

Remember the Resurrection ~ Luke 24:1-12

Pastor Colin Rieke ~ April 5, 2015



On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to

them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ ” Then they remembered his words. When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.



This is the day the Lord has risen, let us rejoice and be glad in it,

“Remember, remember the fifth of November, Gunpowder, treason and plot. I see no reason why gunpowder, treason, should ever be forgot.” How many of you have heard that rhyme before? If you are a student of history, that poem would bring to mind Guy Fawke’s plot to blow up the British Parliament. If you are a film aficionado, that poem would bring to mind the movie “V for Vendetta.” The poem urges each generation to remember the gunpowder plot to overthrow the British government, and that traitors would be punished.

Maybe it’s because we live half way across the world from where the gunpowder plot happened, maybe it’s because parents don’t share as many nursery rhymes with their kids. But I would venture to guess, not very many Americans would know what that poem is about. You would need to explain it to them, teach it to them. But even after you teach it to them, there’s still bound to be some who will forget about it, until they might hear it again.

Today we are celebrating something worth remembering – the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And even though we talk about it all year long, we specifically remember this day, the day he rose from the dead. And whether this is a message you are familiar with hearing, or not so familiar with hearing, today, I urge you to REMEMBER THE RESURRECTION

1. It is true
2. It is powerful

(1)

You see, Easter wasn't supposed to happen. Let me rephrase that, nobody thought Easter would happen. Sometimes we forget that because every year at about this time we hear the same story again – Jesus died, Jesus rose. But think about how unlikely that story is. Think about that, and we begin to get into the sandals and the attitudes of those first people who went to the tomb. It was women mind you, not the men who came bearing spices and fragrant aromas to prepare Jesus' body for burial. But even they weren't expecting the resurrection, they were expecting a dead guy.

And can we really blame them? Yes, Jesus had talked about dying and rising, they had even seen Jesus raise a few people from the dead. But to raise himself from the dead, they had never seen that before. This day was meant to be the great triumph for Jesus' enemies, the Pharisees, who could then point the accusing finger at those who believed Jesus was the Messiah. Now Jesus was dead. And we see now several women coming to finish the burial process.

But what they found was completely unexpected. Not only was the stone which had covered the tomb been tossed aside, the tomb was empty. Before they had a chance to wonder what had happened, two men appeared, with clothes glistening like the sun. These men were angels, and they spoke to the women and reminded them what Jesus said, **“Why do you look for the living one among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee.”**

It must have been one of those “glass shattering” moments, something that's been in front of your eyes the whole time, and you only just realize it. Similar to when you buy a particular make and model car then see it all the time on the road. As the women looked back on their time with Jesus, they did in fact remember when Jesus had said those words. They had dismissed them as meaning something else, but now they all made sense. This was not the work of grave robbers, the sight of the angels confirms this. The women REMEMBERED JESUS' WORDS ABOUT THE RESURRECTION. They saw that it was true. Jesus was probably not the first person who claimed he would rise from the dead. But he is the first and only person to prove it.

They saw the evidence of an empty tomb, they heard the testimony of the angels as to the risen nature of Christ. And they rushed off to tell his disciples. But what did the disciples think? They thought it was nonsensical, these women were talking crazy talk. Only two of the disciples bothered to even look for verification by running to the tomb. Peter ran to the tomb to see what had happened, and he saw the same thing the women did – the empty tomb. But instead of rejoicing that Jesus was alive, he went away wondering.

REMEMBER THE RESURRECTION, because it's true. It's true, Jesus didn't rise in the hearts of his followers and lives in that way. He rose physically from the grave, just like he said. He spoke it clearly, **“After I have risen, I will go ahead of you,”** and he spoke in metaphor, **“I will build this temple in three days.”** All the while telling his disciples that he would not only die but that he would rise. And he did. His words were true. Because his words about his resurrection are true, we know that all the words and promises he spoke are true. He even told us about this when he said, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life, whoever believes in me will live, and he will never die.”**

But we shouldn't kid ourselves into thinking we just need to prove the truth of the resurrection and everyone will believe. There are other matters of truth that people flat out deny, or outright reject

because it is convenient. The Pharisees knew very well Jesus' disciples didn't steal the body, yet they perpetuated that lie. So even if we were to convince someone of the truth of the events on Easter Sunday, that doesn't mean they would automatically believe. Only God can accomplish that. It is only God who can create faith in a person's heart to believe the gospel message, no matter how true it is or no matter how nonsensical it sounds. And if you believe Jesus rose from the dead, praise the Lord, because that is powerful.

(2)

REMEMBER THE RESURRECTION, because it is powerful. Have you ever thought why the stone was rolled away from the tomb on Easter Sunday morning? Many people think it was to let Jesus out, like a parent letting a child out of their bedroom. But that's not the reason the stone was rolled away – Jesus could have passed through that stone as easily as he passed through a door later that night. The stone was rolled away to let the world see in. To let the world know that Jesus conquered death.

Any miracle that Jesus performed was powerful. But how much more so the resurrection. Scientists, despite all they know about life, still cannot create it. Science cannot bring something that is dead back to life. But what science cannot do, God did. Jesus' lifeless body was miraculously brought back to life. Death was compelled to loosen its grip on Jesus. Jesus showed his power over death. But that wasn't the only miracle that happened. Jesus' resurrection opened the door for all of us to rise as well.

We have that promise in 1 Corinthians 15, from which we read this morning. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we have the assurance that we too will rise from the dead and enjoy the glories of heaven with Jesus. The resurrection did more than just bring Jesus from death to life. The resurrection will do more than just take us to heaven. The resurrection has raised us from spiritual death to spiritual life. The Bible describes us as born in sin, blind in sin, dead in sin. This is what causes our anger, our jealousy, our lustful temptations, our doubt. The resurrection changed all of that. It changed us from being dead in sin, to alive for Christ.

Do you know what the most wonderful part about this news is? God has powerfully done it all. Because of what Jesus did, the door to heaven is open. No more hoops to jump through, no more tests to take, no more wondering "have I done enough." How is this all yours? Simply put, **"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."** (Acts 16:31)

How does this make us feel? The writer Peter Kreeft has an interesting take on it. Listen to what he has to say: "Now suppose both death and hell were utterly defeated. Suppose the fight was fixed. Suppose God took you on a crystal ball trip into your future and you saw with indubitable certainty that despite everything -- your sin, your smallness, your stupidity -- you could have free for the asking your whole crazy heart's deepest desire: heaven, eternal joy. Would you not return fearless and singing? What can earth do to you if you are guaranteed heaven? To fear the worst earthly loss would be like a millionaire fearing the loss of a penny -- less, a scratch on a penny."

Christians have been guaranteed heaven, because of the resurrection. The resurrection is so powerful, it relegates all other things that we can worry about. Because of the resurrection, we don't have to worry about what will happen in this world, because we know what will happen in the next. When we remember this, life becomes much simpler. We view this life through the lens of the

resurrection. That's not to say that our life will be perfect by any means, but we know that our eternal life will be perfect because of the resurrection. Our lives will not be controlled by kid's soccer practices, credit card debt or mortgage payments, but rather the resurrection takes center stage. Not just today on Easter, but every day. Every day you can REMEMBER THE RESURRECTION and the power it has. Every Sunday you can come here and hear about and be strengthened in that power of the resurrection.

With the women, we have traveled along with Jesus through his Passion and watched as he was laid in the tomb. But the final trip to the tomb doesn't reveal the finality of death. Rather, it reveals the finality for death. What a change! No doubt Peter was confused, wondering what had happened. Do not look for the living among the dead. Death has been swallowed up in victory; Christ has risen just as he said! Death no longer has mastery over us. Easter means that death ends in life! So REMEMBER THE RESURRECTION. Amen.

