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God Raised Him from the Dead

Easter Sunday

April 17, 2022

Sermon Text: Acts 2:14-41

Scripture Reading: Acts 2

Psa 16:1-11 A Miktam of David. Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. (2) I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.” (3) As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. (4) The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips. (5) The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. (6) The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. (7) I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night

also my heart instructs me. (8) I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. (9) Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. (10) **For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.** (11) You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Liberalism – better titled *counterfeit Christianity* – wants to have its cake and eat it too. Denying the resurrection of Christ, such people still want to be known as Christ’s people. He will not have them.

As we heard this morning in the earlier class on 1 Cor 15, the Apostle Paul has made it plain. If Christ is not risen from the dead, neither are we. We would still be

dead in our sins, headed for hell, never to rise again. Death and the devil would still reign.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a historical fact, attested to by myriads of eye witnesses. The Old Testament prophets such as David foretold it, so to discount their testimony is to make them and in fact the entire Bible a record of lies.

If Christ is risen from the dead, if He came out of that tomb, if He is the glorified God-man seated now at His Father's right hand, then it is true – there is no name under heaven by which we are saved. There is no other way to the Father except by faith in His Son. No other religion can claim a risen Savior, and to deny and reject Him is to be guilty of the most evil sin. To hear Him, to believe in His name, is to have certainty of being justified before God and of our own resurrection to come.

Joh 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he

die, yet shall he live, (26) and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

On that Day of Pentecost which we have just read about in the second chapter of Acts, Peter preached a very powerful sermon to the very people who had just crucified their Messiah. That is to say, he was preaching to a hostile crowd. And yet, the indisputable claims he made to them could not be denied by them. Let's look at what Peter said again:

Act 2:14-18 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. (15) For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

(16) But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: (17) "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your

sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; (18) even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

Peter is announcing that the resurrection of Christ has inaugurated *the last days*. “In those days...” and those days had arrived. The crowds had just witnessed this coming of the Spirit of God upon God’s people – young and old, both men and women.

And Peter goes on to cite Joel –

Act 2:19-21 And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; (20) the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. (21) And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

The new era in Christ, the New Covenant dispensation, began with the resurrection of Christ and the sending of His Spirit. But Joel, says Peter, gave further description of the last days:

- Wonders in the heavens
- Signs on the earth
- Blood and fire
- Vapor of smoke
- Sun darkened
- Mood turned to blood

And all during this era of the last days, *everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved*. Peter will elaborate on this promise after he shows the crowds that Jesus has risen and that His resurrection is precisely what David had spoke of as a prophet centuries before.

But how are we to understand the words Peter cited from Joel and which he applied to this church age? The Spirit had come and now dwells in every one of Christ’s people, but what of these other events?

There certainly were signs on the earth – Jesus had performed many miracles and His resurrection topped them all. There had been wonders in the heavens above – the star of Bethlehem, the darkness that came at the death of Christ – but the blood, the fire, the vapor of smoke? What are these?

Let's see if we can find other such texts which might shed some light on this.

Mat 24:29-31 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days **the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.** (30) Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, **and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.** (31) And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Joe 3:13-16 Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their evil is great. (14) **Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near** in the valley of decision. (15) **The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.** (16) The LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, **and the heavens and the earth quake.** But the LORD is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel.

Zep 1:14-17 **The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there.** (15) A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, **a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness,** (16) a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements. (17) I will bring distress on mankind, so that they shall walk like the blind, because

they have sinned against the LORD; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung.

Rev 6:12-17 When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, **there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, (13) and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. (14) The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. (15)** Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, (16) calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, (17) **for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”**

Understand? It is obvious. Each of these Scriptures, and there are more, are speaking about the final judgment. The Day of the Lord. The return of Christ to judge the world. And in each case the same kinds of events that Joel spoke of (and which Peter cites) are connected with that Day.

Think also of the crucifixion –

Mat 27:45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.

Mat 27:50-53 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. (51) And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. (52) The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, (53) and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

The message to us is plain. *At the death and resurrection of Christ,*

the last days began and they will culminate with the great Day of the Lord when Christ comes again. There have been signs in the heavens – darkness – and signs on the earth – earthquakes – by which we know the last days have come. And these events will increase in intensity when Christ comes again.

Heb 12:25-26 See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. (26) At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.”

In this present age in which we live, the Lord is giving us frequent reminders of these very things, reminding us that these are the LAST days and that the end of this world is rapidly approaching-

Mat 24:6-13 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must

take place, but the end is not yet. (7) For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. (8) All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. (9) “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. (10) And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. (11) And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. (12) And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. (13) But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Once Christ comes again, the clock will have run out. The days when men can call on the name of the Lord and be saved will be over.

Now, listen as Peter continues:

Act 2:22-24 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God **with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him**

in your midst, as you yourselves know— (23) this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. (24) **God raised him up**, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

you lay me in the dust of death. (16) For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet— (17) I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; (18) they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

As you yourselves know. Remember, Peter was preaching to the very people who had just crucified their Messiah! But the fact is, *they did know*. They KNEW that Jesus had indeed been attested to them by God as the Son of God through the many signs and miracles He had done. *As you yourselves know.*

But, says Peter, the story did not end there. *God raised him up!* Peter continues now, the momentum of his argument increasing:

And according to the decree of God as recorded in their own Scriptures, **THEY** had crucified through the hands of the Romans.

Act 2:25-32 For David says concerning him, “I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; (26) therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope.

Psa 22:14-18 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; (15) my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws;

(27) For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. (28) You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’

(29) “Brothers, **I may say to you with confidence** about the

patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

(30) Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, (31) **he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ**, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

(32) This Jesus God raised up, **and of that we all are witnesses.**

Notice again how Peter repeatedly tells these people *that they knew!*

- I may say to you with confidence (they all knew David's tomb was right there in Jerusalem)
- And of that (the resurrection of Christ) *we all are witnesses.*

They all knew. The whole country knew!

Luk 24:17-18 And he said to them,

“What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad. (18) Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

So David, Peter argues, *could not have been speaking of himself in Psalm 16 because David's body did undergo corruption!* His tomb was right there and David's bones were in it!

So who was David talking about? He was prophesying about the bodily resurrection of Christ. It was Jesus' flesh that did not see corruption, nor did He remain in Sheol. *And of that they all were witnesses. HIS tomb was empty.*

You cannot claim to believe the Bible to be God's infallible, inerrant Word if you deny the bodily resurrection of Christ. You cannot be a Christian and deny the resurrection. The empty tomb is God's certain testimony that Christ

is His Son, the only way by which anyone can be saved. Paul said it to the Athenian philosophers:

Act 17:30-31 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, (31) because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; **and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.**”

In these last days, all through this New Testament era since the resurrection of Christ, God has provided “the sign of Jonah.” Three days in the tomb, then risen. No one can stand before God on that Day and claim ignorance. As we heard from R.C. Sproul, God does not *invite* men to believe, He *commands* them to repent and believe in His Son. And do so NOW, because that Day is coming when God will judge the world through His Son.

Christ is the Messiah. Christ is the Savior, the only Savior. Christ is

risen and ascended. And so Peter concludes his sermon, taking still another proof from King David:

Act 2:33-38 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

(34) For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, ““The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, (35) until I make your enemies your footstool.””

(36) Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

(37) Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” (38) And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you

will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

That is the promise given to everyone today – while it still is today.

...the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. (21) And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'