

April 23, 2017

“The Necessities of the Resurrection”

Luke 24:44-49

FCF: The question of meaning and direction to life

PROPOSITION: (anchor) The reality of Christ’s resurrection
(magnet) brings with it some clarifying necessities.

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

There is an interesting set of books for the history student - What If? Each is a collection of essays looking at the hinge points of the past, the importance of seemingly small things, and then asking, “What if this had gone another way?” What if Alexander had died earlier in his career? Or if Napoleon had been more cautious? Or what of certain moments in the American Revolution or the Civil War? What about D-Day or the Cuban Missile Crisis? All hinge points.

The authors of these essays are all scholars worth hearing. But sadly, in a few instances, they draw false conclusions about fate, chance, and the meaningless of it all. Which, if true, would have implications for us and our own stories. For, if there is no larger story or plot, then there’s nothing to be part of. If the big story is without meaning, then so too are all the subplots.

The Bible shows that we are not subject to fate, chance, or meaninglessness. Not at all.

SCRIPTURE READING: [Luke 24:44-49](#)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON INTRODUCTION:

This weekend marks a wedding anniversary for Sarah and me. Which had me thinking on the sweet consequences of getting married. With the vows, you begin a great adventure. You begin a life-long and life-deep enmeshment. You make decisions and go through the summits of happiness and valleys of sorrow together. Along the way, you discover new things about each other. And yourself. And, with each anniversary, you realize that you are not the same as before.

There are significant implications to the greatest event in your life story. And, we should add, to the greatest event in this world’s story - the resurrection of Jesus Christ. A great rock has hit the water with ripples going out. I’ve struggled to come up with a term that would capture the implications to consider and the realities to live out. I’ll go with “clarifying necessities”. According to our text, the reality of Jesus’ resurrection brings with it some clarifying necessities.

There are three we’ll look at this morning. First, the necessity of fulfillment. Second, the necessity of witness. And, third, the necessity of the Spirit. Fulfillment, witness, and the Spirit.

I. NECESSITY OF FULFILLMENT

First, the necessity of fulfillment ([READ Luke 24:44-46](#)). A certainty to God’s plans.

A) *As It Was Foretold*

Jesus is telling His disciples, “What you are seeing is just as it was foretold.”

1. From the start

This was the Lord's purpose from the start (**READ Genesis 3:15**). Immediately after the Fall came this glorious promise. Everything else we read in the Bible can be traced back to here.

2. Unfolding over time

This promise then unfolds over time. Through the many prophecies over the course of ages, in the sacrificial system of the tabernacle and temple, through the major events and figures in the Old Testament - all pointing towards and preparing the way for the person and work of Jesus.

B) As It Had to Be

As it was foretold is then as it had to be. What God said He would then carry out.

1. One theme throughout

With one theme throughout. All history was moving in the direction of the person and work of Jesus. Which means that, as Jesus tells us, all Scripture is naturally then ultimately about Him.

2. A certainty of hope

As it was foretold was then as it had to be. One theme throughout and a certainty of hope. For the wisdom of the living God is unmatched, His power unchecked, and His love unquenched.

Such is the necessity of fulfillment. Such is the certainty of God's plans and promises.

Illustration:

Think of the hours a child will spend building sandcastles at the beach - towers and moats, shells to decorate and fortify that castle's mighty walls. But one thing you learn very early in such a venture is that your mighty walls cannot hold back the ocean. It is unthinkable.

Application:

So too with God. There is a certainty and surety to His good purposes for His children. Which means, if you are a follower of Christ, you can know that He can turn the hardest of circumstances, the most horrendous of injustice and evil, to your good. He can and He will.

We have the certainty of that with His promise and the evidence of that with His death and resurrection. So be assured. We can't know the when, how, or why. But we can rest in that.

Such is the reality of the resurrection and the necessity of fulfillment.

II. NECESSITY OF WITNESS

Which takes us to the necessity of witness, an inevitability to this news going forward.

A) As It Was Foretold

(**READ Luke 24:46-48**) Jesus is saying, "What you are hearing is just as it was foretold."

1. From the start

As it was from the start (**READ Genesis 12:1-3**). Abraham was blessed to be a blessing. It was never just about him and his descendants but someone to come through him and his descendants.

2. Clearly stated

There was an outward focus that is stated clearly in the Bible. The prophets spoke of the nations joining Israel in worship. We read Psalm 96 earlier. Let me pick up there (**READ Psalm 96:7-9**).

B) As It Had to Be

There was a necessity to the witness. As God had said, so it would be. How could it not?

1. Deep change within

Think of it this way - the deep change within that comes to us when we embrace the gospel. Jesus speaks of this in the Beatitudes - marks of kingdom citizens and signs of gospel change.

2. A natural overflow

There is this deep change working within. That then results in what? A natural overflow. After the Beatitudes, what then do we see? (READ Matthew 5:13-16) Do you see the connection? Through our words and works, our lips and lives, we then become proclaimers and witnesses.

Such is the necessity of witness. Such is the inevitability to our testimony.

Illustration:

I mentioned anniversaries. That all starts with an engagement. What happens when a couple gets engaged? They tell everyone. They make calls. "We're getting married! Save the date!" My point? God's purposes can't be stopped. And this news can't be contained.

Application:

Please understand that I don't intend in any way to guilt or shame anyone. But there are times we have to ask, "Just how deeply do I believe this?" Yes, there may be stressors and even seasons to be taken into account. But there are times we have to ask, "Where is my first love?"

And the solution to that is coming back to the very message we are to proclaim - that Christ suffered and on the third day rose from the dead. To the depth that reality takes root, we will truly know and revel in the forgiveness and freedom we have in Christ. Which will then surely cause the coals within to burn hotter and hotter. And give off great warmth for others.

Such is the reality of the resurrection and the inevitability of this news going forward.

III. NECESSITY OF THE SPIRIT

Which leads to the third point, the necessity of the Spirit. For we are utterly dependent upon Him (READ Luke 24:48-49). As we've seen before, there is a twofold necessity here.

A) As It Was Foretold

On the one hand, Jesus is telling His disciples, "What is coming is just as it was foretold."

1. From long ago

Long ago, God had promised this through the prophets (READ Ezekiel 36:26-27; Joel 2:28-29).

2. In more recent days

And, in more recent days, Jesus had spoken of this as well (READ John 14:16-17; 16:7).

B) As It Has to Be

So, in one sense, this necessity is seen in that what God had promised would surely come to pass. But there is another sense of necessity - that the message would then be able go forth.

1. The necessity of His work

There is a necessity to the Spirit's work. Read through the Gospels. There you see His work at Jesus' conception and throughout His ministry. There was a necessity to the Spirit's work for Jesus. And it is no less so with His disciples. Better put, all the more so with His disciples.

2. The necessity to their staying put

There is a necessity to the work of the Spirit. And so, for the disciples at that moment, there was a necessity to their staying put and waiting until His coming at Pentecost. So here Jesus is saying, "Your meager resources are nowhere near what's needed for the task in front of you."

Such is the necessity of the Spirit, our dependency upon His work.

Illustration:

Think of the images in the Bible - the sheep and the shepherd, the child and the parent, the branches and the vine. Each one speaks to this theme. And each one is due careful thought.

Application:

This quote from B. B. Warfield makes the point well. He draws attention to two things, two great things - our great task and the Lord's great supply - both beyond our fathoming.

Keep always before your mind the greatness of your calling, that is to say, these two things: the immensity of the task before you, the infinitude of the resources at your disposal. I think it has not been idly said, that if we face the tremendous difficulty of the work before us, it will certainly throw us back upon our knees; and if we worthily gauge the power of the gospel committed to us, that will certainly keep us on our knees.

All this can be applied to any calling. But most specifically to our call to be Christ's witnesses. Our love for everyone we meet, opportunities to engage, the ability to listen - all of the Spirit.

Such is the reality of the resurrection and the necessity of the Spirit.

CONCLUSION:

We started out by asking if there is a larger story. Are we just at the whims of fate and chance, part of a meaningless plot? Or is there a real story? Perhaps another question we could ask would be if things are as out of control as they seem. Think of parents trying to teach their teenage children to drive. There are the heart palpitations, the feet digging into the floorboard, the hands gripping the armrest. Then the nonchalant, "Just relax, Dad." Arguably, it's a rite of passage not just for said child but said parent. And it's little wonder it can be so very wise for said parent to send said child to a driving instructor with a second brake on the passenger side.

Feeling like things are out of control has a way of bringing things out of us, of exposing things in us. Storms of anxiety. Fits of anger. But are they? Are things ever out of control? Jesus shows and reminds us, "They are surely out of yours but they are never out of mine."

Certainty of fulfillment, inevitability of witness, and dependency on the Spirit - these clarifying necessities - can go deeply to the root of all our fears and frailties. These are all part of the reality of the resurrection, an event in time and space with deep and eternal significance. Which can help slow down our pulse, give us pause, and keep us from trying to grab the wheel.

PROPOSITION: (anchor) The reality of Christ's resurrection
(magnet) brings with it some clarifying necessities.