

**Few** events, leave you feeling more powerless than a **funeral**. The severing of whatever relationship you had with the dead.... is almost unbearable in its finality....

When I was a boy, I was very close to my grandfather... He was a farmer and had fought in WWI and I loved being at his house. When I was a freshman in HS.... I came home from school one day and my dad said the words.... "Pop is GONE"

That phrase echoed in my head for months... Even though my grandmother was still alive... I never visited that home again without feeling the sense of LOSS... that **Pop** was no longer around.

Death leaves those still living..... feeling utterly..... powerless.

How much more.... do you think the disciples felt that LOSS in the days following Jesus's **death**?

The last words they had heard this **LifeGiver** utter were not (at first) encouraging.....

### **John 19:28-30**

" After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "**I thirst.**" A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "**It is finished,**" and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."

They had not merely enjoyed His company for 3 years..... He was the One they had left **everything** for! They had transferred ALL their hope for eternal life to Him..... and now.... He was **DEAD**.....

....and their world was an..... empty **FOG**.....

Many things in life leave **us** feeling that way..... (whether it be the LOSS of someone we love.... or of some dream..... or just despair in general)...

Those **times**.... those seasons are designed by God to show us that our **ultimate** need is for a power we do not possess on our own.....

We need..... **Resurrection Power**....

That is the good news we are celebrating today..... that while you deserve not only to DIE.... because of having sinned against a Holy God....

But you deserve to spend an eternity under His **angry wrath**.... in paying for your own sin....

**INSTEAD** of that... however..... (for those who believe) God sent His Son....(Jesus) to live the perfect life which you could not....

And THEN offered Him up as YOUR **substitute**..... in dying a sacrificial death on the cross.....

On that **cross**..... Jesus took the FULL load of your punishment ...

I want to ask you (right now) to think of some ongoing practice in your life.....which you know is a transgression against God.....

You know it is sin..... and you know God hates sin with a passion.....

He hates **THAT** sin.....

He hates it enough that (in order to save you) He poured out His infinite hatred of **THAT** sin upon His only Son..... who TOOK it all **for** you... until He could say...

“It is FINISHED!” - Debt PAID in full.....

Your sin debt.... made our national debt.... look like a child’s allowance.....

But Jesus PAID it all ..... so that (if you will turn from your sin.... and begin to trust in His death) you will **LIVE**.

That turning is called repentance..... and that belief is called **FAITH**.....

Not faith in a church.... or a religious system..... certainly not faith in yourself....

but faith in the Ressurrected PERSON of Jesus Christ.....to save you from the wrath of God...

That’s a Christian.....

(nothing less.... nothing more)

Turn from your sin..... and begin to trust in Christ enough to follow Him.....

hold on to Jesus in a heart level trust....as SAVIOR and Lord....

For those who BELIEVE that good news..... it gets even better.....

Because not only did Jesus PAY for your sin on the cross.... so your sin debt could be **FORGIVEN**.....

But on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day after His death..... God **raised** Jesus from the dead.... so that He could CREDIT your account..... with the perfect righteousness of His **LIFE!**

Here is how that Resurrection Power was put on DISPLAY in real time....

**Luke 24:1-7**

" But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, **but has risen**. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day **rise**."

You hear all kinds of stories... now... of people who have died (for a few minutes).. then come back to life....

But this is now the dawn of the third day since Jesus died..... He had been buried in a sealed tomb..... with a ROCK so large no one could possibly move it from the inside...

Up until that point....No one.... had **ever** beaten DEATH before.....

Death had ALWAYS brought the knockout blow..... no matter how hard humans tried to fight....

But now... the angels said "Jesus has **RISEN!** (just as He said)..."

The **final** score in this battle is therefore..... **Jesus 1, Death 0**

Resurrection Power

1. Has Defeated Death

Jesus is the head of a new race of people..... who (through believing in Him) will **NEVER** taste the ultimate death of HELL.....

Because...in Him we have **eternal** life!

The News of Jesus' resurrection.....which the angels shared that morning.... spread quickly.....

It spread to the Chief Priests and elders of Israel who had delivered Him up to be crucified.....and (like many today) they made up a **LIE** to contradict the reality.....

The good news had also spread to His family..... and to His disciples.....

But (for the disciples) the news was almost **TOO good** to be true.....and so even at the Word of eyewitnesses..... they still marveled in **DISBELIEF**....

Perhaps that is where some of you are at.... this morning.....

You have heard this life changing truth before..... but it seems (to you) like some distant **fantasy**..... that might be fine for some..... but it just seems to simplistic to be real.....

Resurrection Power....

## 2. Is Power to **Believe**

It is critical to understand that people do not come into this world in some sort of **NEUTRAL** state.....

At least... not according to God's Word.....

Because of the guilt of Adam's sin..... which God counts to us.....

We come into life.... Spiritually **DEAD**..... in trespasses and sins.....

Our bodies are alive....our intellects are alive.... but we are CUT OFF from a life giving relationship with God.... because of sin...our spirits are dead.

We need.... (in effect) for God to RAISE us from our spiritual deadness.....

And Scripture says..... God does that.... with Resurrection Power....

### **Ephesians 2:4-6**

"But God, being rich in mercy, because of the **great love** with which he loved us, even when we were **dead** in our trespasses, **made us alive together with Christ**—by grace you have been saved—and **raised us up with him** and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,"

If you are here this morning..... and you have a glimmer of hope that it was for YOUR sin that Jesus died..... and you believe that God has raised Jesus from the dead.... so that **you** could LIVE forever with him as a child of God...

I want to tell you ...you have that hope... ONLY because GOD has MADE you alive together with Christ!!

In other words..... as you heard His Word.... God exerted Resurrection Power on your dead soul.... so that you could BELIEVE the good news about His Son!

That is what the Bible means by GRACE!

It is God's free gift of power for you to BELIEVE the gospel!

We see how it was fleshed out even in the disciples as they encountered the **RISEN** Christ...

**Luke 24:36-43**

" As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "**Peace** to you!" But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. And he said to them, "Why are you **troubled**, and why do **doubts arise in your hearts**? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still **disbelieved for joy** and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them."

Most people love SURPRISES....

Some of my favorite video clips are those of when children of dads who have been serving overseas for some time... unwrap a big box... and there in REAL life is their dad!!

The last time the disciples had seen Jesus... he was a bloodied... seemingly defeated... victim.... a limp.... lifeless corpse being carried into a tomb...

Now, he suddenly APPEARS in the very room.... (where the doors were locked) to talk with them!

And greets them with PEACE....

Whereas.... Shalom.... was then... and is now... the normal Hebrew greeting.... it is **not** insignificant....

That the very first word out of this Resurrected Savior..... is the very essence of what He came to bring between God and man..... **PEACE**.....

Reconciliation to you! I **AM** alive!

They simply could not believe it!

"The **DIS**believed....for joy"

It seemed to them **too good to be true**.....

So their minds.... just like yours.... started coming up with all kinds of explanations.... all sorts of rationalizations....

If that describes what is going on in your heart right now.....

Something of a **war** between BELIEVING and RECEIVING the good news .....and between some troubling **DOUBT**..... that this is all too good to be true.....

I want you to notice that Jesus **knew** for them.... and He knows for you.... EXACTLY what was happening in their hearts.....

And He wants to urge you.... by faith..... to look at the WOUNDS in His hands....and on His feet....

Which He still... at this moment..... bears on His resurrected body in heaven.....

He invited you (like He did those disciples to LOOK at them.....)

It is by your BELIEVING that those WOUNDS were for **you**.... that you can be healed... from this dreadful disease called sin...

#### **1 Peter 2:24**

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed."

Jesus was **wounded** for your sin.... so that you might be DONE with sin.....as the thing which KILLED your Savior....

So that you might begin to LOATHE...to **HATE** it..... instead of cherishing it...hiding it.....like some of you are right now...

So that you might count yourself as having DIED with Jesus.... to sin..... and live to and for righteousness... by the grace of God.....

- That's the **Christian Life**.... (nothing more.... nothing less)....

**That** is how you know whether or not you (or someone else) is actually **following** Jesus..... you will find a pattern.... of hating sin... instead of loving it..... and you will find an increasing DESIRE to live in a way that pleases God....in **righteousness**

Jesus was raised in a real live ....glorified human body..... just like **you** will enjoy in the New Heavens and the New Earth..... if you are a follower of Jesus...

But the disciples..... were still DOUBTING.....fearful.... they wanted to believe.... but they needed POWER....

They needed God to exert Resurrection power on their blinded eyes.....

And the means that God used then.... and now is exactly the same..... the hearing of the Word of God..... the Scriptures....

**Luke 24:44-45**

"Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,"

The Law of Moses was the **framework** for God's holy people the nation of Israel....

That nation.... was not an end in itself.... God's relationship with the nation... through Moses..... was a **TYPE**.... it was a foreshadowing.... of Him raising up a prophet from among them.... who would die for their sins....

The Prophets (in the Bible) likewise pointed forward to Christ!

The Psalms of David.... foretold (accurately) His suffering... His rejection by His own people....and pointed fwd to HIM...

So that JESUS (Son of David) was not only the pinnacle of Israel's history.... and fulfillment of ALL the promises God made to Abraham.....

But in Him... in JESUS... ALL the promises of God (to each of us) find their YES!

JESUS (alone) is the key that unlocks the door to a living relationship with GOD...

Jesus alone is the answer...

And as a FREE gift of love.....

God chooses to open our minds.... to grant us resurrection power.... so that we can **KNOW Him** through the Scriptures!

If that is new to you.....

Or if perhaps you are just beginning to **grasp** God's love for you in Jesus Christ....

These next words He spoke to the disciples .... are the most important words.... the most important truth you will ever need to know....

Everything else in all of reality... is designed to orbit around these facts:

**Luke 24:46-47**

"and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should **suffer** and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem."

**FACT:** Jesus suffered the penalty of HELL in his own body on the cross....and then because the price was paid in full for the sin of all who would believe in Him.....in VICTORIOUS wonder....

God raised Him from the dead on the third day!

That is what Christians in every country on the planet are celebrating today..... really... on every Lord's Day....

But what is significant.... is not what **others** are doing.....

But how YOU are responding to that good news.....in your heart right now?

**The** response God REQUIRES is not more regular church attendance..... or more random acts of kindness..... or more money given to the church to ensure you are in good standing.....

The direct response required when you hear the gospel..... whether for the first time... or for the 1,000,000<sup>th</sup> time..... is

- Repentance and Faith.....

Even now... some of you who are followers of Christ.....

The Holy Spirit has brought some practice or person.... some desire or **pursuit**....

that you have elevated (in your heart) to the place where ONLY Christ deserves to be.... in terms of your devotion and affection.....

Response to hearing of Christ being **wounded** for your transgressions..... for Him having to suffer **WRATH** because you have chosen to do that....

Is to REPENT....(to turn away from it)..... and to return to Christ... believing that His shed blood is ENOUGH .... for you to be **forgiven**....

So that you can FORGET about your failures....put them behind you..... and press on to the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.....standing on the goodness of the gospel!

**The Church** – is all about preaching that message....gathering a family of people who want to live with God's forgiving love at the center of their lives....

And then teaming up to get that good news to the NATIONS..... starting from right here where we are.....

More Good News for us!! God has not left us without power to carry that out.....

**Luke 24:48-49**

"You are witnesses of these things. And behold, **I am sending** the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

The Power Jesus is referencing here is not **figurative...**

In spiritual terms.... it is as tangible as the eruption of a volcano.....

We first saw it in FULL measure on the Day of Pentecost.... when over 5000 people... formerly DEAD in trespasses and sins.....

Had their eyes opened to understand the gospel!

**Still** seeing it today (thank You Lord).... even through this church.....as people who were formerly in DARKNESS are finding in the gospel..... Resurrection Power to believe...

AND.... Power to **CHANGE**.... (step by step and be conformed to the image of Christ)

Some of you here are in the GRIPS of some Satanic addiction.....

Nothing short of God's resurrection power can set you free....

I urge you to ASK God to fill you with the Spirit of the Risen Christ....

Then....ask Him for POWER to proclaim that same gospel to others still in darkness.....

We ALL **need** that power.....(wherever you are at in the journey.....) nothing else will do.....

And I want you to understand that it is the **SAME** power.... which God used to raised Jesus from the dead....

Think about that!..... as you consider things on your horizon.....that make you afraid....

As you think about relationships in your life so intertwined with conflict ..... that you have lost all hope....

When you are connected to the God who **raises the DEAD!** When His power... is resident in you....

Nothing shall be impossible with Him...

Resurrection Power

### 3. Is Power to **Rejoice!**

Remember what the disciples were like on the night Jesus was arrested..... They were all running away like scared chickens! Even Peter was cowering and denying Christ....

#### **Luke 24:50-53**

" Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God."

For the Christian.... joy is not some emotion that sort of "happens" when all your "stars line up"...

....when you get a little of what you want out of life.... so you are temporarily happy...

JOY is generated by the resurrection Power of Christ as you take hold of the reality of His gospel!

As HIS **risen life** enters yours..... it makes you VERY glad!

His Living Joy becomes like a river..... flowing out of your heart.....

Even when everything else in life **STINKS!**

As we close this morning..... I want to ask you to do a **heart check**.....

Some of you.... have been thinking..... okay good.....

Glad he is saying all of that..... for those who (unlike me) really need the gospel....

Let God put His stethoscope to your heart.....

As you enter into the realities of the gospel.....

Is it producing supernatural JOY.... and an eager expectation of eternal happiness!

That makes you want to FORGIVE anyone who has sinned against you!!

Freely releasing them.....

And to GATHER as ONE with other blood bought children of the resurrection???

Or is God's stethoscope..... hearing perhaps what it has heard for a long time.....

Yeah ...yeah..... yeah.....

More of the same....

Jesus is now in heaven..... pouring out blessings to us through His Holy Spirit....

The best of which is the GIFT of....Power to Rejoice **ALWAYS**.... in the unchanging goodness of His gospel.....

Repent... and Believe the Gospel....

because this Jesus who ascended into heaven on that day.... has promised to RETURN in exactly the same way.....

On some future day.....

To bring us into His loving presence forever.... where we will taste and KNOW fullness of JOY..... in the power of His resurrection.

Pray.

Only Jesus Can Rescue.....

**John 20:24-29**

" Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my

hand into his side, I will never believe.” Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.””