

ESF Lord's day sermon (Easter)
4/16/2017

The Confirmation of the Resurrection

Luke 24:36-49

³⁶ While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." ³⁷ They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. ³⁸ He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

⁴⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹ And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence. ⁴⁴ He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

On Feb. 27, 1991, at the height of the Desert Storm War, a woman by the name of Ruth Dillow received the worst news that a mom could ever receive. Her son, Clayton Carpenter, Private, First Class, had stepped on a land mine in the Persian Gulf. For the next three days she grieved the loss of her son, and although people tried to comfort her, there just aren't any words that can comfort the grieving mom – no words that can be whispered. Three days after the notification of her son's accident, the phone rang. She picked up the phone, and on the other end of the line there

was a voice that said, “Mom, it’s me. I’m alive.” She didn’t believe it. She thought it was some kind of cruel joke and as he continued to speak, she recognized his voice. Her son was alive. She said she laughed, cried, and rejoiced – what seemed like a hopeless situation was radically transformed into the greatest day of her life.

The resurrection of Jesus did not happen because of some wrong information of His death. Jesus was actually crucified on the cross, died and buried in a tomb for three days. And He rose again from the dead. What is the confirmation of the resurrection? If Jesus’ resurrection is confirmed, what does it have to do with our lives today?

The Appearance of the Risen Lord

The first confirmation of Jesus’ resurrection is the appearance of Jesus after He rose from the dead. In this text, after Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to His disciples and proved that His resurrection was not fake or imaginary but real. His appearance in this text is just one of His many appearances. According to the records of the Bible, He appeared to His disciples and followers at least 9 different times.

(1) To Mary Magdalene and the other women as they returned from the tomb, after having seen the angel who told them Christ had arisen (Matt. 28:8-10; Mark 16:9-10; John 20:11-18).

(2) To the two disciples, Cleopas and another, on the way to Emmaus, in the afternoon of the day of the resurrection (Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13-32).

(3) To Peter, just before the evening of the day of the resurrection, but under undetailed circumstances (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5).

(4) To the ten apostles, Thomas being absent, together with others on the evening of the day of the resurrection at their evening meal (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25; 1 Cor. 15:5).

(5) One week later, to all the eleven apostles, probably in the same place as the preceding appearance (Mark 16:14; John 20:26-29).

(6) To several of the disciples at the Sea of Galilee, while they were fishing (John 21:1-24).

(7) To more than 500 people and James, the Lord's brother, on an appointed mountain in Galilee (1 Cor. 15:6-7).

(8) To those who witnessed the Ascension at Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:19; Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:3-12).

(9) To Paul, who did not believe in Jesus at all and even persecuted the followers of Jesus (Acts 9:1-9, 22:6-11, 26:12-18; 1 Co. 15:8).

If there had been any tricks or manipulation to show the resurrection to the people, it would have been successful only to some people most of the time, or to many people some of the time. But the risen Lord Jesus showed His resurrection to many different people in many different occasions.

Also as we see in this text, He even encouraged His disciples to touch His resurrected body. He ate with them. He talked to them. With these events, the risen Jesus proved that He was not a ghost but a real person.

The Scripture

But a more important confirmation of the resurrection comes from the Scripture. The risen Lord Jesus would stay with His disciples just for a while and then would ascend to heaven. Later they would start doubting again about the resurrection. So, Jesus confirmed to them His resurrection not only through His appearance but through Scripture. He told them: *...Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms..... This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day.*

In the afternoon of the day Jesus rose from the dead, two followers of Jesus were walking on the road from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32). They heard about Jesus' resurrection but they did not believe it. On the road, they only remembered and talked about Jesus' painful death on the cross. Suddenly the risen Jesus appeared to them on the road. But they did not recognize that He was the risen Jesus. So Jesus helped them believe in His resurrection with the Scriptures. *"How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself"* (Luke 24:25-27).

Later they believed in the resurrection and testified, *"Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"* (Luke 24:32)

We can believe in Jesus' resurrection because of the records of the Scriptures which are unchanging and eternal truth.

The records in the Scriptures regarding the birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ are historical facts. Although there have been countless attempts to prove that they are fictional stories and false records, no one has ever been able to prove it. The records in the Scriptures still stand as firm truth. The resurrection is not only recorded in the New Testament but also in the Old Testament (Job 19:25-27; Psalm 16:10; 45:6-7; 110:1; Isaiah 26:19-21; 53:10-12; Ezekiel 37:12-14). The records in the Scriptures regarding the resurrection are the surest confirmation of the resurrection. So you have a choice- either you can deny the truth in the Scriptures and reject the resurrection or accept the truth in the Scriptures and believe in the resurrection.

The confirmation of the resurrection in believers' lives

Since the day of Jesus' resurrection 2000 years ago, the resurrection has been confirmed by millions of believers whose lives have been touched and transformed by the resurrection.

When Jesus gives us faith in His resurrection, He touches our lives with the power of the resurrection and confirms the resurrection.

How?

Jesus' resurrection gives us bold power.

When the risen Lord Jesus appeared to the disciples, they were hiding in a secret place with a fear of death. And He said to them "*Peace be with you.*" Jesus confirmed to them that He had conquered the power of death. He confirmed to them that with the resurrection, they had nothing to fear. This confirmation made them bold.

The disciples were ordinary men like us. When Jesus was arrested and crucified, they not only denied Jesus, but also fled. They became cowards with a fear of death. But after they saw the risen Lord Jesus and confirmed the resurrection, they became bold and courageous.

When the powerful religious leaders threatened to kill them if they kept preaching in Jesus' name, were they afraid? No! If they had been the same people as before the resurrection, they would have stopped preaching in Jesus' name. But with the power of the resurrection, they became different people. They were not afraid of death at all. They were bold. They responded to the religious leaders, "*We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard –(Jesus who rose from the dead)*" (Acts 4:20).

Their boldness without fear of death was evidence of the resurrection power in them.

When you receive the power of Jesus' resurrection, you don't fear death. You stay calm and bold even in severe trials and turmoil in your life.

This is confirmation of the resurrection in you.

Jesus' resurrection gives us joy.

This joy is different from any other joy we can get from this world. This joy is joy of the ultimate victory-victory over the power of death. Death brings sadness. Jesus' resurrection brings power to overcome death and the sadness of death. Jesus resurrection assures us of eternal life after death. With this assurance, we rejoice even in the midst of death.

There is a story of a Christian man and his wife who lost their young son in a tragic accident on Good Friday in 1996. The boy's funeral was on Easter Sunday. During the memorial service the father got up and shared with his family and friends that Easter had taken on a new importance. "Until you stare death eye-to-eye," he began sobbing, "Easter is just a word. It's a nice day with bunny rabbits and eggs . . . but when someone so precious to you dies, Easter becomes everything . . . an anchor in a fierce storm . . . a rock on which to stand . . . a hope that raises you above despair and keeps you going."

In the Bible, death means not only physical death, but also spiritual death. Spiritual death is man's separated status from God. Spiritually dead people do not know God. They are under the curse of God (Romans 1:18-32). Their souls are in darkness, emptiness and meaninglessness. Their souls are under the devil's rule.

With the power of the resurrection, Jesus revives spiritually dead souls. When spiritually dead people come alive, to know God and to worship God, there is joy. If you have this joy the resurrection is confirmed in you.

Jesus' resurrection gives us hope.

The risen Jesus emphasized that He had risen from the dead to fulfill the promise of God's word (verses 44-46). If Jesus fulfilled all prophecies concerning His death and resurrection, He'll surely fulfill all the other

promises including the promise of the Holy Spirit (verse 49). This gives us hope always.

The risen Jesus is not physically with us now. But He works through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works for us with the power of the resurrection. The Holy Spirit revives every dead situation in our lives.

After the risen Jesus ascended to heaven, the Holy Spirit worked in the disciples with the power of the resurrection. One day they met a man born crippled. He was over forty years old and had never been able to walk (Acts 4:22). In terms of healing of his handicap, there was no possibility and he was like a dead man. However, Peter and John believed the resurrection power in the Holy Spirit. They healed the man with the power of the resurrection.

We may face different kinds of dead situations- death of relationship, death of financial ability, death of physical ability, death of marriage, death of businesses, and death of reputation, etc. There is no way to revive such dead situations. But the Holy Spirit gives us hope. With the power of the resurrection, the Holy Spirit can revive everything dead and make it alive again. If you have hope in a dead situation, it is confirmation of the resurrection in you.