection for Christ, everything we've told you is smoke and mirrors. Not only that, but we would be guilty of telling a string of barefaced lies about God."* 1 Corinthians 15:14-15 (The Message)
- Paul continues . . .

**If there was no resurrection we could never experience forgiveness from our sin**

- *If Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless, and you are still under condemnation for your sins.* 1 Corinthians 15:15 (NLT). In other words we would be just wasting our time. Christianity would just be another philosophy or cult or religion rather than the relationship that it is with the Living God! But if there was no Easter – that's what it would be – hopeless and useless. In fact there would be no reason to serve God now! In fact we'd be just spinning our wheels. Listen, *If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.* 1 Corinthians 15:19 or as Peterson puts it *If all we get out of Christ is a little inspiration for a few short years, we're a pretty sorry lot.* (The Message) or this, *we are the most miserable people in the world...* (NLT). Paul goes on to say that he would not have gone to all the trouble of sharing the Gospel message if this whole thing were a hoax. Certainly there was no money in it and there was a fair amount of danger, *Why are we in danger every hour? I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."* 1 Corinthians 15:30-32. Peterson puts it like this. *And why do you think I keep risking my neck in this dangerous work? I look death in the face practically every day I live. Do you think I'd do this if I wasn't convinced of your resurrection and mine as guaranteed by the resurrected Messiah Jesus? Do you think I was just trying to act heroic when I fought the wild beasts at Ephesus, hoping it wouldn't be the end for me? Not on your life! It's resurrection, resurrection, always resurrection, that undergirds what I do and say, the way I live.* 1 Corinthians 15:30-32 (The Message). In short, if this is a myth then let's party!!!
- Paul died by beheading because he just didn't hope the resurrection was reality – he died KNOWING it to be an historical fact!!
- Just think about it . . .

**If the resurrection had not happened we would never know the hope of spending eternity with God in Heaven**

- Paul puts it bluntly, *All who have died believing in Christ have perished!* 1 Corinthians 15:18 (NLT). Not only would WE be wasting our time, everybody down through history who has named Christ as their Lord, have wasted their lives too, and died believing it.

**If the resurrection had not happened we would never know for certain that God is really in control**

- So Paul promises, *When he has conquered all things, the Son will present himself to God, so that God, who gave his Son authority over all things, will be utterly supreme over everything everywhere.* 1 Corinthians

15:24-26 (NLT). Peterson puts those final words this way, *showing that God's rule is absolutely comprehensive – a perfect ending!*" (The Message)

**Conclusion:** Let's sum this all this way. Let me get away from the negative of what if there were no resurrection and go to the facts that make it a positive.

**Because of the resurrection – Jesus is who he said he was**

- It actually confirms the many claims that he made about himself being God.

**Because of the resurrection – no situation is beyond God's power**

- This is why Paul says, *If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.* Romans 8:11. In other words, because he lives – we can live too . . . eternally! And Paul can proclaim, *Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.* Ephesians 3:20-21. And this

*I can do all things through him who strengthens me.* Philippians 4:13. And anything Paul could say, you can say too. Anything Paul could do, you can do too. We serve the same God. And finally . . .

**Because of the resurrection – God's forgiveness is available to everyone**

- *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* 2 Corinthians 5:2. Do you know that righteousness? If you don't, talk to me.
- Those ladies went to the tomb to properly anoint a dead body for burial according to Jewish custom. They had not had time to do it before the rush and hurry of getting Jesus buried before Sabbath arrived. What they found made them believers. What all of Christ's followers saw and experienced of their Risen Lord made them believers too. They were believers to the point that they died for what they knew to be fact. Paul went from being the most dedicated persecutor of the church to the most dedicated promoter of the Gospel because of his meeting with the RESURRECTED LORD!!! But that's another talk.

Here is what we can say: The resurrection means that we have eternal life in Christ. The resurrection means that all the hope of the past 2000 years is ours as well. Do you realize that the resurrection means that we have the promise of a resurrection of our own too? All because Jesus overcame death and hell. **I KNOW MY REDEEMER LIVES!**

**He is RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! Amen.**