

Easter Sunday 2017

- **Video Clip – “He is still risen”!**
- What it meant for them – it still means for us!
- What did it mean for them – for the first Jesus followers? I looked at the 40 references to the word “resurrection” in the NT. I figured this could help us discover what the resurrection meant for the 1st believers...
- **What did it mean for Jesus?**
- Well, besides him actually being the “Resurrection and the Life” – actually having the power to raise the dead, for Jesus – the resurrection reveals the eternal nature of God. That God is the God of the living – not the dead! (Matthew 22:23-31).
- For Jesus, resurrection leads to a depth and quality of relationships that makes marriage irrelevant in Heaven. Following resurrection, our relationships will take on a depth and quality more than we can imagine! (Mk. 12:18-23).
- For Jesus, at resurrection – the righteous will be awarded for their righteous deeds – especially those not noticed by man but noticed by God! (Lk. 14:14).
- For Jesus, the one who believes in Him, will never die! The believer – the follower of Jesus will live forever! (Jn. 11:25ff).
- **What about for Luke in the Book of Acts – what did the resurrection mean for him?**
- The resurrection was so vital that the replacement for Judas (who betrayed Jesus and took his own life) had to be one who witnessed the resurrection of Jesus! That’s how important the resurrection was to the apostles! You had to witness it! (Acts 1:22).
- For Luke, the resurrection was proof of Jesus’ identity as the Son of God. The apostles – the first preachers of the gospel all testified to the resurrection as proof for the truth

and for Jesus' identity. It proved He was who he said he was! (Acts 4:33ff).

- For Luke, the resurrection meant HOPE! (Acts 23:6). The fact that there will be both a resurrection of the righteous and the wicked brings HOPE! (Acts 24:15)!
- **What about for Peter?**
- For Peter, the resurrection of Jesus was prophesied in the Old Testament and fulfilled in Jesus Christ (See Peter's first sermon in Acts 2).
- For Peter, God Himself raised Jesus and he and the other apostles became witnesses of "the fact" of Jesus resurrection. For Peter it was historical fact and because of his resurrection Jesus is both Lord and Christ! (Acts 2:32ff).
- For Peter, through Jesus' resurrection we've all been given a "living hope"! For Peter, resurrection was evidence of our salvation (1 Peter 1:3ff).
- **And what about for Paul? What did the resurrection mean for him?**
- For Paul, in Romans 1:1-4, the resurrection was proof of Jesus' divinity! His divine nature!
- In Romans 6:55ff, Jesus' death and resurrection are a pattern for the Christian life itself and are symbolized through baptism! Believers are "united to Jesus in his death" and "raised with Jesus" in his resurrection. As followers we experience daily, both a dying and a raising! We die to self and we have been made alive with Christ! This should deter us from sinning!
- 1 Corinthians 15 is Paul's Pulitzer Prize writing on the resurrection. In this chapter, the resurrection means preaching and faith are useful and not useless! For Paul the eyewitness accounts of Jesus being raised from the dead are true and not false. Because of the resurrection faith is not futile and our sins are forgiven! For Paul, the resurrection means that those who have gone before us in Christ are alive! They are not lost! We will see them again!

- For Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, the resurrection means that there is a great and eternal purpose in life! Because of the resurrection we live for much more than eating and drinking and dying! (1 Cor. 15:32).
- For Paul, because of the resurrection we will have new, powerful, spiritual, glorious, eternal and imperishable bodies! (1 Cor. 15:35ff). Is there a halleluiah out there for that!
- For Paul, in Phil. 3:10-11 – the resurrection is something to attain to – it is our goal! We want to obtain it – to possess it! It is a part of wanting to be more like Christ!
- **For the writer of the Book of Hebrews** – whoever he or she may be – the resurrection of the dead is to be considered an elementary doctrine or teaching – it is a basic and foundational Christian truth. So we don't mess with it! (Heb. 6:2)
- And in Heb. 11:35ff – the hope of the resurrection helps believers endure torture and martyrdom! Death is gain – there is something way better to come! (So keep your fork – there is more to come!).
- **Finally for John, in the Book of Revelation.** The resurrection is a future reality. It is still to come! All of the dead will be raised and face judgment from God (Rev. 20:5-6).
- So there you have it – what the resurrection meant for them – it still means for us!
(Picture of me in front of the Garden Tomb)
- It means our God is the God of the living and not the dead! It means Jesus is still who he says he is! The resurrection is historical fact. The first Christian sermons were based on the fact of Jesus resurrection – we have eye witness account! It means salvation is here and now! It means our sins are forgiven! It means we have hope! The grave is conquered! Eternal life is real! The sting of death is gone. We do not have to fear death! We have hope both for this life and for the next.
- And so church – the resurrection of Jesus is still the best news in town! And yes, it should still bring us a smile, a jump, a shout of praise, a tear of joy, a genuine faith built up and encouraged by the historical fact that Jesus Christ arose!

He is risen! (He is risen! Indeed!)