

April 16, 2017

## “The Significance of the Resurrection”

Luke 24:36-43

**FCF:** The disconnect of our Easter celebrations

**PROPOSITION:** (anchor) We must not trivialize the resurrection of Jesus (magnet) for it is an event of enormous significance.

### **SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:**

There is a disconnect to Easter. It’s like people from different lands using the same words but with different meanings. On one side, we have Peeps, pastels, and promises about hope triumphing over despair. On the other side, you have a story of a dead man risen who turned the world upside down. On one side, you have something nice, polite, user-friendly, but ultimately forgettable. On the other side, you have something bold, surprising, and life-transforming.

This thing on the one side we can ignore. But the thing on the other we need to drill into.

**SCRIPTURE READING:** [Luke 24:36-43](#)

### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

### **SERMON INTRODUCTION:**

Let’s talk about shockwaves. Last week, the USAF dropped a MOAB on a mountain complex in Afghanistan suspected of hiding ISIS fighters. MOAB stands for “massive ordnance air blast” and also “mother of all bombs”. It’s a 21k pound bomb with a concussive blast that rushes into the furthest reaches of cave tunnels, completely obliterating everything beneath.

That’s a shockwave. Paul speaks of another kind of shockwave in the text we read earlier in 1 Corinthians 15 ([READ 1 Corinthians 15:3](#)). The idea is that this is a message of first things. It is something over all, impacting and reshaping all. Nothing is untouched by its blast radius. What is it? The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It truly is a message of first importance.

The point? Easter should be celebrated. The fresh clothes, colored eggs, and chocolate bunnies are all fine. It should be celebrated. But it must never be trivialized. Easter must never be sentimentalized, marginalized, or spiritualized. We must not trivialize the resurrection of Jesus for it is an event of enormous significance. It is an event of enormous significance.

Now why do I say that? Because of three things we see in our text - the historicity of the resurrection, the centrality of the resurrection, and, finally, the physicality of the resurrection.

### **I. THE HISTORICITY OF THE RESURRECTION**

So, first, let’s consider the historicity of the resurrection. That is, the fact it happened.

#### *A) The Coherency of their Response*

This comes out in our text. Let’s start with the coherency of the disciples’ response.

##### 1. Initial reaction

In Luke 24, we have the account of the resurrection in stages. First, in vv.1-12, we read of the empty tomb. In vv.13-35, we read of Jesus’ appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

And here, in vv.36-43, we read of His appearance in Jerusalem. What is the initial reaction? (READ Luke 24:36-37) We might be surprised at their surprise. But it would seem natural.

2. Slow to grasp

We keep reading and we see not just surprise but slowness to grasp (READ Luke 24:40-41a). They are like sports fans sure they had lost only to see the winning points scored in the closing seconds. Jesus had told them of this. But it is category defying. So they weren't expecting it.

There is a coherency to their response. At face value, it seems plausible. It sounds real.

*B) The Candor of the Record*

But there is also the candor of the record. And, at that level, it just doesn't make sense.

1. Poor myth-making

The gospel writers are accused of inventing all this. But, if true, they were poor myth-makers. Think with me. These pillars of the church are not portrayed as heroes. Which begs a question, "If you want to win people to your cause, why do it this way?" Unless it happened this way.

2. Puzzling honesty

Which takes us not just to poor myth-making but to puzzling honesty, a willingness to own their failures, to lay it out there. How? That's not normal. Could something have happened to them?

The resurrection is an event of enormous significance. We see that it in its historicity.

*Application:*

Now, let me be clear. I'm just touching the surface here. We could talk about the number of ancient manuscripts, of outside attestations, and of archeology. We could talk about when the gospels were likely written, the identity and number of witnesses who corroborated the claims. We could talk about the need to explain the origin of the early church, why and how this all began as it did. It's been said that it takes more faith to disbelieve all this than to believe it.

My point is, you don't need to check your brain at the door. Drill down and think this through. If you're skeptical, be skeptical about your skepticism. Re-examine your assumptions. We must not trivialize the resurrection of Jesus for it is an event of enormous significance.

## **II. THE CENTRALITY OF THE RESURRECTION**

Once we have established the historicity of the resurrection, we can then speak of its centrality. That is, its meaning and implications. The list is long but I want to look at just three.

*A) The Victory of Jesus*

1. His tomb empty

First, the victory of Jesus. His tomb was empty. And so there was no body to be found.

2. His triumph clear

Which means His triumph is clear. He not only engaged the forces of darkness. He beat them.

*B) The Forgiveness of Sins*

1. Satan accuses

Beyond that, there is the forgiveness of sins. Satan is a liar, a destroyer, and an accuser.

## 2. Our response

But with the resurrection, when he says “this is now the thing” that will drive us from God’s love, we can say, “You don’t know the half of it. I am so much worse. But I am not relying on my works but Jesus’. I’m one with Him. He died for me. And I am raised with Him.”

### C) *Our Hope for the Future*

So there is the victory of Jesus and the forgiveness of sins. And our hope for the future.

#### 1. The promise of a harvest

Jesus’ resurrection is spoken of as the first fruits. Meaning it is the promise of a harvest to come.

#### 2. A glimpse of the harvest

But not just a promise but a glimpse into it, an indication of what lies ahead. It’s the first fruits.

You see, there is a centrality to the resurrection. It is an event of enormous significance.

#### *Illustration:*

Do we see this? We speak of distracted drivers. Just this past week, I saw a man using one hand to hold his lighter, one hand to hold his cigarette, with his cellphone squeezed between his neck and his shoulder. Just absurd. But what of distracted living? No one stops to think.

#### *Application:*

Could that be you? Or me? Content with numbing ourselves, with staying busy, flitting about without any focus? We desperately need to think this through. And to work it out.

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### **III. THE PHYSICALITY OF THE RESURRECTION**

Which brings me to this - the physicality of the resurrection. A major theme of our text.

#### A) *Intentional Actions*

These disciples were to be sent forth as heralds of this news. And Jesus was determined that they (and we) would be able to embrace it. So we see Him take these intentional actions.

##### 1. Shows the scars

(**READ Luke 24:38-40**) To counter their troubles and doubts, Jesus shows them His scars.

##### 2. Eats a fish

Then He presses in towards them even further (**READ Luke 24:41-43**). What kind of effect did this have? It showed them this was not a ghostly apparition but His physical presence with them.

#### B) *Narrative Emphasis*

So we have these intentional actions. And then, beyond even that, the narrative emphasis.

##### 1. Luke’s account

Note how Luke phrases this (**READ Luke 24:36a**). You can easily hear the emphasis here.

##### 2. Jesus’ words

Then there are Jesus’ own words (**READ Luke 24:39a**). It’s Him! It’s really Him!

The risen Christ is Jesus of Nazareth. Yes, He can now suddenly appear and disappear. So there are differences from before. But it is still Him! Healed, strong, and no longer subject to death. There is a physicality to the resurrection. It is an event of enormous significance.

*Illustration:*

Docetism lives but needs to be put down. You say, “What does that mean?” Docetism was a heresy in the early church that said Jesus was divine but that He only appeared to be human. He only seemed to have a physical body. Well, we can easily slide right back into that.

*Application:*

There is a physicality to the resurrection. Which means at least two things. First, everything matters. Your whole self - both your soul and your body. Your whole life - career, love life, education, hobbies. The whole world - every issue we face. For Jesus is the risen king.

Everything matters. And, second, this is a message for everyone. Indeed, there are things worth fighting for. Christian ethics lands hard. You’re passionate about sex trafficking, racism, the environment, animal cruelty. Good. The gospel gives you reason and direction for all that.

And the ability to live without regrets. We worry we’ll miss out. We’re told we only go around once. So we play it safe and hedge our bets. The resurrection shows we don’t go around just once. Which frees us to live boldly and sacrificially. For we’re not going to miss anything.

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**CONCLUSION:**

Perhaps you’ve heard of “historical revisionism” - the reinterpretation of the historical record. It’s usually meant as a critique. But it’s fairly common and not always controversial.

A case study - George Washington and the cherry tree. For years, we were told of how young George cut down this tree against his parents’ wishes. When confronted, he said, “I cannot tell a lie” and told all. Well, it never happened. In 2008, archeologists explored the land around Washington’s boyhood home and found no signs of such trees. It turns out that it was all fabricated by an early biographer. Now, has that had any effect on Washington’s place in history? No, not at all. But what if it did? What if we were told, “He was an historical figure but insignificant. His contributions and accomplishments are interesting but irrelevant to us today.” We would say that’s absurd and that this was a case of historical revision gone wrong.

Here’s the thing. That’s exactly what many of us suffer from when it comes to our view of the resurrection of Jesus. Because of a combination of cultural pressures, satanic scheming, and our pliable affections, we’ve come to think and live as though the most significant event in the history of the world since the creation of the world is insignificant. And trivial in its impact.

My friends, this news is good and real. It has feet. It can change your life. Don’t let yourself be duped and deceived. The resurrection of Jesus is an event of enormous significance.

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