

April 7, 2024

“The Startling Implications of the Resurrection”
Luke 24:36-49

FCF: Unsure of the meaning of Easter

PROPOSITION: (magnet) The Resurrection has some startling implications.
(anchor) We need to explore and embrace them.

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

Last Sunday was Easter, the greatest of the Christian holidays. The decorations are put away but I wonder if we grasped its meaning. In a recent survey, 83% of registered voters said Jesus Christ did in fact exist and walked the earth. Nearly 70% said they believed He physically rose from the dead. Those are some pretty high numbers. But let me ask you. Does our culture look like one that believes those things? Everywhere we look, we see loneliness, hopelessness, addictions, divisions, ethical disarray, and corruption. And that’s not just “out there”. It’s in here - among and within us. So, I wonder. Have we grasped the meaning of the Resurrection?

There’s no better place to look than to the first witnesses as we see in the Gospels.

SCRIPTURE READING: [Luke 24:36-49](#)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON INTRODUCTION:

In case you haven’t heard, there’s a solar eclipse this Monday afternoon. And NASA is ready. After all, this is a unique opportunity. High altitude research planes will capture images and readings of the sun. But not just that, they will be getting readings on the Earth’s upper atmosphere as well. A collection of special radars at sites around the world will be at work. Sounding rockets will be launched. Special kites and balloons will be flown as well.

This eclipse is getting a lot of attention. After all, it is unique. Sort of. There’s actually one every two to three years, depending on where you live. So it’s really not terribly unusual. And, ultimately, we’re talking about an opportunity to learn more about the Sun and the Earth. Scientists are studying those all the time in various ways. So we could temper our excitement.

If we really want to look at something spectacular, we need to shift our focus. That is, from these relatively ordinary perpetually present subjects and a regular celestial event to something truly unique and deeply significant. That is, something that tells us about God, man, and everything else - the Resurrection, the focal point of Easter, Jesus’ rising from the dead. The eclipse is fine and worth the work. But this is profoundly worth exploring. For the Resurrection has some startling implications. And we would do well to explore and embrace them.

These startling implications come out clearly in our text. First, with an undeserved welcome. Second, with an unexpected mission. And then, third, with an unimaginable outlook.

I. AN UNDESERVED WELCOME

First, we have an undeserved welcome. Look at the greeting ([READ Luke 24:36-37](#)).

A) Where They Were

Consider for a moment where the disciples were - physically and emotionally.

1. On edge

They are on edge. They are hiding, trying to stay out of sight with the doors locked.

2. Confused

And they are confused. If you look at their responses to the events of that Sunday morning, you couldn't pack any more misunderstanding into these texts. They were not expecting any of this.

B) The Words He Spoke

None of which makes for much of a reception to their Savior King who has just returned from doing battle for their eternal freedom. But, true to form, how does Jesus respond to them?

1. The greeting

"Peace to you!" It's a traditional Jewish greeting. But it feels like so much more than that now.

2. The questions

He greets them and asks the questions, "Why so undone? Why your doubts?" Not at all to condemn them but to draw them out, to help them process what has happened. And who He is.

With this greeting, we see an undeserved welcome. And that is startling.

Application:

The gentleness and kindness of Jesus is on display here. He knows well our weakness and frailty. And He fully accounts for that in the face of our failures. Is that the God you know?

With the Resurrection, we have an undeserved welcome. And that is worth embracing.

II. AN UNEXPECTED MISSION

Which brings us an unexpected mission. Hear the commission (**READ Luke 24:44-49**).

A) The Connection to God's Plan

Jesus wants His disciples to know this was all connected to God's plan. And would be.

1. What had happened

Everything that had happened and all that led up to it was part of God's purposes. The prophets, the sacrificial system, the major events and key people in their history - all of it pointed to Jesus' death and resurrection. None of this was by accident. It was a plan unfolding over time.

2. What was coming

As was what was coming. Note Jesus shifts the time reference here as to what was planned for the past to the future, from what had been to what would be. They were witnesses of these things. And they were going forth with this message. This too was part of this unfolding plan.

B) Our Dependence upon God's Spirit

But how? It had to have sounded insane. And it would be except for the next thing. The way their connection to God's plan was going to be realized was dependence upon His Spirit.

1. As promised

Long promised as part of the new covenant, the Spirit was coming. As Jesus had told them just a few nights ago in the Upper Room, the Spirit was coming to move this great plan forward.

2. Great power

And with His coming at Pentecost, just a few weeks later, would come great power. Power to equip, empower, and embolden them. Power to renew, restore, and remake them. Power from on high to change them, change others. and change the world. And that's just what happened.

With this commission, we see an unexpected mission. And that is startling.

Application:

This may not be what you'd think He'd give us to do. It may surprise you to be included. But there you have it. And that comes as good news in our aimless age - rootless and restless, with little sense of any plan or purpose in our lives. Do you hear what Jesus is saying? He has given us a commission. We are part of this story! Not just loose pages but made part of the plot!

With the Resurrection, we have an unexpected mission. And that is worth embracing.

III. AN UNIMAGINABLE OUTLOOK

But, finally, the unimaginable outlook. Again, this appearing ([READ Luke 24:38-43](#)).

A) Their Hesitation

The disciples are, at best, hesitant to believe. They simply cannot take this in.

1. Unsettled

They are unsettled - profoundly troubled, doubts rising and storming within their hearts.

2. Unbelieving

"Disbelieving for joy and marveling" - they couldn't believe what they were seeing. Who could? It was too much, too good to be true. They had no categories at all to process this and take it in.

B) His Demonstration

So, again, we see Jesus countering their struggling impressions and faltering assumptions.

1. Showing the wounds

He invites them, urges them, to touch and look at the scars from the nails. ([READ Luke 24:39a](#)) "It's me!" Luke is doing much the same with the reader ([READ Luke 24:15, 36a](#)). "It's Him!"

2. Eating the fish

So Jesus shows them His wounds. And He eats the fish. This is an amazing moment. This cannot be a spirit, vision, or hallucination. He took the fish in His hand and He ate it. He is still fully God. He is still fully man. A physical everyday ordinary act that speaks so very loudly.

With His appearing, we are given an unimaginable outlook. And it is startling.

Application:

Think with me. How should we live in this world? What is to be our approach to things of this world? The resurrected Jesus took a fish and ate it. Which tells us at least two things.

First, we are now liberated. We need not be controlled by the material physical world. It is not all that there is. And things will not forever be this way. So relax. We're not going to miss a thing. No more FOMO. No more bucket lists. We are now free from all of that.

So we are liberated. But, second, we obligated. Our resurrected Savior has a physical body. He is concerned for the physical world. He made it and will one day remake it. None of this has any hold on us. But it matters to Him. And should to us. We are freed from and for.

Illustration:

Liberated and obligated. Martin Luther is said to have said (READ): “If I believed the world were to end tomorrow, I would still plant a tree.” But why? Two things. First, think of what Jesus will do to that tree on His return. Second, trees matter. And they forever will.

So plant, teach, help, heal, work, write, paint, play, love - all to God’s glory. With the Resurrection, we have an unimaginable outlook. Unlike any other. And it is worth embracing.

CONCLUSION:

In all of this, Jesus has demonstrated a dogged determination that His followers would know that His rising is real. Death could not hold Him. Which means it cannot hold us. So, we have nothing to fear. And Jesus wants us to know this - to know His love and live without fear.

Which brings us to the Lord’s Supper, the successor to the Passover meal. This is a regular reminder of who Jesus is, of what He has done for us, of why that matters, and where this story is going. Again, He loves us such that He wants us to know. He has called us here this morning. He promises to meet with any who come to Him in faith to remind us, to renew us, and to restore us. These are extraordinary promises. But we have an extraordinary Savior.

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