

April 18, 2021

“Resurrection Reorientation”
John 2:13-22

FCF: The trivialization of the Resurrection

PROPOSITION: (anchor) The resurrection of Jesus
(magnet) reorients the most essential things.

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

You may have heard these lyrics by Charles Wesley, written in the 1700’s (READ):

“Christ the Lord is ris’n today,” sons of men and angels say;
Raise your joys and triumphs high; sing ye heavens and earth, reply.

And here are words from John of Damascus from about a thousand years before that (READ):

’Tis the spring of souls today; Christ hath burst his prison
And from three days’ sleep in death as a sun hath risen;
All the winter of our sins, long and dark is flying
From his light, to whom we give laud and praise undying.

Very stirring. You get the sense that human language can hardly express the wonder felt over the events. Yet the resurrection is often eclipsed by the crucifixion, the empty tomb seen as just a sequel to the cross. Why? It may be because of too much attention on bunnies, bonnets, and baskets of candy. It may be because of too little focus on the change that Jesus’ resurrection brings. This week we’re taking another look at things that only make sense in light of Easter.

SCRIPTURE READING: [John 2:13-22](#)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON INTRODUCTION:

Ptolemy was an ingenious man, a 2nd century astronomer and mathematician whose theories and ideas dominated scientific thought until the 16th century. His was the “Ptolemaic system” – a model of the universe with the earth at its center, stationary while the sun, moon, and planets moved around it. No one had put forward such a detailed explanation of planetary movements before. It was quite ingenious. And quite wrong. Fourteen centuries later, Nicolaus Copernicus disproved this idea by showing that it was actually the sun at the center of what now needed to be called “the solar system” with the earth and the planets revolving around it. And, in time, this view led to what has since been dubbed the “Copernican Revolution.” And it was.

Easter, the resurrection of Jesus in history, brings such a revolution. There are obvious implications lying right on the surface - the reality of a spiritual realm, the existence of God, what He is like, and the possibility of purpose and joy in life. Our text makes this clear - a resurrection reorientation, a revolution of our thinking in some critical ways. Put another way, the resurrection of Jesus reorients the most essential things. It reorients the most essential things.

How so? John puts three matters before us. First, the cleansing of the temple. Second, the raising of the temple. Third, the coming of the temple. Together, a resurrection reorientation.

I. THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

First, the cleansing of the temple and the question of authority (READ [John 2:13-17](#)).

A) The Cause of Jesus’ Anger

Clearly, Jesus is angry. A just holy fury has arisen. It might be worth asking, “Why?”

1. A needed service

Some background would be helpful. Worshippers traveling to Jerusalem needed to buy animals for the sacrifices and to exchange currency for offerings. So this was a needed service offered.

2. The crass disruption

The problem was not what but where all this was being done - in the Court of the Gentiles, the one area of the temple precincts open for non-Jews to worship. And this was a crass disruption.

B) The Nature of Jesus' Assertion

Jesus simply will not stand for this. Now think about what He is asserting here.

1. A claim of ownership

A claim of ownership - He makes clear He is acting and speaking on behalf of His Father.

2. A claim of authority

And a claim of authority - He makes clear He has the right to do this. It's a stunning assertion.

With the cleansing of the temple, Jesus claims the right to speak in a sweeping way.

Illustration:

Imagine someone comes in your apartment or house and starts moving furniture, hanging pictures, repainting, pulling up carpet, even knocking down walls. Who is this? Who gets to do that? The owner or a guest? The owner. A guest has to ask permission. An owner just does what needs doing. Jesus is the owner, not a guest, not just of our homes but of our very lives.

Application:

The cleansing of the temple is an expression of His authority over our very lives. As an old hymn puts it, "All my thoughts and words and doings, all my days and all my hours." To be a Christian, to be His disciple, is to humbly acknowledge that Jesus has ultimate say. In it all.

The resurrection reorients the most essential things - including the question of authority.

II. THE RAISING OF THE TEMPLE

But then also His ability. Let's look at the raising of the temple ([READ John 2:18-22](#)).

A) The Consternation of the Leaders

For the Jewish leaders, there is tremendous confusion and consternation here.

1. The demand for a sign

Picture the scene - animals running loose, tables upended, the crowds in disarray. They demand to know, "Who do you think you are? Give us a sign, some proof of your authority here!"

2. Confused by the sign

Jesus says that He will. Which confuses them even more. They had no categories for the sort of resurrection He was speaking of. They assumed His referring to the temple must be this building complex all around them, 46 years in the making, a marvel of architecture and construction.

B) Jesus' Veiled Meaning

But John tells us that's not what Jesus meant at all. What do we learn of Jesus in this?

1. The ability to predict

His ability to predict, to foresee and foretell the future, things planned from eternity.

2. Sovereign over death

And His sovereignty over death (**READ John 10:14-15**). Jesus voluntarily yielded His life in a way no one else could. And He took it up again, freely and decisively, as no one else could.

The raising of the temple points to Jesus' infinite boundless power.

Application:

Nothing, absolutely nothing, is beyond His reach. Not even the one thing that not a one of us can stop. Which, taken to heart, can be a tremendous comfort and encouragement. For this is the One we follow. This is who we yield to, rely upon, lean on, count on, and look towards.

His resurrection reorients the most essential things - including the question of His ability.

III. THE COMING OF THE TEMPLE

So we have the cleansing and raising of the temple Which brings us to the third point, its coming (**READ John 2:18-21**). What does Jesus mean? And how is this significant for us?

A) The Story of the Temple

For this, we need to go back in time and consider the long story of the temple.

1. God's presence in the Garden

In the beginning, God's presence in the Garden was unfettered and unencumbered. But with the Fall, Adam and Eve were then banished from His presence. And the way back was blocked.

2. The tabernacle

Years later, as the Lord led Israel out of Egypt, they encountered His unmediated presence at Mt. Sinai. It was unbearable. But He promised to go with them on the journey in the wilderness. He provided a means for them to draw near through the tabernacle. The restoration had begun.

3. The temple

Years later, David's desire to build a temple was realized with Solomon's labor. And God was there until a time of invasion and destruction. Yet the prophets spoke of a new temple to come.

B) Jesus as the Temple

Then came Jesus. And in Him, all the lines and themes of the temple converged.

1. The description of the Incarnation

Think of how the Incarnation is described (**READ John 1:14a**). Literally, this reads God "pitched His tent" among us, pointing back to the ancient storyline. In the past, He had been with His people through the tabernacle and temple. Now, He was taking up residence in the flesh.

2. The fulfillment of His intentions

This was the fulfillment of His intentions all along. The temple would pass, made spiritually obsolete and being physically destroyed. With Jesus' death and resurrection, He would be the new temple - the temple to end all temples, the place of God's presence with us. It's all in Him.

The resurrection of Jesus means the coming of the temple, heaven come down to earth.

Illustration:

This is the same presence of God the people encountered at Mt. Sinai in the storm and the earthquake. It's the same presence we read of in 1 Kings 8, the glory that was so great that those there could not even stand. That same glory is now available to us in the coming of Jesus.

Application:

Think of the implications here. It means being a Christian is not about simply being nice and following some rules. It means living in the Lord's abiding presence by His amazing grace. It means living in the Lord's abiding presence by His amazing grace. Jesus is the temple, the end of all temples, the last of the sacrifices. Which means our relationship with Him has nothing to do with our merits and accomplishments for Him and everything to do with His merits and accomplishments for us. Now what does that do in terms of your gratitude and devotion, your security and humility, your glad obedience and abiding joy? It changes absolutely everything.

The people there that day really had no categories for this. They had no place to put it, no way to comprehend it. And often, neither do we. The news is that good and that overwhelming.

Illustration:

It reminds me of some of the old science fiction shows with a robot or a computer that is flummoxed by some question or new set of data. And it comes back with, "Does not compute."

To be promised something this wondrous, to be given this depth of assurance, defies all our expectations and outstrips the horizons of our imagination. But there it is. There it is.

The resurrection reorients the most essential things. Jesus is now our temple. He is God and is now our way to God. There is no other way. There is no other way. But the way is clear.

CONCLUSION:

Electronic warfare has been much in the news as of late. The United States has accused Russia of hacking certain agencies and election interference. Iran has accused Israel of a cyber-attack on one of its nuclear facilities. Such things tend to lead to serious software problems.

We all have software problems of our own - not mechanical but spiritual. Because of Creation, we are hard-wired to know God and His ways. But because of the Fall, those longings have gone awry. We are instruments in need of tuning, compasses in need of calibration. Imagine discovering that the software for your smartphone had been infected by some sort of virus. All the files are now corrupted. It's worse than that. Our internal GPS is in dire need of repair. Every aspect of our humanity has been bent and broken, stained and scarred – our hearts and minds, our affections and inclinations. We're in desperate straits. What can set us right? What could be powerful enough repair the damage? What could recalibrate our errant mapping?

The reality of the resurrection of Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus reorients the most essential things. And it is dramatically demonstrated in these events that occurred at the temple.

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