



WEEKLY SERMON

Volume No. 2024 Issue No. 12
March 31, 2024

Sunday March 31, 2024

Pastor David Miklas

Message: Easter Sunday - 2024

Phone: 717-715-3317

E-mail: pastormiklas@aol.com

Text: I Peter 1:3-9

In the Gospel of Matthew 28:1-7 we read,

"In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. (2) And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. (3) His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: (4) And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. (5) And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. (6) He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. (7) And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you."

As dark as the day seemed to be and as discouraged as the disciples were, Sunday made all the difference. Even though He had told them in advance in Luke 24:7; they did not connect the dots (as we say) when the crisis came.

Crucifixion is such an ugly, traumatic event. The shock and the sadness attending it create deep wounds. Death is made all the more real by the entombment of the body. The garden tomb was sealed with a huge stone. Roman guards were posted to secure the situation.

Starting Wednesday night, Thursday was one day, Friday made two, and Saturday, three of the full days and three full nights. These were days of silence and sorrow. Nothing was stirring! It was all over, except coping with the reality. **Then Sunday came!**

Oh, my soul, check it out! Sometime after 6:00 p.m. on Saturday (the Jews counted a day from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.), the Saviour, crucified and buried, walked out of the tomb alive and well, resurrected from the dead and released from the grave. Wednesday was incomprehensible! Thursday, Friday and Saturday posed questions which seemed to have no answers! But never mind the critics, the cranks, the naysayers; never mind whoever may mock and jeer; never mind whatever seems impossible. **Sunday is forthcoming!**

When the sun rose Sunday morning, the Son had already risen from the grave. Death had been conquered. Sin had been atoned. Salvation had been secured. The Devil had been defeated, and Hell had been robbed of its victims.

Sunday makes all the difference. Defeat and destruction are no longer our lot. Because **"he is risen..."** (Matthew 28:6), you and I have a hope that brings **"joy unspeakable and full of glory..."** (I Peter 1:8). When the Devil shows up in your life and shows off his glitz and glitter remind him that he is a whipped dog whose bark is bigger than his bite. Preach to yourself the great truth that **"greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world"** (I John 4:4). Stand up, be counted, and rise above the fray! By faith we have everlasting life that is bestowed upon us when we are

"begotten ... again" (I Pet. 1:3). The other six days may bring all kinds of stress or burdens to you, but because of the triumphant resurrection of Jesus, don't you forget that **Sunday is coming!** Amen!

Thinking about the RESURRECTION – consider the following, **HOW DO I KNOW CHRIST IS RISEN**:

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a proven fact of history. The Apostle Paul states in I Corinthians 15:3-4, "**For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; (4) And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:**" Our loving Saviour died, was buried, and rose again that you might have forgiveness of all your sins: past, present, and future. If you will accept Him today, you will be able to say with Paul that you serve a risen, living, omnipotent Saviour. This was beautifully expressed in the hymn written by A. H. Ackley.

**I serve a risen Saviour, He's in the world today,
I know that He is living, whatever men may say;
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer,
And just the time I need Him, He's always near.**

**In all the world around me, I see His loving care,
And though my heart grows weary, I never will despair,
I know that He is leading, through all the stormy blast,
The day of His appearing will come at last.**

Eugene Harrison wrote:

**How do I know that Christ is risen? What proof have I to give?
He rescued me from sin's dark prison, and I began to live.**

**How do I know He left the tomb that Easter long ago?
I met Him at the dawn's fresh bloom, and life is all aglow.**

**How do I know He gained for me access to Heaven's door?
Christ's work in me is guarantee of life forevermore.**

**How do I know that Christ still lives rich blessings to impart?
Abundant grace and peace He gives and lives within my heart.**

The angel spoke at the empty tomb in Matthew 28:5-7, "**Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. (6) He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. (7) And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.**"

Again may your heart be enraptured during this Passion Week, leading up to Resurrection Sunday!

In His Amazing Grace

Pastor David Miklas

“I Serve a Risen Saviour”

INTRODUCTION: Please turn with me in your Bible to the First Epistle of Peter chapter 1 and follow me as I read verses 1-9,

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, (2) Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. (3) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, (5) Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (6) Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: (7) That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: (8) Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: (9) Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”

Notice again the last part of verse 3, "hath begotten us again unto a lively (or living) hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is more than a beautiful thought. It is more than a religious concept. **It is a historical fact.** It is a fact so persuasive that many who have sought to disprove it have been converted to Christ by the truth they have discovered.

Many years ago in England there were two men, one named Lyttleton and the other named West. They got together and one of them said, "If we could disprove two things, the conversion of the Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus and the resurrection of Jesus, we could destroy Christianity."

So Lyttleton set out to disprove the conversion of the Apostle Paul. West set out during that year to disprove the resurrection of Jesus.

A year later they meet and Lyttleton said to West, "After a year of investigation, I am convinced that the Bible story of the conversion of the Apostle Paul is true and I have been converted to Jesus Christ." Then West said to Lyttleton, "I have been investigating the resurrection of Jesus for a year, and I too have discovered that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fact. And it may surprise you to know that I have received Him as my Saviour."

From the very first resurrection morning until now, our faith has moved forward based on the fact that Jesus Christ did rise from the dead and that He is alive and changing lives. Praise God, the Saviour's suffering, found its **COMPLEMENT** in the empty tomb, where:

Jesus "tore the bars away."
"Up from the grave He arose with a mighty triumph over His foes.
He arose the Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose, Hallelujah, Christ arose!"

Just as the heart pumps life-giving blood to the body, so the resurrection is the very heart of the gospel, pumping life into every area of our soul. The resurrection is the fulcrum on which all of Christianity turns. Take away the resurrection, and Christianity becomes just another useless human philosophy.

Destroy the Resurrection of Christ and you render the Bible ineffective. If Jesus Christ was not risen from the dead, as the Bible teaches us, then the Bible is not the **VERBALLY INSPIRED, INERRANT, INFALLIBLE** Word of God. The resurrection is mentioned in the New Testament **104 times in 260 chapters**. No one can read the

last chapters of the Gospels, the book of Acts and the letters of the Apostles Peter, Paul and John, without a profound conviction that the resurrection of Jesus was a confirmed fact. **IT WAS GOD'S "AMEN" TO THE CROSS!**

Destroy the Resurrection of Christ and you discredit Jesus' own testimony. Five times before His death, Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will rise it up." (John 2:19) One time he said in John 10:17-18, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

Destroy the Resurrection of Christ and you destroy the deity of Christ. For Romans 1:4 tells us He was, "declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead."

Destroy the Resurrection of Christ and you destroy the witness of the Gospel. The preaching of the resurrection was the dominate theme of the Apostles preaching. In Acts 4:33 we read, "...And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."

Destroy the Resurrection of Christ and you find the Christian faith is vain. We read in I Corinthians 15:14, 17, "If Christ be not risen, Then is our preaching in vain, and your faith is also vain. ...ye are yet in your sins." What has been said is certainly true: **THE RESURRECTION IS THE CORNERSTONE OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH AND IS IMPORTANT TO THE DESTINY OF EVERY HUMAN SOUL.**

Now in view of the crucifixion and in view of the resurrection, the burning question that needs to be answered this Easter Sunday is: **WHAT IS GOD DOING RIGHT NOW?**

**Is the God we worship only to be identified with the PAST?
Is the God we worship and serve only to be identified with what is going to happen in the FUTURE?
What about the PRESENT? WHAT IS GOD DOING RIGHT NOW?**

Again notice with me I Peter 1:3-5, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, (5) Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Here in this long sentence, I believe we have the answer to the question, **WHAT IS GOD DOING RIGHT NOW?**

At the end of verse 2, we have a reference to the **BLOOD** of Jesus Christ that speaks of the **CROSS** and the **CRUCIFIXION** of Jesus Christ. While at the end of verse 3, there is a reference to the **RESURRECTION** of Jesus Christ. Please note the statement that is sandwiched between the end of verse 2 and the end of verse 3. It reads, "**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

The blind songwriter, Fanny Crosby, wrote:

**"Tell of the CROSS where they nailed Him, writhing in anguish and pain.
Tell of the GRAVE where they laid Him,
Tell how HE LIVETH again."**

Now Peter is saying: In view of the crucifixion and in view of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we must do something about these events. What should we do? We should "**Bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...**" David said in Psalm 103:1, "**Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy Name.**"

We are accustomed nowadays to say:

**Lord, bless this and Lord, bless that.
Lord, we ask you to bless the offerings.
Lord, we ask you to bless me and my family.
Lord we ask you to bless the missionaries.**

We are always asking for God's blessing upon us, and seldom do we find the need **TO BLESS GOD!** Now that's what this verse of scripture is telling us to do. It is telling us:

In light of what Christ has done for us on the cross of Calvary, and
In light of what transpired at the empty tomb,
We are to "Bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..."

Well now, "**How do you do that, How do you and I bless God?**" The word "**BLESSED**" comes from the Greek word which is known by the English as "**EULOGIZE.**" Peter is saying, in effect, to "**EULOGIZE GOD.**" In other words, in view of the Cross of Calvary and in view of the Resurrection, we are to "**EULOGIZE GOD.**" We are to "**PRAISE GOD.**"

The word **EULOGIZE** is made up of two words meaning "**to speak well.**" It means to speak well of someone. In our world, it is not uncommon to hear God's name taken in vain, "**God _____ this or God _____ that.**" In fact, many of you may have heard these phrases this past week.

However, the Word of God is telling those of us who have experienced the New Birth, as a result of Christ's death and resurrection, that we are to **speak OUT** and to **speak WELL** of God.

Back in Matthew 28:5-7, the Angels' message to the women who came to the Empty tomb was simple,

"And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. (6) He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. (7) And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you."

The angels said, "**Come and see where the Lord laid...go and tell.**" Listen. Easter is not a day of decoration, during which we all parade into church for the service. It is a day of **PROCLAMATION.** Once you have received Christ as your Saviour, every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has the responsibility "**TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL**" that Jesus died and is now alive!

**Our gospel is not purely personal, to be selfish about, to hide the fact that we are Christians.
It is to be PROCLAIMED!**

The Bible tells us not only to **PROCLAIM** the gospel, but also to **SPEAK WELL OF GOD.** Is not this the reason we have this service this morning? For that matter, isn't that why we have church every first day of the week? We gather to speak well of God.

**We praise His name through our Hymns.
We praise His name through the service we render.
We praise His name through our tithes and offerings.
We praise His name through the message.**

We bless His Holy Name because of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ!
We especially celebrate the results of this event.

The questions I ask are, **What has the DEATH and RESURRECTION of our Lord Jesus Christ**

come to mean in your life? Why should this event bring joy to your soul?

As Christians, we celebrate the resurrection of Christ because of something that has happened in our lives in a very personal way. However, if the resurrection hasn't affected your life in a personal way, or it hasn't touched you and changed your life through faith, then you really have nothing to celebrate as far as Easter is concerned.

Nevertheless, there are three things in verses 3-4 that tell us what the resurrection accomplished on our behalf.

First: In verse 3 notice the phrase, "Hath begotten us again." Here is what Easter is all about. Here is the reason Christ was crucified and arose again from the dead, so that we might be "begotten again."

Now someone who has been "begotten again" is someone who has been born twice. You not only have had a physical birth, but you have also had a spiritual birth. Did not Jesus say in John 3:5, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"?

If I were to ask you to tell us **the day, the year, and the place** of your physical birthday, most of you would be able to give that to me without any doubt. But I wonder how many in this room can stand to their feet and say:

"Because of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, I can truly say there was a DAY in my life when I was truly BORN AGAIN through a PERSONAL FAITH in the Lord Jesus Christ. I can tell you the PLACE, the DAY and what exactly TRANSPIRED at that moment."

Now, if you can't tell us that, then the resurrection, as far as you are concerned, means **NOTHING**. Jesus arose from the dead:

In order that we might be Begotten again,
In order that we might be Born again, and
In order that we might be Born a second time!

Romans 10:9 reads, "... if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." I wonder if you can include your name in that verse.

You ask me, **WHAT IS GOD DOING RIGHT NOW?** I believe God, at this very moment, is causing men and women, boys and girls, to be born again, born a second time, through faith in the Lord Jesus. God is doing that, all over this world at this very moment, as a result of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Second: In verse 3 notice the phrase "A Living Hope." Here is the second result of the death and resurrection of Christ. We who have been begotten again have become recipients of what the Bible calls "a living Hope."

When we speak of **HOPE**, we usually speak of some kind of a wish. For example,

"I hope all of you will be here next Sunday." Now that is a wish. In all probability that will not come true, but none the less, I hope you will all be here next Lord's Day.

"I hope you are all listening to what I have to say in this message." Some of you are, but in all probability, there are some of you who are not. This is something I kind of wish would happen.

Here, the Bible is not saying that God has given us some kind of a day dream to live in and live through or some kind of a wish for life. Rather, I believe what God is saying here would be better represented by the word **CONFIDENCE**.

God has given to those of us who have been Born Again a **NEVER DYING and EVER LIVING CONFIDENCE** that no matter what takes place in this life, **IT IS THE WILL OF GOD**. Along with that confidence is the absolute assurance that now and forever we have eternal life.

It must be a terrible thing to just **MUDDLE** through life.

You don't know why you are here.

You don't know why things are happening as they are to you.

You don't have any assurance of tomorrow.

Life is just passing by as you go through your same routine day after day. Listen. God intended for you and me to have **CONFIDENCE** every single day of our lives as we walk with God.

God will not forsake you as far as your salvation is concerned. I must say, there are times I get very exasperated when I hear people say that after you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, somewhere along the way you can lose your salvation. That, my friend, is a **LIE FROM THE DEVIL OUT OF THE PIT OF HELL**. God will not forsake you once you are saved.

As far as Salvation is concerned, it is yours forever. The last part of John 3:16 tells us, "**that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**"

Now, there may be times when you will forsake God, and in all probability you have done that, or maybe you are doing that right now in your life. **BUT GOD WILL NEVER, NEVER FORSAKE YOU** once you have received His Son as your Saviour.

In Deuteronomy 31:6 we read, "**Be strong and of a good courage, fear not...for the Lord thy God, He it is who doth go with thee; He will not fail thee or forsake thee.**"

In Hebrews 13:5 we read, "**...for He (Jesus) hath said, I will never leave thee, or forsake thee.**"

From the original text of Hebrew 13:5 with the double negative we read, "**I will NEVER, NEVER leave thee ... I will NEVER, NEVER forsake thee.**" What a promise of **HOPE**. What a promise of **CONFIDENCE**.

God will not forsake you even at death.

To Martha, Jesus said in John 11:25-27, "**I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live...And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.**" Upon reading that verse a 5 year old boy said, "**Dad, Jesus sure took the scariness out of dying, didn't He?**"

Paul tells us in I Corinthians 5:8, "**to be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord.**" For us who are born again by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, death does not end life. It is only the beginning.

Those of us who have this living hope, and those of us who have this ever living confidence in God, You **DO NOT** have to worry about tomorrow, because our confidence is in God who will never forsake His own. That is why the composer of the hymn could write,

**And then one day, I'll cross that river;
I'll fight life's final war with pain.
And then as death gives way to victory,
I'll see the light of Glory, and I'll know He lives.
Because He lives, I can face tomorrow,
Because He lives, all fear is gone.
Because I know He holds the future,
and life is worth the living, Just because He lives.**

Third: In verse 4, notice the phrase "**An inheritance incorruptible**" As a result of the resurrection, God not only provides us with a **NEW BIRTH**, and a **LIVING HOPE** or **CONFIDENCE**, but according to verse 4, he gives to us an "**inheritance incorruptible.**"

In John 14:1-4 just before the crucifixion, Jesus said to His disciple "**I am going to prepare a place for you.**" For almost 2000 years Jesus has been preparing a place for you and me. So at that moment of death, whenever it comes, we will be ushered into the presence of God. We will be in that place Jesus is preparing and reserving just for you and me. **THAT IS OUR INHERITANCE INCORRUPTIBLE.**

My friend, this is why we celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not just because it was a unique event, but because of what it has done in our lives individually.

Let me ask you this on Easter Sunday morning: Because of the resurrection, has God done something very personal in your life?

Easter is not just a day of decoration for new clothes.

Easter is not just a day to parade into church to satisfy your loved one, and to show yourself off to God.

Easter is a day to look inside and ask, **WHERE IS CHRIST IN MY LIFE?** Can you sing what many consider to be the **NATIONAL ANTHEM** of the **RESURRECTION SONGS** written by Alfred H. Ackley?

I serve a **RISEN Saviour**; He's in the world today,
I know that He is **LIVING**, whatever men may say;
I see His hands of mercy; I hear His voice of cheer,
And just the time I need Him, He's always near.

In all the world around me, I see His loving care.
And though my heart grows weary, I never will despair,
I know that He is leading, through all the stormy blast,
The day of His appearing will come at last.

He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives? He lives with in my heart.

Can you say, that today, "**He lives within my heart**"? My friend, that is what makes the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ so precious. If you can't say that, I would encourage you right now to invite Jesus into your life as your **LIVING SAVIOUR**.

If God has spoken to your heart after reading the sermon "**I Serve a Risen Saviour**" right now talk to God about what He has spoken to you.

Do you have the assurance that one day you will go to heaven? If you have no assurance that you know Jesus Christ, then I trust you will decide to accept Him as your personal Savior. The Bible tells us in

Acts 16:31, "**...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...**"

Romans 10:13, "**For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**"

This prayer is here for those who need to ask Jesus to be their personal Savior: "**I do want to go to Heaven. I know I am a sinner, and I do believe Jesus Christ died for me. I realize I cannot buy this great salvation, nor can I earn it. Knowing Jesus died on the cross and arose from the grave to pay my sin debt and to purchase my salvation, I do now trust Him as my Savior, and from this moment on I am completely depending on Him for my salvation.**"

If you made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior let me know. Please send an e-mail to, pdmikBBM@aol.com and I will send you some literature that will help you in your Christian life.

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