

Sermon Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God



The Stunning Impact of Christ's Resurrection

KEY PASSAGE: Matthew 28:1-15 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: Matthew 27:50-51 | John 1:29 | Acts 19:18-19, 23-27
Galatians 5:22-23 | Philippians 3:10

SUMMARY

There is one event in history that is unparalleled in its effect upon the world—the resurrection of Christ.

Nothing like this had ever happened before, and nothing since has equaled it. When Jesus rose from the grave, the impact was felt immediately and has continued to reverberate throughout the world. This event has shaken not only religions, cultures, and governments but individuals, as one by one, believers are transformed through Christ's resurrection power.

SERMON POINTS

Jesus was not just a man but God in human flesh.

When He overcame death, the world was shaken in the following ways:

■ **Christ's resurrection shook the world physically.**

An earthquake occurred at Jesus' death when the rocks were split, and again at His resurrection when an angel descended from heaven and rolled away the stone to reveal an empty tomb (Matt. 27:50-51; 28:2).

■ **The religious world of Jesus' day was shaken.**

Christ died on Passover when thousands of Jews were gathered in Jerusalem to worship the Lord. When Jesus yielded up His spirit on the cross, the veil in the temple, which separated God from the people, was torn from top to bottom. There was no more need for the veil or the animal sacrifices because Jesus Christ was the perfect Lamb of God who died for the sins of the world (John 1:29). His

resurrection proved that His sacrifice was accepted by the Father, and the door was now open for anyone who believed in His Son to come to God.

Shortly after His resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven where He is seated at the Father's right hand. Then a few days later, He sent the Holy Spirit on Pentecost to indwell His followers and empower them to share the message of salvation in His name. At that time many of the priests believed in Jesus as their Messiah, but the Jewish leaders who were opposed to Christianity began to persecute believers. The most famous of these persecutors was Saul of Tarsus who was dramatically saved by Jesus as he traveled to Damascus to imprison more Christians. The final upheaval of the religious system of that day occurred in A.D. 70 when the Roman soldiers attacked Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, and scattered the Jewish people all over the world.

■ **Jesus' resurrection impacted the political realm.**

Rome ruled the world in the time of Christ, but they discovered in Him an enemy of a different kind. They couldn't explain how the man they had crucified was now alive. Furthermore, they had no power to stop the spread of Christianity. Paul became the greatest missionary of all time as he and his fellow workers evangelized the Mediterranean world of that day. And today, nations are still being influenced by the Christian faith.

■ **The cultural world of their day was impacted.**

On one occasion when Paul was teaching about Jesus, the people who had been practicing magic responded by burning their books, which were worth fifty thousand pieces of silver (Acts 19:18-19).

At another time, Christianity caused an economic crisis by disrupting the sale of idols in Ephesus (Acts 19:23-27). The cultural upheaval continued for several hundred years until even the emperor of Rome professed to be a Christian.

■ **Christ's resurrection shapes our lives today.** Its impact reaches beyond the world's institutions into the hearts of individual people.

- **The transformation begins when we believe the testimony of the Word of God.** Jesus came as the sinless Lamb of God to atone for the sins of mankind. He died in our place to pay sin's penalty on our behalf. Our salvation is based on what He did and our personal acceptance of His substitutionary death for us.
- **Because of Christ's resurrection we can live a surrendered life.** When we yield our will to Him, He lives in and through us, demonstrating to those around us who He is. As we share our faith with others, His message of salvation changes the eternal destiny of those who receive it.
- **We are empowered by the Holy Spirit.** God's will is that we become the persons He wants us to be, achieve what He desires us to accomplish, and share with others what He's done in our lives. When we submit to Him, the Holy Spirit transforms us by producing His fruit within us so we can display love, joy, peace, patience, and His other qualities (Gal. 5:22-23).
- **Because of the resurrection, we are part of a great missionary movement.** Whether personally or corporately, the church of Jesus Christ is taking the message of His death, resurrection, and the promise of eternal life worldwide. Although some reject the gospel or even persecute the messengers (as did those who stoned Stephen for proclaiming Christ's resurrection), we can't afford to keep the good news to ourselves because it has the power to give eternal life in heaven to all who believe and accept it. We each have a responsibility to tell family, friends, and co-workers about Jesus' offer of salvation.

• **We have been sanctified to live holy lives.**

This means we are to reject anything in our lives that doesn't fit our identity in Christ. Instead of thinking of ourselves as sinners saved by grace, we need to acknowledge the fact that we are saints called by God to live in holiness and righteousness. Each day is an opportunity to invite Christ to live through us by asking Him to sanctify us, fill us with His Spirit, and make our witness like a flaming torch.

A godly life is the result of continuously choosing to reject sin and walk in obedience to the Lord. It doesn't mean we'll never fall, but that we're quick to turn back to God. When we surrender ourselves to His control, sin will become distasteful to us. Although we'll never be perfect, the resurrected Christ enables us to be set apart for Him so His impact upon us can be clearly seen through a godly lifestyle.

RESPONSE

- How has Christ's resurrection impacted you personally? What practices has He called you to leave behind because they no longer fit your identity in Him? What new practices have you adopted because of your new life in Christ?
- Do you tend to think of yourself as a sinner saved by grace or a saint called by God? How would focusing more on your holy calling instead of your failures shape your responses and choices?
- How can you become a part of God's great missionary movement to impact the world with the message of Christ's death and resurrection? We each have a role in this mission, but the way we contribute varies according to God's specific calling for each believer. What abilities and opportunities has He given you to be a light in this dark world? How have you seen Him work through you?

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