

LD 17; I Peter 1:3-5; I Cor. 15:12-28; He Rose Again on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Day I. His Necessary Resurrection II. His Beneficial Resurrection

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the historical event upon which the gospel- indeed the church stands or falls. It has been said that the resurrection is the most important event in the history of mankind. Of all the other events that Jesus endured- this is the one that every unbeliever will deny. The people of our world will have a hard time trying to explain away the fact that Jesus is a real person who came from Nazareth- no one really denies this. They have no problem with his life, suffering and even his death and burial. All these they can agree on. But when it comes to His resurrection, we find that only those who believe the gospels will embrace this event as true and historical. Because, for the church, this event is crucial- it is critical to our faith! As we will see, without the resurrection of Jesus there can be no salvation! So this morning we are moving from the humiliation of Jesus into His exaltation. After He suffered, was crucified, died and was buried- we know that on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day He rose again! This morning we consider this theme: Jesus Christ came back to life in order to become the Lord of life and the savior of the church.

### **I. His Necessary Resurrection**

In our first point we consider that His resurrection is not just a good idea- but rather that there is no hope and no salvation for us if He did not rise! So why must Jesus not only die but be raised again? Was it possible for Him to die alone- and remain dead- and yet still help us? Well, this is the opinion of many people today. Jesus was a good teacher- He had interesting things to say. He was an example- He lived a life that we should try to follow. He was ultimately misunderstood- and that is why the Jews killed Him. His life ended in a tragedy! This is the opinion of most people. But if that is the case- if Jesus died and remain dead- what would be lost? Well, our reading from I Cor. 15 dives into this subject. The context of I Cor. 15 is that some within the Corinthian church were teaching this very fact! That there was no such thing as a physical resurrection. That Jesus had died and stayed dead. That there was no

hope for the bodies of those who died. Jesus only gives us spiritual but not physical life- so we have spiritual hope in this life but none in the physical life that is to come. But that is not good news- as Paul says in this chapter. So Paul constructs an argument proving the necessity of the resurrection by considering the opposite- what would happen to us, our faith and the gospel if Jesus had not been raised. In v. 14 he starts by saying, if Jesus has not been raised, our preaching is in vain. If Christ is still dead, why have I spent countless hours on the road and on the sea? Why have I endured such trial and struggles in order to preach to you all- if Jesus is still dead- there is no reason for it. There is no urgency- as preachers will have no hope to offer. If salvation comes from hearing the word of God- and this word is Jesus- then without Jesus the word remains a dead letter. In other words, gospel preaching is powerless. In fact, as v. 15 continues- anyone who tells you that Jesus is alive when He is in fact dead is a liar! Paul- and anyone who preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ- is a deceiver- misrepresenting God. They have no good news to offer to you, because death wins in the end. All preachers are doing is selling you a bill of good- not worth the paper it is printed on. The Bible is nothing more than a bunch of paper and ink. The gospel has no power if Jesus could not conquer death- then what hope do you have! In fact, those who believe are to be pitied as v. 19 concludes. Believers are deceived- they are wrong- their hope is baseless and their comfort is only whistling in the dark. So those who preach and those who believe are a sorry lot. Preachers have not been sent by Christ if Christ is still dead- and believers are not called by Christ if Christ is still dead. Going back to v. 14- not only is the preaching vain- so also is your faith! What good does it do you to trust in someone who is dead? How can they help you? What good does it do to hope in someone who himself has succumbed to the grave? This point is made again in v. 17- without the resurrection your faith is futile! The one you trust in cannot help! And without the resurrection you are still in your sins! No one has atoned for you- you are still guilty in the sight of God- sin still clings to you and we know that all sin leads to death! So not only are you still in your sins, you are going to die and there is nothing that you or anyone can do about it! Death wins- there is no hope!

So without the resurrection there is no comfort and we will not see life! There is no hope for us in this life nor in the next! No one will dwell with God- there is no escape! We had just as well eat and drink for tomorrow we die! There is no purpose to this life- and no way to escape hell. We should be pitied as v. 19 says- because we have been deceived into thinking that we have good news when we do not. All is lost! This is how important the resurrection is- without it there is no good news in the gospel! The Bible and those who preach it are full of deceit- promising you something that is not true! So to summarize the necessity of the resurrection, we see that He need to rise again! First of all, to prove His word is true! Jesus foretold that He would rise again in Mt. 17, Mark 8 and in Luke 9- just to name a few. Would He really fulfill the sign of Jonah as we saw last week? So He needed to be raised because He had foretold it. Second, He needed to be raised to prove His power. His resurrection proves His identity! He has the power and authority to lay down His life and take it up again! He is the Lord of Life- He has the power of Life in Himself- and the grave is not stronger than the Son of Man! Third, He needed to be raised in order to secure our blessings. We will look at this more in our next point, but every blessing we receive finds Jesus at the source. Fourth, He needed to be raised to prove that He had victory over sin and death. His resurrection puts that power and victory on display for all to see. And finally, the sixth reason that Jesus needed to be raised is so that He would live forever as our perfect prophet, priest and king! As our living Messiah, He is able to gather and protect His people! Our living shepherd who gathers His sheep! That is why He must be raised again!

## **II. His Beneficial Resurrection**

Well, now that we understand the necessity of the resurrection, in our second point we consider the very concrete and specific benefit that we receive because He lives. LD 17 outlines these benefits and breaks them down into 3 categories. You will see that the living savior secures benefits for our past, present and future. Or we could say that Jesus is working in our lives as He secures our justification, sanctification and glorification! Only a living Savior can secure and apply these blessings to us! He lives

to preserve and apply the blessings He has earned! So then, one of the reasons that Jesus rose from the dead is for the sake of our salvation! 3 aspects then- starting with our change in status. As Rom. 4 puts it, Jesus was raised for our justification. The rising of Christ has secured our acceptance by the Father- in that we are declared righteous, holy and without blemish in His sight. It proves that the Father is satisfied and pleased with the Son- thus He is pleased with us! To prove that Jesus remained well pleasing to the Father- He needed to rise again! If we would be pleasing to God- we have to be joined to Him who is already pleasing to Him! This is possible because Jesus shares the righteousness He has earned with us- making us partakers of His grace. This sharing- or bestowing His gifts of righteousness and holiness with us- is a necessary part of our justification. Although we tend to think of justification as a work of the Father in declaring us legally righteous- this is not a legal fiction because Jesus shares His righteousness with us! Our new position is actually earned, established and true! The death and resurrection of Jesus is what secures forgiveness- not one without the other. He is our living mediator by which He brings peace between God and man- born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus as we read in I Peter 1! Added to this, He was raised for our sanctification. As LD 17 puts it, by His power we to are already raised to new life. Our hope for a new life is not only a future hope but it is a present reality. It is our living groom that washes us by His Spirit and Word. Christ is conforming us by the Spirit whom He has poured out upon us- giving us His mind and sanctifying us in the truth. One of the clearest ways to prove this point is His act of pouring out of His Spirit on Pentecost. Jesus needed to be alive in order to pour the Spirit upon us- so His resurrection is necessary for our sanctification! The putting to death of the sins that remain- and the coming to life in the image of Christ- presumes both the death and the resurrection of Christ! Or as Rom. 6:4 says, Christ was raised so that we might walk in newness of life. And finally, the third doctrine linked to the resurrection of Jesus is our glorification. If Jesus had not been raised from the dead, we would not be raised one day either. Our reading from I Cor. 15:23 calls Jesus the first fruit. Picture a new car being developed- and if you go to the car show

you will find a concept car that is going into production next year. That concept car is like a down payment- the first of many to follow. The pattern that will be followed for years to come. Well, Jesus is pattern for us- the first fruit of our future resurrection- what happened to Him will one day also be applied to us! As He was raised and glorified, we too will one day be made like him! As Phil. 3:20 says, we will be transformed to be like His glorified body.

To conclude, the dead do not have the ability to save others. Ironically, when Jesus was on the cross the crowds scoffed at him by saying- "He saved other why can't he save himself?" Well, Jesus did in fact take His life back- and it is His resurrection that secures our resurrection! He raised Himself so that He might also raise us! Ecclesiastes puts it like this, a living dog is better than a dead lion. The point is simply, anything living is better than the strongest thing that is dead. Well, this applies to our savior as well! A living savior is so much better for than one that died and remained dead! Jesus Christ came back to life in order to become the Lord of life and the savior of the church. Could we be so bold as to say that the resurrection of Jesus is one of the most significant and far-reaching events in history to ever happen? So rejoice in that Jesus has conquered the grave as He was resurrected on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day.