

THE REAL WAY TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE RESURRECTION

Introduction – Lesson Text: I Corinthians 15:1-8

A. Though we do not observe Easter as a holy day, we want to consider what many are emphasizing this day, the resurrection of Christ and its significance.

B. I'm afraid that this particular holiday is like other "holy days" that profess to honor Christ. They involve a mass mentality or expectation that brings people to church for a single service, but doesn't change the thinking or lives of people beyond a single day.

C. The resurrection of Christ should have the profoundest impact upon our lives every day when properly acknowledged. Consider the real way to acknowledge the resurrection

I. EVIDENCE of The Resurrection - Was Jesus Raised From The Dead?

A. Jesus Died On The Cross

1. Before a resurrection can even be entertained, the death of the individual in must be affirmed. Did Jesus Die on the Cross?
2. His death is unanimously attested by all four gospels (Matt. 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30)
3. Skeptics deny His death by hypothesizing the "swoon" theory: Jesus revived from a state of unconsciousness and climbed out the tomb.
 - a) The soldiers (expert executioners) pierced His side (John 19:32-35).
 - b) His death was confirmed to Pilate (Mark 15:44,45)
 - c) How could "any man" having been brutally beaten, nailed and tortured on the cross; his side profusely bleeding from a spear, without food, water or medical attention for three days – undo the wrappings, take the time to neatly fold them, push a heavy boulder (1-2 tons) uphill, fight off several Roman guards, walk the length of Palestine on feet pierced by a spike and then convince his disciples he had over death and the grave? Incredible!!

B. Jesus Was Burial in a Sealed and Guarded Tomb

1. The gospel narratives tell us that Jesus died and buried in a tomb that belonged to Joseph of Arimathea; and that a large rock was rolled in front of the tomb (Matt.27:57-60; Mark 15:42-46).
2. The tomb in which Jesus was laid meets with archaeological discoveries, and the fact that Jesus, accused as a criminal, was buried in a *new* tomb coheres with the Jews not wanting to pollute other family members interred there. There has never been another conflicting tradition about the fact of Jesus' burial. (There is no evidence for finding the actual "Tomb of Jesus")

C. The Tomb Was Found Empty

1. Skeptic try to explain away the empty tomb by say that the women went to the wrong tomb; or that the body of Jesus was misplaced or stolen.
2. Proclaiming the empty tomb in the very city where it was located would have not stood for a day if not an established fact (Acts 2:22-32)
3. WHO MOVED THE STONE?
 - a) The women knew where the tomb was located (Luke 23:55) and coming to the tomb knew they could not move the stone (Mark 16:3).
 - b) What about His enemies? The enemies, by accusing the disciples of theft, admitted the empty tomb.

- c) What the Jews? The Jewish leaders had no motive in stealing the body. It would have defeated their purpose. They wanted Him dead and made every precaution to assure that the body of Jesus was still in the grave three days later (Matt. 27:62-66).
- d) The enemies did everything possible to stop the preaching of the disciples except the one thing that would have put an end to it all, producing a body!
- e) What about the Romans? What would've been their motive? Any soldier negligent in his duty would have faced the death penalty. The Jewish leaders paid them a large sum of money to tell a lie (Matt. 28:11-15).
- f) Did the disciples steal the body?
 - (1) How could the disciples get past a guard of at least 12 Roman soldiers (under penalty of death for negligence)?
 - (2) The disciples were not in a physical or psychological condition to perform such; they were grief stricken, in doubt, confused, and afraid! (Mark 16:10; John 20:19)

D. Jesus Appeared To Witnesses After His Resurrection 1 Cor. 15:3-8

1. Skeptics claim the disciples "hallucinated" or fabricated the whole thing.
 - a) This does not account for the number of witnesses. Were they all called into a court of law to testify, it would be the most lopsided trial in history!
 - b) This also does not explain the conversion of Saul of Tarsus.
 - c) This would also leave the body of Jesus in the tomb, and the stone untouched!
2. How do we know their testimony is reliable? These men were eyewitnesses and in a position to know the facts (Acts 1:3; 2:32; I John 1:1-3).
 - a) These were not gullible men (Luke 24:9-11; Mark 16:10-14; Jn 20:24-28).
 - b) Did they "fabricate" such a hoax? What would they have to gain from it? What was their motive? (Acts 4 and 5; I Cor. 4:11-13)
 - c) It doesn't explain the preaching or persecution of Paul (2 Cor. 11:24-28).
 - d) They were hated, persecuted, imprisoned, exiled, tortured and most died a martyrs death. Their story cost them everything, even their lives.

II. IMPORTANCE of The Resurrection – Why was it important for Jesus to be raised? Had Jesus died for our sins on Calvary, but not raised the third day, there would be no salvation! (I Cor. 15:1-4, 14-19)

A. Proved His Deity

1. The miracles Jesus performed during His ministry of Jesus gave proof that He was the Son of God, But resurrection from the dead was the crowning piece of evidence to mankind that Jesus was who He claimed to be (Romans 1:3,4).
2. When his enemies asked for a sign He pointed to His resurrection. (**Jn 2:18-21**)
 - a) While others had been raised from the dead through the instrumentality of others, Jesus was the first to be raised unassisted, (Eph.1:19-20)
 - b) He was also the first to be raised never to die again! (I Cor. 15:20-23)
3. It proved His claims of DEITY! He was shown not to be just a good man, or a prophet, or a great prophet, or even THE PROPHET, but THE SON OF GOD!

B. The Foundation of the Gospel

1. The resurrection of Jesus is a central truth of the gospel message. I Cor. 15:1-4

2. The gospel is the good news of salvation. While salvation promised to anyone is good news, the proof behind it must be established. Acts 2:22-33– Peter’s sermon on Pentecost preached the death, burial and resurrection.
3. Others’ (world religions) tomb are occupied, but Jesus’ was found EMPTY!

C. Made the Church Possible

1. Jesus indicated that the church would not be built until after His resurrection – Matt.16:18 - *“The gates of hades shall not prevail against it.”* This meant He would die and enter hades, but would not be kept there. To build His church He must first die and be raised from the dead.
2. Peter preached this as the central message on Pentecost (Acts 2:22-36).
3. The apostles were not to preach Him as the Christ until after the resurrection – (Matt.16:20; Matt.17:9; Lk.9:21,22).
4. This is the foundation for the church (1 Cor.3:11).

D. Gained Victory Over Sin and Death.

1. When Jesus died on the cross it appeared that Satan had won and defeated the plan of God.
2. Death came into the world because of sin. It was the greatest power that the devil had. But it was not powerful enough. Peter says that God raised Jesus up, *“having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it”* (Acts 2:24).
3. When Jesus rose from the dead, He gained victory over the devil and all his power, including sin and death (I Cor. 15:54-57; Heb. 2:14,15).

E. Gives Us Assurance

1. **Of our forgiveness of sins** (I Cor. 15:14-17). The resurrection of Jesus gives me confidence that my faith is not in vain.
2. **Of our own resurrection**
 - a) This is the basis of our hope in Christ (1 Pet. 1:3).
 - b) If Christ is not raised from the dead we have no hope (I Cor. 15:13-23).
 - c) Paul hoped to attain unto the resurrection of the dead. He understood the resurrection gives us promise (1 Cor.6:14; 2 Cor.4:14; Phil. 3:9-11).
3. **Of the judgment to come**
 - a) Paul says that the proof of this is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (Acts 17:30-31).
 - b) If we believe that Jesus rose from the dead, we must also accept the fact that we will be judged. Assurance of this fact should move all men to repent.

III.ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – How do we acknowledge His resurrection?

It has been observed that more people attend worship services on Easter Sunday than on any other Sunday of the year. People feel there is something special about Easter Sunday. But the resurrection of Jesus from the dead should motivate people to do more than just attend one church service a year. It should move us to change our lives completely!

A. Obey the gospel of Christ!

1. *What we must believe!* (Romans 4:23-25)
2. It is the motivation for the repentance (Acts 17:30-31).
3. The basis for our confession of Jesus as Lord. (Romans 10:9-10).
4. It provides the imagery of the purpose of our baptism (Rom 6:3-5).

5. It not only provides the imagery for baptism, it gives baptism its saving power. (1 Pet. 3:21-22)

6. ***One truly acknowledges the resurrection when he/she responds in obedience to the gospel of Christ!***

B. Live a life professing Christ!

1. ***Just as we acknowledge the resurrection through obedience to the gospel, we also acknowledge the resurrection through living a changed life*** (Rom.6:4-6) (Col. 3:12; 1-2).

2. Paul acknowledged he had to give up all that was gain to him and count it as loss, that he might attain to the resurrection (Phil.3:7-11).

C. Rely upon the power of God to transform us into Jesus' likeness.

1. The resurrection power of Jesus works in us to raise us from spiritual death and make us alive in Him (Eph. 1:19-2:6)

2. We acknowledge the resurrection when we look to that power as the source of our spiritual strength (2 Cor. 13:4).

3. Rely upon Him for forgiveness and help in times of weakness. I serve a living Lord who cares for me who now is at the right hand of God (Heb 7:16,23-24).

a) He is a faithful and merciful High Priest (Heb 4:14-16).

b) When we pray, relying upon His intercession, we are really showing our faith in His resurrection.

D. Worship with other Christian's each first day!

1. The first day of the week is the significant day – the day Christ was raised! (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1,2; Luke 24:1,21)

2. Christians meet every first day of the week to remember and worship Him and proclaim His death, burial and resurrection (Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:25).

3. When we meet with the saints on the first day and break bread we acknowledge the resurrection; remembering Him until He comes again (I Cor. 11:23-26).

Conclusion: The resurrection of Jesus is the essential life-transforming truth of the gospel. Without it, Jesus is just another dead prophet and faith in the gospel is in vain. To truly acknowledge the resurrection of Jesus is to live a life totally different from the world about us. In these ways we show the world about us what the resurrection means! When we really believe there is empty tomb outside Jerusalem, it will impact our lives with excitement and enthusiasm. We will no longer have to be begged to attend assemblies, sing praises, teach our neighbor, or live daily for him. We will do it and do so joyfully.