**EASTER- The Road Beyond the Cross**

**Faith to Believe, John 20:19-31**

Easter Weekend, 4/16 & 17/2022

**WE Slide 1 Happy Easter or more accurately HAPPY RESURRECTION DAY! A bunch of us had a great time at the Good Friday service at our Fremont campus remembering the incredible work Jesus Christ did for you/me when He went to the cross to take God’s wrath for us, for our sin.** It’s one of the unique things about Christianity- no other religious leader died to take their followers’ judgment only Jesus did that and what makes it more incredible is that He is God. **The One who will judge us for our sin took our judgment for us. Slide 2** Buddha, Gandhi, Joseph Smith, Mohammed, and every other religious leader died, but not for their followers. **They died like everyone else because of the sin that has permeated this world/our lives.**

**NO ONE WILL ESCAPE the reality of death which is obvious when you drive by the many cemeteries around here.** We mark where people are buried so we can go back and remember them, though they have no ability to respond or clue that we’re there. **Some of those markers are elaborate and others are simple- just a plaque with a name, dates, and maybe a short saying.** Some of those sayings are pretty entertaining, for instance…

1. **Slide 3** Rodney Dangerfield’s- There goes the neighborhood.
2. **Slide 4** Merv Griffin- TV host and game show producer, “I will NOT be right back after this message.”
3. **Slide 5** Mel Blanc- Looney Tunes creator, “That’s all folks”
4. **Slide 6** Here’s an anonymous grave marker that has the last word, “I told you I was sick”
5. **Slide 7** Another anonymous one- “Now I know something you don’t”
6. **Slide 8** Here’s one for John Yeast- “Pardon me for not rising.”

**Speaking of RISING there is one grave that doesn’t have a marker because the One buried in it is no longer there, but if it did have something engraved it would read Slide 9, “He is not here, for He is risen.”** This picture is the tomb where they believe Jesus may have been buried or at least in one like it. **Like other gravesites you can visit it and remember Him, but He’s not there- He is ALIVE.** He didn’t just rise from the dead to show off His infinite power, He did so to deal with the sin that causes us to die and if not dealt with die an eternal death in hell. **We’ve been in a series called ROAD TO THE CROSS, which has now happened, so today we’re going to take the ROAD BEYOND THE CROSS Slide 10 where Jesus tells us how we can be sure He has dealt with our sin and eternal death in hell.** Turn to John 20:19, pg. 1085, as you do let me catch you up on what’s happened up to this point.

1. Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb, sees it empty, and runs back to tell the disciples, John 20:1.
2. Peter and John run to the tomb but don’t quite understand what’s happened, John 20:9.
3. Mary goes back to the tomb and Jesus appears to her, John 20:17.
4. That night the disciples are locked in a room hiding from the religious leaders, John 20:19.

**We pick up the story in v. 19, let’s see WHAT JESUS SAID and then WHY IT MATTERS for us today. Slide 11-21 So, what did Jesus say in this passage? He said a lot but for our purposes we’ll look at what He said about we who have not personally seen Him with our own eyes.** Jesus said “Those who have not seen Him with their own eyes and yet believe are blessed.” **What does Jesus mean by “blessed”? Slide 22**

**GOD**

1. **WHAT JESUS SAID- Blessed are they who did not see and yet believed.**
2. **“Blessed”- makarios; happy, glad, given divine favor.**
3. #1 Jesus is assuring all of us that we don’t have to physically see Jesus to believe in Him.
4. #2 In fact, it’s a greater demonstration of faith to believe without seeing.

**Why is that important? Slide 23 Because FAITH in God pleases Him.** The author of Hebrews summarizes it perfectly in 11:6. **Slide 24 What is FAITH in God? He defined faith back in v. 1.** **Slide 25-26** So we learn that biblical faith…

1. **Faith in God Pleases Him, Hebrews 11:6**
2. Biblical faith/hope/trust/belief is being convinced that something God says is true based on who He is- His character/attributes.
3. **1st what God says about salvation-** being right with God comes through, believing Jesus Christ is God, that He took your eternal death sentence on Himself on the cross, and then rose from the dead to give you spiritual life.
4. **2nd what God says about living out that salvation-** His way of thinking/responding is the way to life/peace, our way of thinking/responding leads to death/destruction.

**Here’s the deal Slide 27 whether you consider yourself a Christian, one who’s “spiritual”, agnostic, atheist…**

1. We all live by faith- driving, eating out, mechanics, doctors, CDC, etc. **but more than that…**
2. We’ve adopted a philosophy of life, not unique to us- no philosophy is, that we’ve placed our faith in- that whatever our philosophy is, that’s the most effective way to do life.
3. That philosophy of life has a belief on what happens to us when we die and that’s where everyone but strong-in-faith Christians begin to squirm a little.
4. Some non-Christian people act confident- there is no afterlife, we go back to dust.
5. Others act arrogantly- if there’s a hell I’d rather go there where my buddies are partying.
6. Others more spiritual- “I believe God is a god of love and accepts all into heaven.”
7. **Slide 28** Every one of those people, if honest, are not confident about what happens after death.
8. One way Christians are BLESSED is that because God IS and He is the REWARDER of those who seek Him- we have great confidence in the face of death.

**Slide 29 Which is why what Jesus had to say MATTERS.** Jesus is the One who makes us right with God so we can have Him in our life on this earth and be CONFIDENT that we’ll be with Him for eternity. **Being RIGHT with God isn’t based on us- what we DO, it’s based on Christ- what He’s DONE.** Look what John says as he closes out this passage. **Slide 30-32 You may not be able to see Jesus today, but John, who spent time with Jesus has given you enough evidence to believe that Jesus is God and the One who gives you spiritual/eternal life- He’s the one who makes us right with God. Why does HE have to make us right with God? Slide 33**

1. **WHY IT MATTERS-** **Jesus is the One who makes us right with God.**
2. **Because We Are Not Right with God-** we’ve all sinned and no matter what we do we fall short of God’s glory/His perfection, Romans 3:23 **All the bad things we’ve done brings bad news… Slide 34**
3. **Our Sin Earns Us Eternity in Hell-** what our sin earns us is an eternity in hell as God’s judgment for our sin, Romans 6:23

**But as the verse says, the FREE gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. Slide 35** That’s the good news, the gospel. **I’m going to continue to let God speak for Himself on this issue- look at Romans 1:17. Slide 36**

1. **Our Faith in Christ Makes Us Right with God,**
2. We need someone powerful enough who can remove our sin and give us the righteousness needed to be in God’s presence; we don’t have that power but God does, Romans 1:17
3. **Slide 37** He goes on to say in Romans 4:4–5
4. People try all sorts of things to be right with God, but all of our attempts are sin and the only thing sin earns us is hell.
5. How we receive the righteousness needed to be with God is from God through believing what He’s saying in these verses.

**And one more… Slide 38**

1. When we believe what God says about how salvation is secured, when we place our faith in Jesus that He took our eternal death sentence on Himself and then rose from the dead to give us spiritual life God declares us not guilty of our sins which brings peace between us and Him, Romans 5:1

**BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO DO NOT SEE AND YET BELIEVE. Slide 39 Would you allow God to bless you today- to bring peace between Him and you, and confidence of where you’ll spend eternity?** You can by expressing your belief in Christ today. **I’d like everyone to close their eyes as we close.** I’m going to pray a prayer that you can pray that expresses your belief in Christ- your heart to God’s heart. **If you pray this prayer I’d appreciate it if you’d mark that on a CONNECT Card- grab one while no one is looking.** You don’t have to put your name on it just mark the box that says you prayed today to trust Christ for your salvation. **If you’d like me to send you some helpful information on how to grow in your new relationship then put your information on the card as well.**

**YOU TAKEAWAYS**

**Pray something like this if you want God to forgive you of your sins, bring peace between Him and you, and secure your place in heaven with Him. PRAY**

**Slide 49 Again if you prayed that prayer I’d love to know about it so catch me in the lobby or put your CONNECT Card in the orange offering bucket on your way out.** Now let’s stand and close our time with Logan/band.

**PODCAST- Believing Is Seeing, John 20:19-31, Hebrews 11:1, 6; Romans 1:17, 4:4-5, 5:1**