

Resurrection Sunday - Personally Applying the Resurrection - Communion

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[0 : 00] ...because of time constraints and of necessity, we will not be able to entertain a question and answer period like we are sometimes able to do after the message, because I took all of the question and answer time up with the announcements this morning.

But I think this is the kind of message that probably would not lend itself nearly as well to a Q&A; anyhow. Now, we're going to be talking about some of the practical aspects of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

I'm sure all of the benefits that accrue to mankind because he is risen cannot be enumerated. They are not even all known among the sons of men, because God has accomplished a lot of things without our even yet being aware of it.

But we do know that one of the very principal reasons, and perhaps the principal reason, for Jesus Christ ever coming, for his ever leaving those ivory palaces, was to repair a broken relationship. That bond which had been created between the creator and the creature had been voluntarily broken on the part of the creature.

[1 : 19] Our first parents, in their disobedience to God, took upon themselves a new kind of nature that God did not create within them. It's called the sinful nature.

And the essence of the sinful nature is abject selfishness, self-centeredness. It is a moral, spiritual disease that affects and infects all of us.

None of us have escaped this terminal disease called sin. And we are all going to experience the same kind of consequences that it brought, as did our first parents.

They died spiritually, and they died physically. And yet, when Jesus Christ countered that, through the promise being fulfilled that he gave to our first parents in Genesis 3, about the seed of the woman crushing the head of the serpent, in connection with that, that is precisely what happened when Christ died on that cross.

And much of the world's population, in fact, I think it's safe to say most of the world's population, have no idea what the cross of Jesus Christ was really all about.

[2 : 42] And because they can't really appreciate the rationale and the reason for the cross, they are as well at sea when it comes to the resurrection. They don't get that either.

They're not able to connect the dots. But without going into detail, let me just say this, that the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ changed everything.

I mean, it changed absolutely everything. It became the central focal point of the entire world for all of human history. What happened on that hill called Calvary, outside the city of Jerusalem, forever changed the destiny of all those who put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

And there are incredible and numerous benefits that accrue to the believer because Jesus died and rose again. But if you do not know what those benefits are, there is no way that you can implement them or take advantage of them.

And perhaps one of the most practical and significant events or ideas or concepts that came out of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ is an extension or an application of what he actually accomplished there.

[4 : 03] And as I said earlier, what his coming was principally all about was reconciliation. We read in 2 Corinthians 5, God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

And as we have been saying for so these many years that I have been with you, that God is so committed to the value of relationships and connections that he sent his own son down to this earth solely for the purpose of reestablishing a broken connection between our first parents and all of

their progeny, which includes us and himself.

And because Jesus Christ balanced God's righteous scales of morality in the universe, Jesus balanced the scales of God's justice.

And that enabled him to let us go free because justice was served in the person of Jesus Christ.

And it is because of that incredible act that took place that we are able to experience the newness of life.

[5 : 35] Because when Christ died on that cross, he opened up a way of access to God that did not exist before. And now all everywhere are free to come to him because Christ has removed the barrier, the impediment that was against us, the impediment that kept God from accepting us because he is a holy God and we are unholy people.

But in Christ, we have his righteousness. And when we come to faith in him, we are given this new life, this regenerated life that makes us a new person on the inside.

And it comes only through a personal placing of one's trust and faith in Christ as your sin bearer.

So, it seems to me that the most profound thing that should be our portion for being recipients of eternal life and eternal blessing and eternal benefit, the response on our part should be one of overwhelming gratitude and thankfulness.

And how can we best express that? Jesus said, If you love me, keep my commandments. Keep my word. The best way we can demonstrate gratitude is by our obedience to what God commands.

And since God has placed such an enormous premium upon relationships and connections, because listen, this is the essence of life.

[7 : 22] And you'd be surprised how many people don't know this. You'd be surprised how many people throughout the world think the essence of life is wealth, health, notoriety, fame, stardom, recognition, whatever.

No, no. The essence of life is found in relationships. It's in connections. It's people. That's what life is really all about.

That's where its greatest joys are realized. In connecting, first of all, with God, and then in connecting with people. And in an effort to express our appreciation to God for being connected with Him through receiving His forgiveness, His righteousness, we ought to just naturally, I think, have a desire to share that with other people.

That which changed our life. That which renewed us. That which regenerated us. That which gave us eternal life. That which gave us Christ's righteousness.

It's something we should be so grateful for, we want to communicate it and share it with others. And that's what missions, of course, is all about. That's what evangelism is all about. It's connections.

And when we proclaim the gospel, we are simply giving people information.

[8 : 51] Information that they can act on, just as we did when we came to faith in Christ. And then secondly, by way of a practical application of that death, burial, and resurrection, we should hasten to maintain or repair, if necessary, broken connections in our relationships with our fellow human beings.

We all know of terrible, tragic, sad stories of people who once loved each other, who haven't spoken in years because somebody's angry, somebody's hurt, somebody's resentful, somebody refuses to repair the rift or even make an effort at it.

I received a letter just recently from someone who was at Grace years ago and they're in Colorado now. And they informed me that in the small local church that they were attending, there were two women who were at one another and it was disrupting the fellowship.

And of course, what happens in those cases is that people usually choose up sides, you know, and then you have a congregation of the them and us and the them sit on that side and the us sit on that side and there the tweens shall meet.

It is petty, carnal fleshliness is what it is. But it so often characterizes churches and families.

[10 : 38] And it reminds me of what Paul said when he wrote to the Philippians. He said, I beseech lodias, and Syntyche, that they be of the same mind, one mind, another.

These, we don't know the details, but they were obviously two ladies that had a falling out of some kind. And old J. Vernon McGee used to say in his Texas drawl, and I don't know about having a name like these, but these were the names that these women were given.

lodias, E-U-O-D-I-U-S, lodias and Syntyche. S-Y-N-T-C-H-E, lodias and Syntyche.

And J. Vernon McGee called them, one was named Odeus, and the other was soon touchy. Well, and you know something? We all know that it isn't limited to the ladies, is it? Sometimes, it affects the men as well. And the reason it does is because we say things and we do things to one another that hurt, that wound us, that cause us real pain.

[11 : 53] And the response to that hurt and that anger is anger and resentment and pulling back, withdrawing, avoiding that person so that you don't have to interact with them.

You ignore them in the hallway. You look the other way or you're, you know, you're preoccupied. You don't, you don't want to talk to them. This is a bad thing.

And it is never confined to the principles, but it always has a way of spreading and involving others. And when these kind of rifts take place, and we are all prone to them because, as James said, in many ways we offend all.

Let's face it, we are all capable of saying something stupid, something hurtful, something out of line that we shouldn't have said, or doing something. We're all capable of that. We're all cut from the same bolt of cloth.

We can all misspeak. We can all say, ooh, you know, the day later, I wish I hadn't said that. I wish I could take that back. But you can't take it back. But you can follow it up with the right thing, and that is with simply acknowledging being big enough to own it.

[13 : 17] You know what? That was really dumb of me to have said that. It was my fault. I shouldn't have done that. I shouldn't have said that. You know why we're not eager to do that?

Because we all have this thing called ego. The Bible calls it the flesh. And the ego wants to be protected and preserved.

We never want to be made to look bad or wrong. or feel bad or wrong. So we just deny it. So when and if these rifts happen, you know what I'm talking about.

There are fathers and sons who haven't spoken even by telephone for 20 years. others. In fact, they may not even know the other is alive.

And this goes on between sisters, between brothers, between friends and neighbors and co-workers. It goes on all the time. and it's just because we operate from the flesh rather than from the spirit.

[14 : 22] And when you do, you get the play out that Paul records in Galatians 5, that whole list of ugly activities that come from the flesh. And it's pretty ugly too. And we're all capable of that because we're all sons and daughters of Adam and we all still have an old nature.

And it's true, God has given us a new nature. But he hadn't done away with the old nature. And that's why it's still not only possible, but it's very possible for Christians to really blow it, really mess up big time.

And how people usually try to resolve situations of hurt and offense and resentment, how they usually try to resolve it is, do nothing, say nothing, just give it time.

time. And the hope is that with the passing of time, both parties will cool down and things can generally start to fall a little bit and the next thing you know, they'll at least look in one another's direction and they might even say, hi, you know.

But time alone never resolves these things in the right way. Never does. There's always that lingering hurt.

[15 : 45] And it hurts. And you know, nobody can hurt you like those who are really close to you.

Strangers can't hurt you. Oh, I mean, you know, I don't mean that you can't go someplace and get mugged and get hurt that way, but I'm talking about the hurts of the heart.

Strangers can't hurt your heart. Only those that you love can really hurt your heart, can really wound you deeply, like the prodigal in Luke 15, you know.

So, my Easter message to you is one of a need for reconciliation whenever and wherever it exists because life is too short to spend it on the outs with anybody.

I mean, with anybody. And the only way that that can be done, the only biblical way that that can be done is by taking some responsibility whether you were the wounded or whether you were the wounder.

[17 : 03] And you know what? These things usually go both ways. Usually, we offend others and they offend us. We hurt them and they hurt us. And it's tit for tat. And, you know, brothers and sisters know all about this.

If you grew up with some siblings, you know, the sibling rivalry that goes on, the name calling and everything. But deep down in, there is almost always that deep abiding love that you would fight for that brother or sister.

or die for them if you had to be. But you can fight like cats and dogs when you're with them in the backseat of the car. That's typical. But rifts need to be mended.

And, you know, it can't always be done. Because it takes two parties to mend a rift.

One cannot do it independent of the other. And the reason you can't is because the offense and the hurt was a two-party proposition. And it takes two parties to resolve it.

[18:09] So it can't be done independently, no matter how much one wants to do it. But somebody has to make the first move. And one of my favorite sayings, is the reason I'm talking about this is because it's so fresh to me.

I did a series relating to this particular issue in Marriage on the Rock. Because the thing that always, I don't mean most of the time or a lot of the time, I mean all the time, all the time, that drives a wedge between a husband and a wife, so that if they aren't separated physically, they're separated emotionally, distanced, aloof, cold, it's always the same thing.

Always. There's never an exception to this. It's always. It's an offense. It's something that was said or something that was done that hurt. And the hurt person shrinks back, pulls back.

Because they don't want to be within range to be hurt again. Or sometimes in response, they don't shrink back, they hurt back. They hurt back. You have a knock-down, drag-out fight, as it were, you know.

But at any rate, it's a cleavage in the relationship. It's a separation. There is one good thing about husband and wife spats.

[19:40] There's only one good thing that I've ever been able to come up with, and that is making up is so much fun. Kissing and putting it behind you is so much fun.

That's the only good thing about it. But sometimes there's a terrible price of pain to be paid in order to get there. So, who's supposed to make the break?

Who's supposed to do the initiating here? And the little quip that I came up with, in this series that I did in Marriage on the Rock about relationships, it was probably, I don't know, probably six months ago, something like that.

But my solution is, the one who is to go is the one who is in the know. The one in the know is the one to go.

now. And yet the tendency is, I'm not going to go to her. Let her come to me. After all, I wasn't the one that caused this problem, they did.

[20:46] Let them come to me. I'm not going to them. But if you're the one in the know, and you understand these principles, you'd be big enough to do the right thing.

And do what you can to repair the relationship. Now, the sad part about this letter that I got from this gal in Colorado was, as regards of reconciliation, one of the ladies is willing and eager to resolve the issue and do whatever it takes, and the attitude of the other is, nothing doing.

I'm not interested. You know what the Bible calls that? Stiff necked, unrepentant, and hardness of heart.

don't be there. Don't be there. God has given us the ability, through what he has provided, in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, there is a whole plethora, a huge package of capabilities and possibilities available to us that the world knows nothing about.

And one of those is he will enable us to do the right thing if we are willing to exercise our volition to do the right thing. But he won't make us do it.

[22:07] God will not make you make it right, but he will empower you and undergird you in doing it the right way, if you're willing to.

This communion table, you notice it has the word union in it? that's not coincidental. It is a union. This is the body of Christ that we are celebrating. And the cup reminds us of his blood, the bread reminds us of his body. And the body and the blood are pretty much together.

There's a union there. And when we put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, we become members of the body, of the spiritual body of Christ.

We become in union with him. And then we celebrate that with these elements.

[23:07] These are mere mementos. There's nothing mysterious or magical in these elements. Nobody is changed from anything to anything. We do this in remembrance of him and what he did

for us.

so. It's a wonderful occasion to be able to remember him who was willing to lay aside his glory, come down to this earth and be one of us so we could have a human body to die in and to be resurrected and to provide us with new life.

life. I first heard this message December the 8th, 1956, and I have never gotten over it.

Don't expect to. So, if you know Christ as your personal Savior, whether you are a member of this church or not, you are a member of the body of Christ and you are invited to partake of this table.

If you are not a believer in Christ, partaking of these elements will not make you one, that is justification by faith and you commit yourself to Christ, acknowledging that you are lost without him and putting your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus who died as your substitute.

[24 : 28] And if and when you do that, God regenerates you, makes you a new creature in Christ, forgives you, pardons you, gives you eternal life. The package is just incredible.

And it's all wrapped up in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. And our striving to be at peace one with another is just one of the fruits that's made possible for those who are in Christ.

And it's a glorious thing. Elders, would you come forward please? We'll prepare the table. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

[25 : 42] Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[28 : 12] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[30 : 42] Thank you.

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[33 : 12] Thank you.

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[35 : 42] Thank you.

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